



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

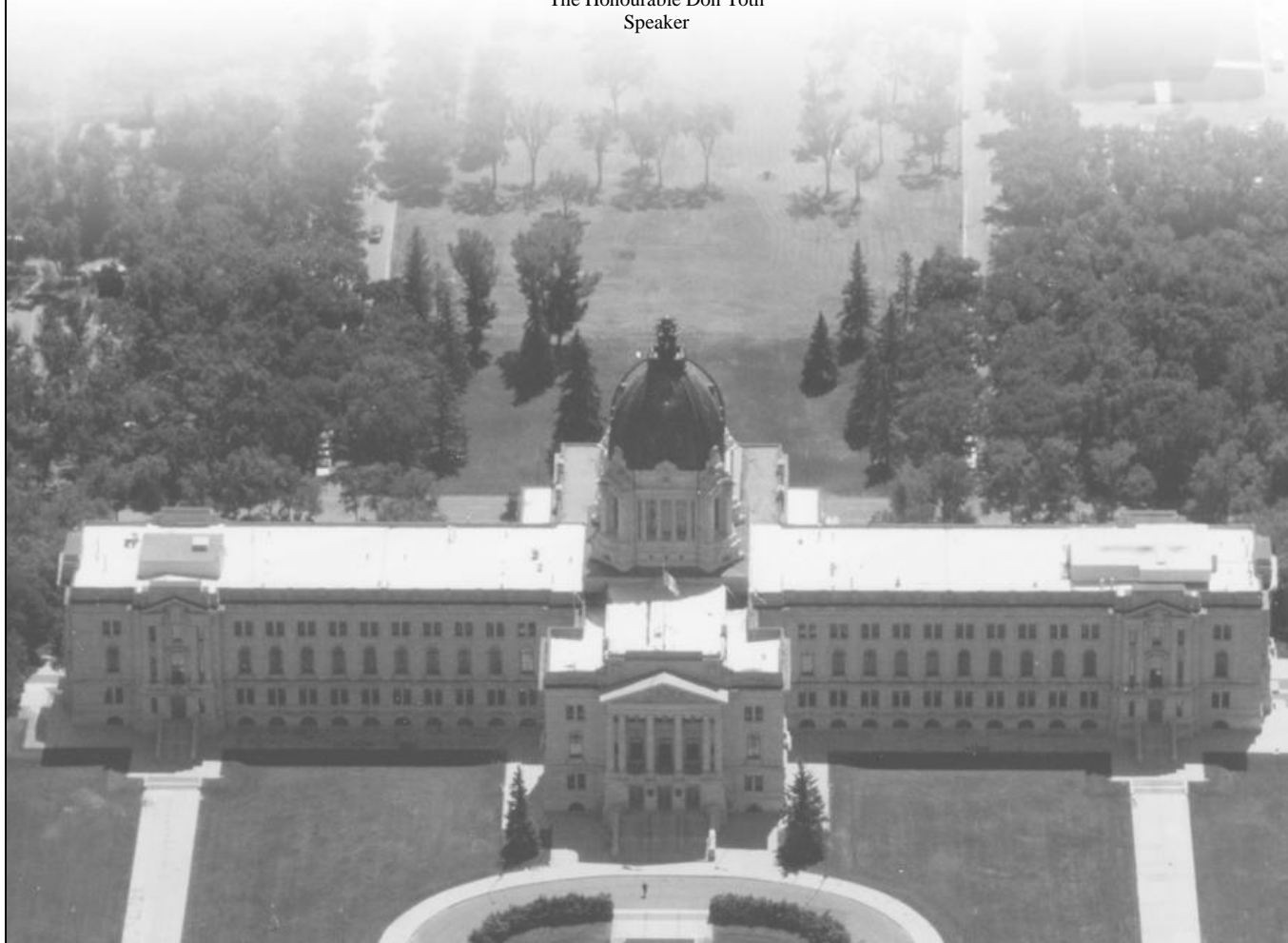
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth  
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall  
 Leader of the Opposition — Dwain Lingenfelter

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
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 resumed at 19:00.]

**SPECIAL ORDER**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY  
(BUDGET DEBATE)**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Gantfoer that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The time being 7 o'clock, this House now resumes sitting. I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying before we broke for the supper hour . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Start over.

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — And I'm sorry but I will not be starting my remarks over from the very beginning . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I know.

Right, on the issue of policies and particularly on the climate change policy, there is one very substantial difference between the NDP [New Democratic Party] and us, and that is we actually have a policy on this issue, Mr. Speaker. This budget sees the continuation of our campaign promise to commit \$15 million per year to our Go Green Fund. This fund offers financing to enable people to go green and make the changes necessary to help our environment and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Included this year, Mr. Speaker, in the Go Green allocation is \$4 million for SARCAN and their recycling efforts. This is above and beyond the environmental handling charges that we are returning to them. Under the NDP administration, they were quite happy to collect the environmental handling charges for beverage containers and then dump the money into the GRF [General Revenue Fund] instead of reinvesting completely in recycling. We are taking a different approach.

Mr. Speaker, we are allocating more than \$10 million per year more to SARCAN than the NDP ever did. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this year SARCAN will receive an allocation of over \$21 million to make sure they can continue to recycle beverage containers, to expand their services to meet a growing need, all the while employing peoples with all abilities, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the government, I would like to thank SARCAN for their investment in our communities and their commitment to people with disabilities and their dedication to protecting our environment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, before this House is our legislation on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions for Saskatchewan. This is yet another area where the NDP were all talk and where our government is taking action. We have set a target of a 20 per cent reduction over 2006 levels by 2020.

I'm not sure what the NDP's targets are today, Mr. Speaker. They started off with a 32 per cent reduction. Then the Environment critic clearly called upon us to adopt the federal targets of 20 per cent. And now the NDP leader says that we have to do what the United States is doing, which is a 17 per cent reduction. And, Mr. Speaker, I'll quote from November 17, 2009. The member for Regina Douglas Park said, and I quote:

My view is that we will continue to watch as this develops and through our policy forums come up with our proposal. But at this point in time, I think to do something other than the Americans is going to be very, very difficult.

So, Mr. Speaker, from that quote it's quite obvious that they don't actually have their own proposal for this initiative. They said that they're going work through their policy forums on that and that they are apparently quite willing to adopt what the United States is doing, which is a 17 per cent reduction, Mr. Speaker. So they're apparently a little confused. And the other quote from the member for Regina Douglas Park, from *The Leader-Post*, December 29, 2009 says, and I quote:

I think it's incumbent on a large producer of fossil fuels and all the opportunity we have in Saskatchewan, for the New Democratic Party to be absolutely clear on what our environmental policy is going forward. I think we've got quite a bit of work to do there.

Mr. Speaker, that was his quote. Obviously he's not confident in the position their party has, whatever that position is today, and he admits that there's a whole lot of work yet to be done. So while they talk amongst themselves to come up with their policies, Mr. Speaker, our approach is very clear. Not only are they confused about targets and what their policy is going to be on this, Mr. Speaker, they're apparently a little confused on the mechanisms which will be employed to actually help us reach our targets.

Just last week the NDP leader was proudly stating Saskatchewan's history in carbon capture and storage, and I actually have to agree with him on that point. Saskatchewan is a world leader in carbon capture and storage, Mr. Speaker. But what I find more than passing strange is that his own hand-picked Environment critic is absolutely opposed to carbon capture and storage. She said and I quote, ". . . they [meaning us] committed to the expensive and untried technology of carbon capture."

Mr. Speaker, so they are confused about their own policy. They're obviously confused about their own targets, and they're confused internally about what mechanisms we're actually going to employ to get us to reach our targets, Mr. Speaker. So I wish them well on that.

However, I do want to thank one of the members of the NDP, the member for Regina Dewdney. And I want to thank him for his absolute unqualified support for our government's legislation on reduction of greenhouse gases'. I have a long list of quotes here, and I think I'll read every single one of them, Mr. Speaker.

This is from debate in the House on . . .

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

**Ms. Schriemer:** — Request leave for an introduction.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Sutherland has requested leave to introduce a guest. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Ms. Schriemer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you, hon. member. To you and through you to the rest of the legislature, I'd like to introduce my only daughter, Elise, who's up in the Speaker's gallery. This is the first time she's been in the House. And I wish to tell everybody how proud I am of her, what a wonderful daughter she is, and welcome to your legislature.

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

### SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Gantfoer that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.]

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, last fall in this House on November 18th, the member for Regina Dewdney was . . . I think we were having a debate about greenhouse gas legislation. And so I want to quote some of what he said, Mr. Speaker, because I really do want to thank him for his support. It's, you know, pretty clear. He said, "Mr. Speaker, what we're urging the government to do is reintroduce their own Bill, Bill No. 95, because we support that Bill." The member for Regina Dewdney, he went on to say, and I quote, ". . . on reflection of that legislation, Mr. Speaker, it is something that in fact does put forward a concrete plan."

Mr. Speaker, he went on to praise our legislation and again I thank him for that. He said, and I quote:

Well, Mr. Speaker, we've now had the opportunity to review some additional information that was provided, including Bill 95. We reviewed it in detail, and we support Bill 95.

Mr. Speaker, one more. He said, and I quote, ". . . it is a very, very, very, very . . ." And I didn't put those in myself. He said that ". . . it is a very, very, very, very important piece of legislation, Bill No. 95, because it's actually the plan. And if we

pass Bill No. 95, we then have a concrete plan . . ." So again, Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for Regina Dewdney. Oh, Mr. Speaker, I missed one because I switched my pages. I've got one more. He said, and I quote, ". . . this is a Bill that has substance and structure in which to accomplish the goals of which the government has brought forward."

So, Mr. Speaker, I do thank him for his support, and I hope that he can speak with the members of his caucus to get them onside because apparently he's pretty happy with the piece of legislation that we have before the House. And he is the House Leader, so you know I would imagine he has some sway.

Mr. Speaker, I have personally spoken to numerous stakeholders, and they are incredibly supportive of our government's approach. I actually . . . We're in the middle of consultations currently on our greenhouse gas reduction Bill in both Saskatoon and Regina. We're meeting with industry stakeholders, with stakeholders from the agricultural community. There's some potential for offset credits within how they do business. We're meeting with environmental NGOs [non-governmental organization] and others, Mr. Speaker.

And I was able to go down and meet with the industry stakeholders just this afternoon and thank them for their participation. They have been outstanding in their participation, the feedback they've given us on our legislation, and I know that they're very supportive. They particularly like the tech fund structure that we have, Mr. Speaker, that we would actually reinvest in Saskatchewan businesses to help them reach those targets.

Mr. Speaker, another issue within my ministry, which is incredibly important for our government, is water. As part of this budget process, the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority has also been asked to find efficiencies, and they will. But they have been able to do this without reducing the key services that they offer to people. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we continue to do more than ever. The authority's important work will continue on a water availability study. As our province grows, it is essential that we are aware of where our water resources are, what they are, in order to accommodate our population growth and the increased industrial activity in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP left behind a massive infrastructure deficit. We know this. We hear about it when it comes to schools and hospitals and roads. But there is also a water infrastructure deficit in our province, infrastructure that needs to be repaired, improved, and built. Mr. Speaker, we are spending six times the money the NDP did on dam infrastructure in our province.

The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority is also continuing free water testing for communities at risk. We did this previously for the village of Hepburn. When having this information on the deplorable state of their water system, Mr. Speaker, a water system that the NDP completely overlooked . . . the village had asked for financial help under the NDP for years and were denied every single year. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say that we were able, through federal and provincial money, to contribute \$6 million to a \$9 million water project for the community of Hepburn so they could have clean, safe water.

Mr. Speaker, while the NDP spent a mere \$9 million in their last two years on water infrastructure, in our first two years we have handed out over \$76 million for water infrastructure projects in our province. Access to clean, safe water is essential not only for human health and safety but to meet the growth of our province, Mr. Speaker. We are committed to making sure that communities in Saskatchewan have access to safe, clean water.

And I have to say I'm a little surprised at the NDP's Environment critic's request for the current water supply to continue to flow into Furdale. Mr. Speaker, the water is raw water. It's straight from the river. It is meant for industrial use. In fact 97 per cent of the users on that system are industrial users. Monitoring of that water system has shown that there are rodents making their homes by the water intake. It has E. coli, metals, other contaminants. And, Mr. Speaker, after the water situation in North Battleford, I would have thought that we would all see the benefits of having safe, clean water delivered to homes in our province, Mr. Speaker.

Just last year, there was money that was given to the non-profit Dundurn water utility, about \$15 million through federal and provincial funding to expand their water system, and the residents of Furdale have an opportunity to hook up to that system. But we will continue to work with the good people in Furdale to make sure that they have access to clean, health-safe water, Mr. Speaker.

I listened with interest also — speaking of water — to the member from Athabasca make fun of my toilet replacement program offered through the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority. On one hand, he stated that we needed to protect the water in this province, and on the other hand he repeatedly mocked a program that does just that. The NDP had their own toilet replacement program. It operated for one year, had a budget of \$200,000. Mr. Speaker, ours is a four-year program with a budget of \$11 million, and so far we've had pretty good uptake. The total that's replaced in this province, there's been 13,000 traditional toilets that have been replaced for water savings of 150 million litres of water, Mr. Speaker. So the opposition's concern about protection of our water; this is a great way for the average person to be involved in reducing their water consumption so that we have a safe water supply going into the future.

Mr. Speaker, the funding continues in this year's budget, and the program is being expanded to include things like schools and municipal buildings as well. Mr. Speaker, we are continuing our unprecedented investment in infrastructure through this budget. We have spent almost \$3 billion over the last three years, and we wouldn't have to do that if the NDP made infrastructure a priority under their government but, Mr. Speaker, they did not.

We are committed to building schools and fixing roads. The twinning of Highway 11 will continue, and as I drive this highway all the time I can see the benefits of this project. The communities along Highway 11 continue to grow and no more than the town of Warman.

I want to thank the Education minister for his announcement this month that a middle-year school for Warman will be built.

The minister and I have discussed the need for this . . . The minister and I have discussed the need for this school many times, and I can tell him that over the past few weeks the residents of Warman have contacted me through phone calls and emails to say thank you. Without this school, the community's growth would have been stunted. It is a great town. Even as it grows, it is holding onto its small-town feel and sense of community, a place where neighbours help neighbours.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is listening. Whether through door knocking during the 2007 by-election or talking to folks over the last few years, there have been pretty much the same issues raised consistently: education property taxes, a safe water supply for Hepburn, a middle year school for Warman, and attention paid to access roads within my riding. I'm happy to say that we have or will be addressing all of these issues, Mr. Speaker.

The good people of my constituency have had the same concerns for years. Hepburn repeatedly applied for water funding, and the NDP repeatedly refused their requests. Tax payers across this province repeatedly called for relief from education property taxes, and the NDP repeatedly refused to hear them, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Drivers have repeatedly asked for better roads, and the NDP repeatedly refused to invest in infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, that was the old Saskatchewan led by a tired, old NDP government. But Mr. Speaker, we are in a new Saskatchewan, one led by a dynamic leader and MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] who are listening.

Nothing is more indicative of the NDP's backward-looking ways than their convention this past weekend. Mr. Speaker, I found it interesting that their policy renewal session was titled "Saskatchewan in the 21st Century," and then their leader spent most of his time talking about the past. He continues to talk about the 1980s. Well, Mr. Speaker, I was in high school in the 1980s. It was quite a while ago, and I think it's probably time to move on and pay attention to this new Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, the NDP are going back to old school politics, looking backward instead of forward.

[19:15]

Mr. Speaker, this is the new Saskatchewan. There is a renewed optimism in our province. People are moving here like never before. Our population continues to increase. Saskatchewan under the NDP might have been a good place to be from but, Mr. Speaker, the new Saskatchewan is a great place to be.

Mr. Speaker, I started my remarks talking about my kids, and I'll talk about my parents' kids for a second. At one time my brother, sister, and I all lived outside of Saskatchewan, and I don't think there was a happier day for my parents when we all moved back home. Mr. Speaker, I have six nieces and nephews, and in this new Saskatchewan there are opportunities for every single one of them. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm proud to be a resident of this new Saskatchewan. I am proud to support this budget. It is a budget that will see Saskatchewan continue to move forward, to see Saskatchewan be a leader in the country, and a place where people want to be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina

Lakeview.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a real pleasure tonight to rise and speak to this budget. I think there are a number of concerns in quite a few different areas. And as many people know, I have a strong interest in the arts and in what's happening in Saskatchewan, and there have been a number of things that have been done or started to be completed in this budget which are a worry to many of us in Saskatchewan.

Now I find it's kind of interesting that April 2010 is Ibsen month in Saskatchewan. Right now at the University of Saskatchewan, they're performing *Peer Gynt* which is one of Ibsen's early plays, and it's quite an interesting play. It started last Thursday. I recommend it to anybody who is interested, and it continues I think every night this week until Saturday.

But *Peer Gynt* — if people don't know this play — it's about a man who basically follows the wisdom of the trolls, and basically what it does is it puts that person first above the community. And in many ways when you think about or listen or go to this play, like I did last Thursday, it reminds me a lot of this budget which effectively neglects the many, the community, and starts focusing on a few and on the friends of the members opposite. And, Mr. Speaker, I just don't want to spend a long time on this, but the main character in this play is Peer Gynt. And it's quite interesting that he goes through three bankruptcies during the play. And I think we've had quite a few discussions about bankruptcies and abilities and things that have happened. And so I encourage everybody to go and see that play.

Then in a week or two, the Globe Theatre will be performing *A Doll's House*. And once again, this is a 19th-century play that speaks to the 21st century because it deals with, once again, many of the issues around how we treat women, family, and their roles within society. And, Mr. Speaker, we've heard a number of things and seen a number of things that raise concern both here in the provincial area but also at the national area as it relates to the rights of women. And I will once again urge people to go and see that particular play.

Now when one looks at a budget and what needs to be in a budget, one of the concerns that you have is that you follow the accounting rules. And I was very pleased to see in the certified general accountant magazine that just arrived this week — it's the March-April edition — they have one of their writers talk about a breakthrough in setting generally accepted accounting principles for private enterprises. And basically what they're doing is they're setting up these generally accepted accounting principles according to Canada's Accounting Standards Board for smaller businesses, but which then obviously helps certified general accountants and accountants to do their work.

But one of the comments made by a person who's quoted here is a comment by Stephen Spector who is an accounting lecturer at Simon Fraser University. He's also a treasurer of the Certified General Accountants of British Columbia. And what he says is:

“the three fundamental underlying premises of the new GAAP [or general accounting principles] are that . . .

[private enterprise] financial statements should allow users to understand an organization's operations, to determine whether it will be able to meet its cash flow obligations, and to figure out what happened from one period to the next. Those addressed the three key needs of creditors. The focus is on decision usefulness.”

I think that one of the concerns that we have, fundamentally about the budget that was presented last week, is the usefulness of this budget for voters, for the people of Saskatchewan in understanding exactly those three things — understanding how the operations are organized, determine about whether or not the cash will be there to actually meet the obligations, and finally to make a comparison between what's going to happen in this coming year with what's happened in previous years.

And when a government comes in and starts changing the accounting rules in the middle of a term, we know that there's a problem somewhere. And I think that's why the Provincial Auditor is concerned. That's why many in the accounting profession across Saskatchewan are concerned, and that's very clearly why we on this side are concerned because, when one starts to mess with the budget, well then you end up with all kinds of issues.

And it's quite amazing when you look at the document and see that at the end of almost every page in that book, when it comes to departmental expenditures, there's a little footnote at the bottom that says these things have been adjusted in some way. So you don't really know whether the comparisons are accurate or not. And that I think becomes the concern for all of us in Saskatchewan.

Now to compound that, we have a commentary — which kind of reflects my own sense — from Jeffrey Simpson in March 6th, the Saturday edition of *The Globe and Mail*. And the article's called “Budget reality: promises, promises on the road to fiscal hock.” And one of the little highlight portions here says, “The single most curious aspect of North American political conservatism is that it has very seldom produced what it preached, although the yawning gap never stopped the preaching.”

And what Mr. Simpson is talking about is that much as conservatives, like our Saskatchewan Party friends opposite or our federal Conservatives or Republicans in the United States, much as they pride themselves in thinking that they know how to manage and keep account of money, they are the ones that continually get us into big debt which then requires New Democrats or Democrats in the United States to come back into power and sort the thing out. And one of the quotes in here very clearly says:

In Canada, Conservative governments in provinces such as Ontario and Saskatchewan preached all the usual small-c conservative virtues but bequeathed deficits that subsequent governments had to eliminate. They cut spending for a while but left their provinces in hock.

And, Mr. Speaker, this budget that we had last week shows that our government is on the same track as Mr. Devine was during the '80s. The only thing that's shocking is that they seem to have been able to get there in two and a half years rather than in

five. And that ends up actually being of benefit for the people of Saskatchewan because I don't think the people of Saskatchewan are going to be bitten twice by this same dog of debt. And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to raise the questions about some of the decisions that are hidden in this budget, but we'll also raise questions that make sure that the public knows that there are major problems as it relates to the finances of the province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, given that there's a bit of a theme of drama tonight, I thought that it would also be appropriate to look at that dream play of Shakespeare called *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. And it's got a bit of a section in there which is sort of a play within a play where it talks about a wall, and I think the wall is kind of like the debt of the province. And so I want to put some quotes into the record from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, act V, scene I, and the first section is a quote from the wall:

In this same interlude it doth befall  
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;  
And such a wall, as I would have you think,  
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,  
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe,  
Did whisper often very secretly.  
This loam, this rough-cast and this stone doth show  
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:  
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,

And holds up his . . . if you go to the play, hold up your hand and have their finger and thumb making a hole in the wall: "Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper." And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this particular play then continues, and I think some of these lines will be quite familiar, but I think it's well worth reminding ourselves of them. We have Pyramus talking, and he says:

O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!  
O night, which ever art when day is not!  
O night, O night! alack, alack,  
I fear my Thisbe's promise 'tis forgot!  
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,  
Thou stand'st between her father's ground and mine!  
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,  
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!

And so basically you then have the wall put up his hand and put the chink up, and Pyramus starts talking. But when you're watching the play or you're in the mood of sort of imaging this as you read it, you end up having this wall which is a fair barrier between Pyramus and Thisbe as they try speak to each other.

And a little later — I'll just give you a one more quote — Pyramus says, "O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!" And Thisbe says, "I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all." And then later Snout the wall says,

Wall: Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;  
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this wall is debt that we're talking about, ends up being a barrier between what should happen in this province and what the people want to happen. And so I think

that what I need to talk about are these holes in this budget or these holes in this whole thing so that maybe these last words of Snout will be fulfilled in November 2011 when it will say, and I quote, "And, being done, thus Wall away doth go."

So, Mr. Speaker, what are these chinks? What are these holes in this particular budget? Well I think late last week we heard the Minister of Finance reveal a secret that wasn't in the budget documents, and that's the whole spectre of a harmonized sales tax. And when he actually speaks through the holes so that somebody could understand, all of a sudden that chink is attempted to be filled up. But, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that that can be done. I think that, in the plans of the members opposite, there are recognition that they will have to find some revenues in some other place if they're going to fulfill the kind of agenda that they want to fulfill.

[19:30]

Last year and the year before, they made a number of changes when they had cash, without a plan, without thinking through where they were going to go. This year they're stuck. They have to try to do some things, but they still don't have a plan. But this harmonized sales tax is sitting out there as a way that they can recoup some money from not the places that pay it now but from individuals within our community. And I think that there's a great deal of concern that once again something that was not in the budget shows up in the budget rollout within a day or two after.

Today we heard the Minister of Health talk about privatization of a whole part of the health care system, and he does this after underfunding exactly the solutions that he wants to pay somebody else to provide. There were clear plans for surgery centres, surgical care centres in both Saskatoon and Regina — but I think Regina's was maybe a little further ahead — that were part of a plan which would then complement a whole surgical wait-list plan which was rolled out today.

But rather than go forward with some of the well-thought-out ways of dealing this which would allow for it to be completed within the health system that we have, what we heard today was, well we're going to give some money — we don't know how much for each procedure or how much this is all going to cost — but they're going to give some money to some private facilities where they have withdrawn the money from the public facilities and the plans that were laid out. And I think that all of us in Saskatchewan should be worried when we have these kinds of plans and these kind of ideological statements made by our Minister of Health, and I'm sure that we'll hear them from the Premier as well.

We also have another chink in this wall that is a problem, and that relates to the whole film industry and especially the role of the Saskatchewan Communications Network. It appears quite clear, even three or four or five days after the budget, that the amount of discussion within the film industry, even within the board of the Saskatchewan Communications Network, was very, very minimal and that in fact there wasn't any sense of trying to figure out a way of maybe doing some things in a different way that would allow for that role of a first source of money for new films, for new filmmakers, or for other filmmakers, or as a place of a gathering of expertise which

would help the continued development of the film industry in Saskatchewan.

So here we have destruction of something which was built up over the last 20 years. And I guess maybe it is a bit of a reflection of the memories of the people on that side of the House, which is also reflected in the overall budget. The Saskatchewan Communications Network was brought forward by the minister of SaskTel in the late '80s in the Devine government. That person, Mr. Gary Lane, was very proud of this organization. And I'm not sure if any of the members opposite have phoned and talked to him about this. But this is a legacy of Mr. Lane and the good work that he did at SaskTel.

And I think it's a sad commentary that some of these things are done without much planning, without much thinking. But the more that I hear about this one, it seems to be one of the worst cases of not talking to the people who are directly affected, not talking to the people who might know something about this, and then coming up with something that will be of benefit to all of us in Saskatchewan.

Now I'm hoping that there'll be some way that this can be fixed. We do know that we'll be trying to retrieve all of the good things that were created out of this in November 2011. I don't think this one can wait that long, and so I'm hoping that there'll be some rethinking by the minister and by the Finance minister and by the Premier because it'll be a sad legacy for long, hard work to build up a film industry in Saskatchewan if the Premier and the member from Weyburn are tagged for the role of destroying the film industry in Saskatchewan.

Now one of the other chinks in this wall that shows up in this wall of budget is that there's a goal to or a plan to lay off civil servants without really thinking through what they're doing. And this appears to be clearer each day as we get more information about this. And once again, I think that there have been many comments from people in the press and within the community that say a plan that does the kind of reductions in the civil service that the members opposite have put forward is not a plan at all. And it's going to not only harm the individuals who are doing these jobs and their families and their communities; it's also going to be of no benefit and will in fact damage the rest of us as we try to pick up the pieces.

And I guess what I would say is that it's difficult for many of us to understand that have been around this place for quite a long time, and I know many members on that side have been as well, but it's difficult to understand that they would bring forward a plan like this that doesn't get to the heart of what some of the functions are of the people that they're trying to eliminate and that it doesn't end up providing some direction for the future.

Now I think the really sad part is that I know, from the many years that I worked with the civil servants of Saskatchewan, that they all are people who are very proud of the work that they do. And they appreciate and understand their role to provide advice, to provide options to the people who are to make the decisions. And clearly the important part of that whole interaction between civil servants and the politicians is that 95 per cent of the time you're probably going to listen to the advice that you get from the civil servants because they have been working in a particular area and understand the different options and will

give their recommendations. If you don't understand their recommendation as a minister or as a member of caucus or as the Premier, then it's your job to sit down and figure that out and then make the right decisions based on the information.

Something broke down last year on the advice around the value of potash and resources, and that has ended up causing all kinds of difficulty right through the whole province. What we're seeing and what we were worried about was exactly the kind of budget that we had this last week, which then pushes all the damage from the lack of taking advice last year onto others who had nothing to do with that.

And I think that's a sign, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of poor government. It's a government that doesn't listen to advice. It's a government that makes decisions in a willy-nilly fashion. It's a government that seems to be reacting in crisis mode and, Mr. Speaker, we've seen that in quite a number of ways. It's also a government, when some truth or story comes out like it did last Friday . . . that the Premier's office then quickly goes to try to shut it down.

Now you'll know that other times I've talked about the concentration of power in the Premier's offices or the Prime Minister's Office, and once again I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's a reflection of that particular perspective that our Premier has. I think people would appreciate if there was a change in tactics, a change in understanding, and much more consultation, even with the members of his own caucus. I think it would prevent quite a few of the wild and crazy decisions that we've seen over the last couple of years.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also know that this budget doesn't seem to tell us the whole story in the area of the environment and the kinds of things that are happening there. We know in the Throne Speech last fall that there was great discussion about some kind of new water plan. We haven't seen that. We don't kind of know what's happening. The word on the street is that there's groups of people outside of government who are trying to define this, maybe over at Clifton Associates, including some of the old advisers from the Devine government. And so we're quite concerned. I think people right across the community are quite concerned. Those professional civil servants who have worked in the Department of Environment and related pieces of the civil service have been effectively pushed aside, and we're concerned that this will be once again another chink in this wall. So we'll be watching that carefully, and we will make sure that we will ask hard questions.

Another aspect of this which relates to this is the introduction of legislation into this House around wildlife habitat land. And the kind of flexibility opening up, allowing the minister in cabinet to have total control of this is not acceptable to Saskatchewan people. But it fits with some of this kind of behind-the-scenes scheming. And we are watching it carefully, and we're listening carefully, and we're hearing many things that we don't like. And we urge the government to spend some time to get this out in a way where there can be public discussion because, I think, when there is public discussion the course of the government will be changed. We don't know what other areas where these things are happening, but once again these are these chinks or holes in this wall that is this budget.



Now the final topic I'm going to describe tonight is one that concerns me personally, and my colleague from Saskatoon has been quite ably raising this one, but this relates to the whole issue of the role of this legislature in being the guardians of democracy in Saskatchewan, and it relates to the election of the Chief Electoral Officer. And we have a process and procedure that has been developed over many years, and this procedure was used. And what is of concern to me as a lawyer, as somebody who understands how government works, is that this particular role of a Chief Electoral Officer belongs to the members of the legislature, but more importantly the people of Saskatchewan.

And when we have the leaders of all of the political parties, other than the government, raising questions about it in this building and in this community, when we have the unexplained responses from the government that then get curiously and curiously as each day rolls out, then we are concerned that this is also another hole in this wall of budget. And we will be watching very, very carefully because, because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this goes right to the heart of how our country is organized, and we will not be in a position where we're going to tolerate any kind of funny business as it relates to the Chief Electoral Officer.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we have here is a situation where the budget is a reflection of a government that seems to have lost its way. It's a government that doesn't consult in ways with the people. It's a government that hides things in some of the accounting rules and in the documents that they provide. It's also a government that doesn't even tell us all the things that are going on here.

[19:45]

But, Mr. Speaker, we are experienced people on this side of the House. We also live within the community. And we're not the only ones that are concerned about how this government is trying to proceed. And we will continue to ask hard questions. We will continue to keep our eyes and ears open, and we will continue to stand on principle as it relates to the rights of the people of Saskatchewan and that also relates then to this budget. We will be examining it carefully as we move forward into committee, and I urge all of the ministers and their officials to be well prepared because we have many, many questions about this budget, even more than we've had over the last couple of budgets because there are all kinds of difficulties or, as I said, chinks in the wall that need to be examined. So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will conclude my remarks on this budget.

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

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is indeed an honour to stand here today and join in this important budget debate.

Mr. Speaker, before I . . . or Deputy Speaker, pardon me, before I start to talk about this budget, I want to take a moment to thank the people of Regina Wascana Plains. The constituents who have contacted me in my office over the past year have brought many important issues to my attention. It is indeed an honour and a privilege to represent the constituents of Regina

Wascana Plains as their MLA in the Saskatchewan legislature.

I'd also like to take this time to acknowledge my family for their ongoing support. As well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to thank my staff in my constituency office and minister's office who work hard to serve the citizens of this great province. Thank you to Marie, Raynelle, Gary, John, Selena, and Linda. Also my thanks to my constituency president, Sean Quinlan, and the executive for their ongoing support.

Mr. Speaker, this is our government's third balanced budget. In this budget, we have balanced caution on the revenue side with prudent spending while taking an overall balanced approach to the province's finances. We are cognizant that, as a government, we need to invest in key capital areas that ensure that the citizens of this province continue to receive important programming. We did this in a way that focuses on sustaining and enhancing core government services with a view to reducing the footprint of government and reducing government spending. The end result, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a budget that will see an overall government spending drop of 1.2 per cent or 121.3 million.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that this budget builds on the economic momentum that the province has experienced over the past couple years. I think that this budget also reflects the overall optimism that the people of Saskatchewan now feel. In our first budget, we made payments against the provincial debt. We started working to erase the provincial infrastructure deficit left behind by the members opposite, and we delivered unprecedented tax relief to the people of the province.

What we did and continue to do, Mr. Speaker, is to work to ensure a sustained period of economic growth. Last year we saw an economic downturn which threatened the entire world economy. Our government responded by continuing to invest in our province. We delivered an economic booster shot and, Mr. Speaker, it succeeded in keeping our provincial economy healthy and vibrant. Mr. Speaker, as we look back on everything that has happened over the past two years, we can now appreciate how so very important it has been for our government to have invested in programs specifically designed to keep our economy strong. We also now acknowledge how very important it was that we paid down the debt by an unprecedented 40 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this year's budget builds on that strong foundation. We are building on the successes we have had in rebuilding the province's infrastructure and revitalizing the economy through historic tax cuts. Mr. Speaker, this success is being noticed. On average, Canada's nine leading economic forecasters are projecting an economic growth rate for Saskatchewan of 3.0 per cent. This is the third highest in the country.

In this budget, we also wanted to make sure that we maintain our momentum in eliminating the infrastructure deficit that has built up over many years prior to us forming government, Mr. Speaker. To that end, this year we will spend 632 million on capital expenditures across the province. That is the third largest amount ever budgeted for capital in Saskatchewan. It will bring the total amount invested in infrastructure since we were elected to almost \$3 billion, Mr. Speaker. Also, Mr.

Speaker, a key part of our infrastructure strategy was to maximize the amount of federal dollars available for projects. So we will be spending 177 million on municipal infrastructure in this budget, an increase of 30 per cent. And we know just how important those dollars are to municipalities, especially as our communities continue to grow throughout the province.

We have more people living in the province than ever before. After years of decline under the NDP, we are seeing Saskatchewan's expatriates coming home to new job opportunities, and we are also welcoming new residents from across the country and from across the world. In my own constituency, Mr. Speaker, I've witnessed that growth first-hand. And I'm proud to say that, since we became government in 2007, there are now more than 1,500 new postal addresses in Regina Wascana Plains.

With that population growth, our municipalities of course are seeing a rising demand for services. Our government is working to assist municipalities in funding those new and expanding services. We saw it last year in Regina through a number of programs: the historic 25.9 million in revenue sharing in 2009-10, an increase of 64.5 per cent from 2007-2008, an increase of over \$10 million in two years; 19.5 million through the municipal economic enhancement program. You may remember, Mr. Speaker, that the municipal economic enhancement program was a per capita funding agreement with municipalities to make local infrastructure improvements. It was intended to get infrastructure projects moving quickly to stimulate the economy and help municipalities deal with the infrastructure deficit. And I believe that that program absolutely succeeded in doing just that.

Four Recreational Infrastructure Canada or RInC projects for just over 1.5 million in provincial funding; 750,000 for Leibel Field — and this is just in Regina — Leibel Field upgrades; 300,000 for YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] renovation; 190,000 for the Broad Street pedestrian bridge and trail improvements; \$283,666 for Wascana Rehabilitation Centre playground improvements; \$300,000 through urban development agreements for the development and revitalization of Regina City Square.

Regina also received 43.1 million borrowing approval to provide water, waste water, and drainage for the global transportation hub through the Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative. And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to talk just a minute here about the global transportation hub. This is one of the most important projects Regina has seen in decades. When Loblaw starts operating its distribution centre later this year, it's going to create approximately 750 jobs, Mr. Speaker. And this budget continues to support that project with a \$26 million investment from the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also continues our government's commitment to public safety by increasing the number of police officers in the province. There will be 30 more police officers in our province this year, part of our commitment of 120 new police officers in our first term of government. The members opposite of course promised and never got it done. In addition we are also providing \$700,000 in municipal policing grants for continued support of our specialized officers who deal with issues such as gang activity or Internet crime.

This year's 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 forward-looking. This move is forward-looking, and that will help ease future doctor shortages. As well, Mr. Speaker, funding of 3.5 million will continue the implementation of the physician recruitment strategy and agency. We are planning for the future of health care in our province, but we are also addressing the needs of today with these two initiatives.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I know that a very important topic for the people of Regina Wascana Plains has been the availability of autism services. And with this budget creating \$2.5 million in new funding — new funding, Mr. Speaker, to enhance autism services — I think we've taken a huge step forward in how we deal with this disorder. Kim Kelln-Kennedy, whose 7-year-old son Tate is autistic, is indeed happy with our decision. And I think she summed it up very well the other day: "In the last two years this has been really big steps." Two and a half years ago, Tate was on a waiting list, but extra autism funding has gotten him the service he has so rightly deserved.

And another important point for the people of my constituency has been the chiropractic services. Our government had to make a difficult choice on this issue. We decided to take a responsible approach, and that was in line with what most other provinces in Canada do, and continue to insure low-income earners under family and supplementary health benefit programs.

Mr. Speaker, there are also a lot of students in Regina Wascana Plains constituency. In this budget, our government is taking steps to invest in post-secondary education and innovation to prepare our young people for their bright future. We are increasing the operating grant to our post-secondary institutions by 16.3 million to help hold down tuition increases. We are also enhancing the student support programs by 1.8 million. That includes the lowering of the interest rate paid by students. Interest rates will now be reduced to prime on repayable loans. As well, funding for the graduate retention program will increase by 4.3 million for total funding of 23 million.

Our government recognizes that we cannot move our province forward without the youth. That is why we're investing so much in them, in their future, in their education. This is because some day soon these young people are going to be leading a province that is the envy of the country. And you know something, Mr. Speaker? I don't think we hear the term brain drain very often in our province any more.

**An Hon. Member:** — Brain gain.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Brain gain I think is what my friend has stated because young people see the promise that our province holds and the opportunities that are right here today.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address some of the changes being made by SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] or Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming relating to the provincial budget. Effective April 1, SLGA is making changes to its markup structure. If you recall, our government made this announcement on budget day. This will result in some changes to consumers. A 750 millilitre bottle of spirits or a 26 ounce

will cost an additional 50 cents. A 40 ounce bottle will go up approximately 75 cents, and a dozen bottled beer will see an increase of 75 cents or a little more than 6 cents a bottle. The changes to the markup structure will also strengthen SLGA's existing social reference pricing by establishing minimum prices based on the amount of alcohol contained in a product. These measures are intended to help reduce the overconsumption of products with a high alcohol content.

As I mentioned, these changes will take effect April 1 and will boost SLGA's overall net income which in turn supports the government's General Revenue Fund and important priorities like health care, education, and infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, even though prices are increasing slightly, I would like to point out — and I think it's important to point out — that Saskatchewan's prices for beverage alcohol will still remain competitive with other jurisdictions, and less than Alberta's average prices. That was one of the changes relating to SLGA.

[20:00]

Another change, Mr. Speaker, relates to the charitable gaming grant program. This is a program that provides groups, community groups and organizations, with a grant equal to 25 per cent of the net revenues they raise from licensed charitable gaming activities. These activities include bingos, break-open ticket sales, raffles, Texas hold'em poker tournaments, and Monte Carlo events. The program is being amended slightly to provide for a maximum of \$100,000 on the amount of grant received annually per organization. This change will affect less than 1 per cent of the 2,000 groups, Mr. Speaker, and organizations that receive grants each year.

Mr. Speaker, we know the grant program continues to be well received by volunteer organizations across the province. Groups that receive the quarterly grants include cadets, Scouts, Girl Guides, 4-H clubs, community associations, seniors' associations, service clubs, volunteer fire departments, and so on. Our government is proud to be able to provide these groups with a grant that allows them to continue to support the many worthwhile projects and services that make Saskatchewan communities strong. Mr. Speaker, those are two of the items announced by SLGA on budget day.

In general, Mr. Speaker, SLGA is predicting a busy year at Saskatchewan retail outlets for 2010 and 2011. Saskatchewan's growing population and strong economy are expected to once again contribute to robust liquor sales, and we know that Saskatchewan's retail system will continue to meet the needs of its customers. Saskatchewan's liquor retailing system is a mix of public and private businesses: 79 are government owned; approximately 189 small, private businesses in rural Saskatchewan that retail beverage alcohol for the government; approximately 500 private businesses which include off-sale outlets such as hotels and brew pubs; and two specialty wine stores in Saskatchewan.

The new specialty wine stores opened with news releases and with great success . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. Opened over the past year and complement SLGA's existing liquor stores, serving a niche market and providing enhanced customer services for Saskatchewan consumers. The stores — one is in

Saskatoon and one is in Regina — address a growing segment of SLGA customers who were looking for specialty products not available within the general listings carried at SLGA liquor stores.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight some of the other good things going on at SLGA. In November SLGA launched a new reusable bag for sale in its 79 liquor stores across the province. The new bag was the result of interest from customers who were looking for a reusable bag that can handle the bottle products more easily. Since its launch, the reusable bags have proven very popular, and in fact there are only a fraction of the original 50,000 bags left. Stay tuned for a new design coming this spring, and I know we'll all stand by with bated breath.

Flipping over to the gaming side of SLGA, Mr. Speaker, we recently launched a program called Know the Score. This interactive, problem-gambling awareness program engaged university and college students in a fun and informative way and focuses on raising awareness about the real chances of winning and losing, signs of problem gambling, problem gambling services in the province, and ways to keep gambling safer. The program is funded by SLGA and delivered by the Responsible Gaming Council. And by the time the Saskatchewan tour wraps up at the end of March, it will have visited six post-secondary institutions across the province, and the reviews from the students and universities and colleges have been very positive.

Mr. Speaker, another awareness program we're proud . . . that was launched in Saskatoon just over two weeks ago, on March 19th, SLGA recently partnered with SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], Saskatoon Police Service, MADD [Mothers Against Drunk Driving], SADD [Students Against Drunk Driving], and Rawlco Radio to launch the Report Impaired Drivers initiative. Report Impaired Drivers, or RID as it is called, is a crime prevention campaign that encourages residents to call 911 to report a suspected impaired driver. In support of the program, SLGA's Saskatoon liquor stores are distributing RID promotional material to its customers. The program allows the public to assist Saskatoon law enforcement to help in the removing of impaired drivers from our roads. The program also serves as a warning to motorists that there are many more eyes out there watching their actions than just that of the police. SLGA has also asked Saskatoon's approximately 300 liquor permitted franchises to help spread the word by displaying RID posters in their bars and lounges.

I would like to talk a minute about the other ministry I'm responsible for, Mr. Speaker, which is Government Services.

It's exciting. The average person in Saskatchewan does not deal with the Ministry of Government Services on a day-to-day basis. But the work of government would not be able to happen without the hard work of our employees. Government Services leases or owns 741 buildings across our province. We manage the government vehicle fleet of approximately 5,000 vehicles. We manage the government's air fleet that includes three aircraft for the province's air ambulance service which, incidentally, flew over 800 million miles last year, as well as three aircraft for executive air services. Beyond that, Government Services process about 26 million pieces of mail per year and tenders about \$135 million in goods per year.

And as we look to find efficiencies — and every ministry in this government was expected to find efficiencies, Mr. Speaker — in the way government does business, in the way services are provided, Government Services is right on the front lines. One of the largest changes we have made to government, in regards to government office space . . . Previously there was no standard for government working space, which means the work space in government offices currently ranges anywhere from 18 to 27 square metres per employee.

Now stand by. I'm going to tell you what the rest of it is here. We are bringing in a standard across the government of 18.6 square metres, which is going to result in a much smaller footprint for government. That also means government will be leasing less office space. It will take some time as this works through the system and as we make this change in office space, but it means in the long term that we are going to save taxpayers' dollars.

We are finding efficiencies in a variety of other areas as well, Mr. Speaker. One of those is in our cleaning service. We looked at our cleaning standards and realized that we could make more efficient use of our staff's cleaning time. This is going to save us thousands of work hours over the next year and save taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Another of those efficiencies in our ministry was in our mail service. Since Government Services works primarily with other government ministries, our services rise and fall to meet the demands of government. We re-evaluated our service and realized that with some minimal changes, Mr. Speaker, we could achieve some fairly significant savings.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, with this budget our government has set a path for a balanced, forward-looking, and responsible future. I want to once again thank our Finance minister and his officials for having put together a forward-looking budget that is going to deliver results for the people of our province. Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to stand in this legislature and support the strong, balanced, forward-looking, responsible budget of our government for 2010 and 2011. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — [Inaudible] . . . Mr. Speaker, thanks very much. It's interesting starting up at this point, Mr. Speaker, because following the member from Regina Wascana Plains, it's interesting today, you know, just hearing her speech right now.

She went on at length about the new bags that are being offered by Sask Liquor and Gaming. And you know, this in and of itself is a fine thing, Mr. Speaker, a fine thing. But for her to go on at length about it and then to go on at length about the savings they're finding in Government Services . . . And the one thing she didn't talk about, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that we're getting calls today from different community groups that have been using the central vehicle authority to help defray their costs. And . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Why is the member from

Yorkton on his feet?

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — To ask for leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Yorkton has asked leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce some guests here tonight in your gallery. They're all attending here tonight. They're from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints here in Regina, Mr. Speaker.

A friend of ours and one of my researchers, Steve Ellingson, is with them and I'd like to . . . I've never introduced Stephen before, a very valuable member of our team. And with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints here today is B. Alvon Tondevoid — if you guys just want to wave as I say your names — Braden Henrie, Kendal Henrie, David Kydd, Sister Drake, Crystal Gail Horning, Kayla Anne Beamer. If I mispronounce one of these names, I apologize: Alicia Miller, Georgina Majetich, Samantha Hermann, J. Charles Stewart, Elder Tieken, Elder Farr, Anthony W. Worfolk, Amelia Henrie, Stephen Hermann, Mackenzie Wilson, Kristin Hawkes, and Chuck E. Fisher. I'd ask — I think I've got everybody — I'd ask all members to welcome these young people to their Assembly.

## SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Gantfoer that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.]

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. But to return to my point about the member's speech, and I guess I find it symbolic of a number of things that this government does, that this government coming forward with statements that are less than fulsome, Mr. Speaker, statements that are less than representative of the truth.

Again you know, we've had a nice speech about the bags that have been brought forward in Sask Liquor and Gaming and how it's good to have recycling bags and how enthusiastically this has been received. But the minister doesn't talk about a policy change in her department that has a huge impact on community groups right across this province. And we've got the member from Yorkton just got up to introduce some

students, and I join him in that welcome.

But you know, on the one hand we've got the member that did a summit with community-based organizations, and then we've got a minister that gets up and neglects to mention to the House that they've cut the access to central vehicle authorities for a multitude of community groups across this province. And of course, Mr. Speaker, we don't have the details on this yet. We just have the people calling in saying, you know, this has been dropped on us. We're trying to do the best we can with the small bottom lines that we've got, the small amounts of funding that we've got.

And again we know that the budget overall was increased one per cent for CBOs [community-based organization]. That's not going to be enough to keep up with the cost of living. But what we find out today from different groups is that they've cut off access to the CVAs [central vehicle agency] which they've been using for transport.

And to give you a picture of what this means, Mr. Speaker, this means that for, say, example one of the Aboriginal Head Start programs or one of the KidsFirst programs that operates within my constituency — a very valuable program, Mr. Speaker, a program that works with families that are at risk, that works prenatally to make sure that you have the healthiest baby possible, that works in a very culturally sensitive way, Mr. Speaker, that partners with any number of community groups throughout the city — one of the things that they depend on in terms of getting the kids to those programs is transportation. And up until now, Mr. Speaker, that transportation has been provided in partnership with Government Services and SPM [Saskatchewan Property Management], before that through the CVAs, through the government-owned vans that go around the neighbourhood, pick up those kids, get them off to that program, and help them with that early childhood development which is so critical.

And you have this minister stand up and give this lengthy speech that's been no doubt written for her by her staff, and she neglects to mention this. In the grand scheme of things, probably not a lot of money, Mr. Speaker, but something that is absolutely critical for a multitude of community-based organizations throughout this province.

And again, we're just starting to get the picture of what this entails, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the groups throughout the inner city of Regina that are impacted by this. We're getting a pretty good picture of that already. And, Mr. Speaker, the other sort of details we get that they're not going to stand up and beat their chests about.

[20:15]

You know I had a phone call from a group that does adult basic education in the inner city today. And these are people that have come back as adults because they want to make a better life for themselves, a better life for their children, and they're working in programs that have had a lot of success over the years. And we find out today that some of these programs have had to beg for their funding to be extended till graduation is here, Mr. Speaker. So that these students that have struggled and gone back to school to better their lives and make a better situation

for themselves and their families and that benefits the whole of society . . . These programs had to beg to have their funding continued to graduation.

And you don't hear that in their speeches over there, Mr. Speaker. And I guess it's hard to take them at face value when they can't, they can't stand up and own up to the things like that, how the mistakes that they've made in terms of the budget, how this is impacting people on the ground. It's business as usual over there, Mr. Speaker. It's this carrying on with this . . . you know, everything is happy. We'll talk about the recycling bags at SLGA, but we won't talk about how community-based organizations will have a bigger struggle getting kids to programming that will have an invaluable effect on their lives.

So they get up and they carry on with the don't worry, be happy line and the smiley faces. And it's hard to take them for real, Mr. Speaker. You know we hear about the wonders of the Saskatchewan economy, that they like to return to again and again. And I've got a graph here. I've got a graph here, Mr. Speaker, that sums up the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay, we've got somebody over there talking about how we're always about doom and gloom.

So I'd like to ask them, you know, what measure of the Saskatchewan prosperity has been there for the Social Services caseloads that have been climbing month over month for the past year? You know, Social Services caseloads growing month over month over the past year? So . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well we've got a graph based on the minister's own statistics, so perhaps she can get up and enlighten us in her speech about how the doom and gloom has been dispelled by the wonders of the Sask Party government. Or maybe she can tell us about how the new money that's in there for social assistance is there because the caseloads have grown. Maybe she could tell us about that, Mr. Speaker. But she won't.

She'll spend all this time talking about, you know, how great they are. They'll spend their time patting themselves on the back. But when it comes to benefiting the people that are out there that are in real difficulty, Mr. Speaker, that are struggling with higher rent, that are struggling with higher utility rates, that are struggling to put bread on the table, that are going to food banks in greater numbers than ever, Mr. Speaker . . . you know, will we hear about that from those members opposite? We won't hear a darn thing from those members opposite. We'll hear about how great things are.

So when it comes to the impacts that are being felt on the ground by different organizations . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I'd ask the members if they want to have a private debate, if they would either meet in the halls or behind the bar and allow the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre to make his speech. I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. And again it's hard to take these members seriously when the story is so incomplete, and it's just so much propaganda.

And again we've seen last year, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite talk about how last year's budget was the greatest of all time and the greatest in the universe and different things like that. And again you know, the story of the year played out, and the real numbers started to come in. And then by the mid-term, it was clear that this government had put the province into serious jeopardy, serious jeopardy, Mr. Speaker.

And the problem with that is of course if it was just them that paid the price for that, there'd be some kind of justice in that. There'd be some kind of equalling out of the responsibility for this mess, Mr. Speaker. But it's not them that pays the price. It's the people that are on the growing Social Services caseloads that pay the price. It's the people that are trying to get their kids to early childhood development programs that now have to figure out how they get the transportation sorted out.

It's the community-based organizations that are already out there working on very tight margins, Mr. Speaker, that have an even harder time to work on this than ever. And I guess it's, you know, where to start with the ironies and the hypocrisies, Mr. Speaker.

You know, one of the community-based organizations that's had their GED [general equivalency diploma] program cut and that they had to beg for it to be continued has been used at different occasions in the past couple of years, Mr. Speaker, by that government over there for photo ops. And again when it comes to the photo ops, we know that the members over there are quite happy to come out with the cameras and you know smile and wave and get their picture and then take off.

But when it comes time to stand by these programs to support them, in terms of the front-line work that they're really doing, they get cut in the budget. Or you know, so you look at different things like the \$280,000 that was cut from Aboriginal education K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] from the Department of Education. Or you look at the community solutions program that was cut out of the Department of Education that is having a bad impact on different child care centres throughout the inner city in Regina. And again you don't hear anything about it from the members opposite in their speech. All you hear is that everything is great. But this has worn thin to the point of embarrassing for those people opposite.

There's a reality on the ground that those folks are so out of touch with, Mr. Speaker, that it's a wonder that they continue to get up in this House and make the kind of speeches they do. But I guess once they're in motion, they tend to stay in motion, Mr. Speaker. There's some kind of inertia that's seized the Saskatchewan Party over there. They can't recognize what's happening on the ground, so they've got to keep rolling right along with their . . . You know, you mention any of these things, and you're somehow a purveyor of doom and gloom.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not the reality on the ground. It's not the reality in housing, Mr. Speaker. You know, in Regina we've got a point seven per cent vacancy rental rate, and the impact that that's having on families and the kind of squalor that people are having to put up with because they're scared if they speak up about the places they're living in, then the terrible place they're living in is better than no place at all.

Or we can talk about the food bank caseloads and the fact that there was no help on the way in this budget for those people and the tremendous work that they do. And you know, again we've had all kinds of fancy speeches over the years from the members opposite on these scores. But when push comes to shove in this budget, when it comes time to pay for their mistakes, when it comes time to pay for the fact that . . . You know, we should I guess be thankful that they didn't take the member from Kindersley's advice on the potash projections and go 3 billion instead of 2 billion.

But any time you've got people saying just don't worry, be happy, you know, that's the most frightening thing of all, Mr. Speaker, in politics because you know that there's some kind of sham going on. You know that there's some kind of ruse being played.

So in terms of the way that this budget impacts people, we see more of the same in this budget, Mr. Speaker. We see numbers that are lowballed. The health . . . I guess we'll wait for the midterm to get the real picture on what happens with this budget or perhaps the third quarter or perhaps the fourth quarter, Mr. Speaker, because in terms of what's happening in health care, in terms of education, in terms of the way that they've played with the accounting principles of this budget and changed their horses midstream on that, Mr. Speaker, we know that there's going to be a big impact on the health care workers in terms of the settlements that are outstanding. We know that the teachers are outstanding. And neither of those things have been worked into the budgetary projections. Can you believe that, Mr. Speaker? I know you've seen a lot of things in this Chamber, but it's hard to believe.

And it's following on the heels of a budget last year that was \$1 billion in deficit. So you know, right off the top, they're owing up to a \$622 million deficit off the top. And I'll bet you this, Mr. Speaker . . . and I hope this bet proves wrong because again, if it proves right, it's yet another terrible thing happening to the finances of this province and then the way that that plays out into normal people's lives. But that \$622 million deficit, on a summary basis right now, we'll see where that's at, at the year. We think it's going to go to another billion.

You know what? I don't know if they're the billion dollar babies over there, Mr. Speaker, but \$1 billion deficit one year, \$1 billion deficit the next year, and then we'll see what other kind of terrible, terrible cuts they have to impose on people next year, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I hate, I hate to be this negative, Mr. Speaker, because there are good things in this budget. There are good things in this budget. But in terms of seeing the way that announcements don't necessarily translate into real action or real impact on people's lives, even those things that look good on the surface, Mr. Speaker, it makes you feel like a fool to sit there and to salute whatever good has been done. You know, in terms of . . . I hope to goodness that the money's been put out there for autism. I hope that has an impact because those families, they need that support, they need that help. But if that \$2.5 million doesn't translate into action, of course, we'll be there to call them on it, Mr. Speaker. If the monies that has been put there for additional police officers don't translate into police officers, we'll be there to call them on it. But on the face of it,

these things look good.

But I guess you know, Mr. Speaker, on the face of it, things like long-term care centres, those look good. The surgical care centre for Regina, that looked good. And now we find out that they're going to find some efficiencies by operating some kind of private runaround with the system. And in terms of what that does to the health care system, Mr. Speaker, we've seen this play out in other jurisdictions. We've seen the impact that it's had in other jurisdictions, and it hasn't been good for this system, and it certainly hasn't been good for the patients that those people over there claim they want to put first.

You know, we've seen them beat their chests about the children's hospital and then defer it and then defer it some more. We've seen them play some games with the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford and then play some more games. We see something with what's happened in Moose Jaw in terms of the hospital there and the games that they continue to play.

So, Mr. Speaker, they can make a lot of great announcements, but we wait for these things to actually show up because when it comes to trusting these guys on that path from announcement to reality, they like to take a whole lot of detours, Mr. Speaker. And again, in terms of the budgeting of this outfit opposite, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the budgeting, again we know that they can make these announcements in the budget and they can talk about how it's the greatest budget of all time and the greatest budget in the universe and on and on and on with the self-congratulation and the back-patting, Mr. Speaker.

But then of course the numbers come in. The cheques come due, Mr. Speaker. The bills need to get paid. And then we find out that things are getting deferred, and they're going to be put off into the future because they can't run the books. And again, Mr. Speaker, that's bad enough in and of itself. But we always have to remember that when the government can't manage its finances, it's the people that pay the price. So again even the things that look good being announced in this budget, we wait very anxiously and with a great deal of concern to see how they play out in real life, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say a few things about First Nations and Métis Relations in this budget, Mr. Speaker. You know, in the question period before the budget, Mr. Speaker, we'd asked about the Aboriginal employment development program and the Premier said, you know, stay tuned, there's going to be . . . you know, we'll have lots more to say about it in the budget speech. And the only thing they had to say about it in the budget speech, Mr. Speaker, the only thing that they touched on with regards to First Nations and Métis people . . . Métis people didn't get mentioned at all, not once, Mr. Speaker. Métis people didn't get mentioned. What did get mentioned was, in passing, the impact that the tobacco control measures of this government, they're going to have on First Nations. And so that was their big centrepiece for First Nations and Métis people in this budget. You know, it's more than passing strange.

In fact the Premier had more to say about First Nations the week before when he was announcing his move on tobacco in front of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. And of course, you know, he had the guts to get up in front of the

chamber of commerce to make this announcement and then to talk about how he was going to work in partnership . . . [inaudible] . . . and how he was going to consult. Well I guess, Mr. Speaker, we on this side would like them to table that record of consultation. We would like to see what they've done internally to consult, to see if that First Nations and Métis Relations minister is actually earning his paycheque over there.

And we'd also like to see the legal opinions upon which they've launched this initiative because there's some pretty interesting arguments out there, Mr. Speaker, that the authority by which they're proceeding in this endeavour is highly suspect. And again this is not unlike the Sask Party to go out for the cheap applause line, to go out to make sure something gets turned into a communications exercise, but it turns out they haven't really thought it through or they haven't asked for the advice from the officials.

[20:30]

So we await the tabling of legal opinions that back them up in their ability to even do this. And we wait to see how they square what they've done with the fact that they've, you know, quite happily proclaimed that we're all treaty people and that the duty to consult and accommodate is so very important. You know, if that was true, Mr. Speaker, would this have proceeded like that? And I don't think it would have.

I think announcing something to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce that affects First Nations in this province, I think there's some kind of . . . I think there's a profound disrespect involved in that, Mr. Speaker. And I think when, before Christmas when that government made announcements through the press about the impact that their fiscal mess was going to have on revenue sharing with the municipalities, when they made those announcements through the press, the Premier wound up getting to the SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] convention, and he apologized to the SUMA delegates, as well he should have because they're an order of government, they're a partner in this province, and that's not how you treat partners.

So I guess, Mr. Speaker, I'll be waiting to see when the Premier comes forward with an apology to First Nations for his approach to consultation and his approach to working in good faith on something that . . . again we wait to see what their authority is in this matter in the first place, Mr. Speaker. But I perhaps will go on and wait for that.

I guess the next thing I'd like to speak about, Mr. Speaker, concerns the Aboriginal employment development program. This past weekend, we had our convention. It was a very successful affair, Mr. Speaker, a lot of folks from around the province that are thirsting for change from what the Sask Party was putting on the table. And one of the things that came forward as an emergency resolution deals directly with the whole question of Aboriginal employment development.

And I want to quote this resolution. I want to read this resolution into the record, Mr. Speaker, just to draw it to the attention of the House and to draw to the attention of the House the outrage that a very sizable, broad section of Saskatchewan people feel at the destruction of a valuable program. The first

whereas states:

One of the most important challenges facing Saskatchewan is the need to better engage First Nations and Métis people in the social and economic life of this province; and

Whereas the Aboriginal development program has played and should continue to play a valuable role in taking on this challenge; and

Whereas since its establishment in 1995, nearly 5,000 First Nations and Métis people have been hired directly, 40,000 people have received cultural awareness training, and over 2,000 who have work-based skills training; and

Whereas 111 AEDP agreements have signed bringing together unions and businesses, employers and employees, communities, First Nations and Métis people; and

Whereas AEDP fights racism and fights it very effectively; and

Whereas the \$786,000 investment in AEDP leverages about \$1 million in federal funding each year; and

Whereas the Saskatchewan Party government unilaterally killed the Aboriginal employment development program in the provincial budget of Wednesday, March 24, 2010;

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party condemns, in the strongest possible terms, this attack on efforts to better include First Nations and Métis people in the social and economic life of Saskatchewan by killing the Aboriginal employment development program; and

Be it further resolved that the Saskatchewan NDP calls for the restoration of funding to the AEDP and for further investment and expansion of efforts to enable First Nations and Métis people to take their rightful place in the social and economic life of Saskatchewan.

Now this was moved by the president of the Aboriginal New Democrats, Mr. Speaker, and by one of the most prominent labour leaders in this province. And these are people that, in the case of the individual who is our president, have seen the impact of this in terms of his peers and in terms of the labour leader, representing a union that has participated in this program in a good faith basis, and has become a real believer and champion in this program.

And the thing that I find hard to believe, Mr. Speaker, is that when you scan the list of the partnerships that have been signed which — you know, up until the budget speech, Mr. Speaker — was available on the government website in both alpha and in chronological order . . . But of course all this has disappeared, you know, the moment they started reading the budget. But you look at the different First Nations that have been involved. You look at the different Catholic school boards, the different public school boards. You look at the Métis locals. You look at the chambers of commerce. You look at the private businesses. You

look at the municipalities. You look at, you know, Cumberland College, SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies]. In some of these cases, Mr. Speaker, there are deals that have been put together that involve upwards of half a dozen groups.

And this has been a successful program. You know it's less than a million dollars in funding. It levers, you know, for every dollar it levers more than a dollar from the feds, and this government kills it. You know, is the better engagement of First Nations and Métis people in the economic life of this province, in the social life of this province, is that a serious challenge for this province or not? If it is, then these are the things you back. These are the . . . you know, if there are problems that they had with the program, then come forward with the solutions. But what they've come forward with instead, Mr. Speaker, is to take, you know, 111 deals that have been worked on since 1995 and tear them up.

And they sent a letter out, Mr. Speaker, to all of the partners on March 24th, and I'm going to quote from that letter. This letter is over the signature of the deputy minister of First Nations and Métis Relations. There's the opening, you know, 2010-11 budget today:

While a new direction for Aboriginal employment and economic engagement evolves, the government has terminated the Aboriginal employment development program. Current Aboriginal development partnership agreements are no longer valid.

No longer valid, Mr. Speaker. I want to underline that. All these deals that have gone before, the 111 deals that have been signed with a myriad of different community partners, are no longer valid. "Anticipated agreements will not be entered into and funding supports are not available." I scan down a bit into the letter, Mr. Speaker. "The ministry will no longer be supporting Aboriginal employment directly." Now isn't that an odd thing for the lead government ministry on First Nations and Métis issues to say, "The ministry will no longer be supporting Aboriginal employment directly"?

And I guess I want to quote from what the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations had to say on budget day because I think it displays the kind of ignorance and lack of understanding that led to this decision, Mr. Speaker. Okay, where are we here? Okay. So in regards to the cuts to the Aboriginal employment development program, the minister: "Yes, AEDP is actually probably the easiest way to remember it." I'm glad that he's got an easy device by which to remember it, Mr. Speaker.

Reporter:

They've cut the funding. Is that sort of rolled over to the CIC \$3 million program? Was it a case of duplication? Is that why they cut the program out of the First Nations and Métis Relations?

The minister:

Well first of all what we can mention is that there are three million new dollars that have been included in this budget specifically to help First Nations with their



economic development aspirations too, so we'll be happy to chat with Chief Guy Lonechild and his colleagues at FSIN and other stakeholders, the tribal councils and the First Nations, to find out how this new amount of money might be best invested.

So that's three million new dollars that we didn't have before the budget. The AEDP, this program was started many years ago. A lot of the impetus was to try to encourage corporations, municipalities, all kinds of large employers to do a better job in achieving representative workforces.

Let's imagine for example that you lived in a community where the Aboriginal population was 10 per cent and you only had two or perhaps three per cent of an Aboriginal workforce. Would you like to do better? We'd be happy to encourage you [Mr. Speaker] and we brought funding to the table. We think that a lot of the groundwork has been done now. We also know that we are able to encourage employers, municipalities, banks, credit unions, all the larger companies to do this simply by providing them access to the resources.

We already have those resources. We can provide them to them without actually paying them to do it. These people have money of their own. They have their own resources [and this is the critical part, Mr. Speaker] they're simply asking for the right insight, the right experience, and we're delighted to be able to provide it so all that kind of effort will still move ahead.

Close the quote, Mr. Speaker. So what's so enlightening about that quotation, Mr. Speaker? Well the expertise is in the Aboriginal employment development program which he just finished being delighted about how it had been cut. It's not a massive expenditure of money, Mr. Speaker. It's \$786,000. It levers more than that from the feds, but they cut it, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly where the expertise is situated. That's exactly where the people who have been bringing together labour force need with educational institutions, with the people that can fill those needs to do some very successful things in terms of Aboriginal employment. There's the Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy, in 2007 did an evaluation of AEDP for the Human Resources Skills Development Canada, for the feds. And what they said about AEDP was that was a best practice in Aboriginal engagement and employment for the country, Mr. Speaker.

One of our neighbours right now is currently embarking on this very approach to better engaging First Nations and Métis people in the economy. But they cut it, Mr. Speaker, and for the life of me I can't understand why. I can't understand why, Mr. Speaker. You know, they cut it on the one hand, and they offer up some, some vague promise on the other in terms of monies that had been reallocated.

But again, Mr. Speaker, we've seen that even when they announce money. It's one thing to have that announcement. It's another thing to actually get to it. And in terms of the \$3 million that they've announced for economic development for First Nations out of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan], again, Mr. Speaker, he's going to go out there

and chat with the First Nations. You know, I'd suggest to him that when he should have been chatting was before the budget about what they were doing on tobacco control and how that impacts First Nations in terms of their autonomy or their authority under the constitution, you know. Or you know, they want to talk about the health concerns involved in tobacco. Fair enough, Mr. Speaker. Fair enough. But perhaps they could also talk about the other health afflictions that are facing First Nations people.

But again there's the cut on the one hand, Mr. Speaker, and the light in the window on the other side. So it's like they've got . . . you know, this way we'll have something to say when we're in the scrum, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of it having a real impact, you know, we know how that works out, Mr. Speaker.

The one thing I will give them credit for in this budget, Mr. Speaker, is the \$1.4 million that they put into the Clarence Campeau Development Fund. And again it's a budget that has a track record, has, you know, their own delivery for it in terms of the Métis Nation, a corporation that has been doing good work. So we're glad to see that that \$1.4 million goes into that. But even then, Mr. Speaker, it's always on the one hand this and on the other hand.

This budget represents the wrapping up of the First Nations and Métis business development program. So the million-plus that they cut from that over the past three years of their existence, you know, is that balanced out by, on the one hand, this vague \$3 million in CIC and, you know, by the 1.4 million in Clarence Campeau? Well we'll see, Mr. Speaker. To quote the member from Kindersley, we'll see. But if their track record is anything to judge them by, Mr. Speaker, you know, their approach to something like Aboriginal employment development I think tells the story of just the sort of bizarre decision making that goes on over there. And I think bizarre is a kind word for it, Mr. Speaker, because if they can't face one of the largest challenges facing this province with some more common sense than what they've shown, I don't know what's up for this province, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess, you know, the last thing I want to say about Aboriginal employment development at this juncture, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that, you know, over the past two budgets when there's been expansion in other departments, this has been a ministry that got cut. The only new money that went into this department was through the gaming framework agreement that we signed, that we built in partnership with First Nations. And but for those dollars, Mr. Speaker, that was it for new money going into the department. So they got cut in the two good budgets, so guess what happened this year? Well they got cut again.

And the thing that surprises me about Aboriginal employment development, Mr. Speaker, is that of the fewer and fewer things that those members opposite do in partnership with First Nations and Métis people out there in the community.

[20:45]

In 2008 when the member from Kelvington-Wadena was still the minister, that department, if you can use news releases as sort of an indication of a ministry's activity, the member from

Kelvington-Wadena when she was the minister had a total of 34 news releases. And you know, this also includes things like, congratulations, it's National Aboriginal Day. Or we're having a feast at the legislature; come on down. Of those 34 releases, Mr. Speaker, 12 of them related to the signing of Aboriginal employment development partnerships, so fully 35 per cent of the activity as represented through their website to the rest of the world was related to Aboriginal employment development.

Move forward to 2009, Mr. Speaker, and of course in the spring of that year we had a change of minister and the member from Regina South moved into the ministry. And I'm surprised he's not thumping his desk right now as he is so often wont to do. But the thing is about this, Mr. Speaker, he was even worse. Of the activity in the department, of the 21 news releases — and again this includes, you know, congratulations, it's going to be Year of the Métis, and congratulations, it's National Aboriginal Day — in terms of his news releases that he sent out, of the 21 news releases, 10 of those news releases were announcing the signing of Aboriginal employment development programs or partnerships, for 48 per cent of the activity as represented on that government's, on that ministry's website.

So what does this tell you, Mr. Speaker? Well it tells you that they like to sign deals. They like to have the signing ceremony. They like to have the big photo op. But when it comes time to backing up these programs and the real-life difference that it makes in people's lives, what happens? You know, when things are tough, you find out what the priorities are. And they cut it, of course, Mr. Speaker. They cut it.

I think one of my favourite sort of representations of this kind of hypocrisy is the signing of the 100th Aboriginal employment development partnership with IBM [International Business Machines Corporation]. It is the centrepiece of the big provincial action council on the representative workforce conference. And the smiling pictures that you can see on the web, Mr. Speaker, of this minister signing with officials from IBM and just, you know, how glad they were to be there for a photo op, but when it comes time to backing the program up, Mr. Speaker, what happens? They cut it.

One more thing I want to, or a couple more things I want to say about the program, Mr. Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** — Or you could wrap it up. I'm anxious to get up.

**Mr. McCall:** — Well I'm sure the member is, but if you'd . . . I'll make those members opposite a deal, Mr. Speaker. If they give us less to sit there and wonder what the heck they're doing, if they can do that for us, Mr. Speaker, we'll make for shorter speeches on this side of the House. How's about that?

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. I would like to remind the member that it would be appropriate to be very careful of how the member chooses his words. And I was listening earlier on and I've gone to Beaudesne's and I'm also going to ask the member to apologize for a comment made earlier.

Beaudesne's on page 145 uses the term "has not the guts" as unparliamentary, and the member made that comment in regard to, in relation to the Premier. I'd ask the member to stand and apologize. And I'd ask the member as he continues his speaking to be mindful of the words he's choosing. The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — I apologize and withdraw that remark, Mr. Speaker.

One of the other things I want to say about AEDP. This is from the 2007 Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy study that was done for the federal government, Mr. Speaker. There's an example cited in terms of the Aboriginal employment development program with the Prince Albert Health Region, where we spent the last weekend, Mr. Speaker. And I want to quote at length. This is from page 24 of that report.

One example was in the Prince Albert Health Region. They wanted to increase the numbers of Aboriginal people in the health workforce and worked in partnership with the Dumont Technical Institute and created a Licensed Practical Nursing program for Aboriginal people. It graduated 77 in the first year, with 100% employed.

And if I can say, Mr. Speaker, parenthetically, here's the thing:

Soon after the retention rates fell to almost 0%, so the partners came back and developed a cultural awareness package suited to the health workplace. After this training, delivered by the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the retention rate is up to 60% and climbing.

And this is the program they cut, you know? This is what makes these workplaces better for Aboriginal people. This is what makes us get along better in this province, in that critical workplace that we all share in some way, shape, or form, Mr. Speaker. So they cut Aboriginal employment development.

I want to just say one last thing on Aboriginal employment development, Mr. Speaker. And this was brought to our attention by one of the groups that have received the letter. And again I quote from the letter dated March 24th from the ministry, announcing that all these 111 partnerships were no longer valid and over the signature of the deputy minister in First Nations and Métis Relations: "Current Aboriginal employment development partnership agreements are no longer valid."

The contact that we've had from people that have been party to these agreements, the question that they raise is, what gives them the authority to do that, Mr. Speaker? These were multi-party agreements. They were signed by, you know, different parties in good faith, some of them by up to half a dozen parties representing municipalities and First Nations and Métis locals to name just a few, Mr. Speaker, private businesses.

Where does this government draw its right to tell them that their agreements are no longer valid? It's signal to the approach of this government in terms of, you know, not thinking through

what they're doing. And that's the most charitable way I can explain it, Mr. Speaker, because if you enter into a multi-party agreement in good faith, surely there's some kind of compunction to work in good faith if you are going to exit that agreement.

And surely those 111 different agreements and the groups that signed them, surely they would have something to say about, was it really about the photo op for these people, or was it about making a real difference in people's lives and in real workplaces across this province and in terms of better engaging First Nations and Métis people in the social and economic life of this province? I'll bet they've got something to say about it, Mr. Speaker, and I'll bet they'll have something to say about it more and more in the days ahead.

So again, if the government could explain for us instead of, you know, going on at length about how they've got . . . how great the uptake has been on the recycling bag program at the Sask Liquor and Gaming Authority, if they could spare us some of the lengthy diatribe that they go into about that, Mr. Speaker, and maybe tell us exactly how some of these things work and how it works out there in the real world. Because there are lot of people that signed these agreements and entered into them in good faith and worked in them and saw the positive impact that it's had, and they want to know, where does that government get the right to tell them that "Current Aboriginal employment development partnership agreements are no longer valid"?

You know, there's a strange combination of arrogance and foolishness involved in that, Mr. Speaker. A strange combination. So we wait to see what happens on that front.

I guess the last thing I want to say on this in terms of First Nations and Métis Relations at this stage of the game, Mr. Speaker, is regarding First Nations University. And last night I had the honour of attending the First Nations University powwow, the 32nd annual. This is an institution that a lot of people put their lives into, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, was our record perfect on it? It was not. It was not, Mr. Speaker. But did we work in good faith and in partnership with the institution and with First Nations and with educators and with the students to try and get it back on track after February 2005? We absolutely did, Mr. Speaker. And in terms of what's happened over the past two months, in terms of the miscommunication that's gone on, in terms of the different games that have been played with different of the actors in this, in this equation, we find alarming, Mr. Speaker. And I guess I want to say just very clearly that we are glad on this side of the House to see the province put their money back on the table. And we want to see that funding continued for this very important institution, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess the other thing we would like to see is that the province quite happily led the federal government out, and we are watching very closely to see what they're doing to lead the federal government back in. Federal dollars in Saskatchewan are, you know, too often hard to come by, Mr. Speaker. You'd think that would be different with the representation we have in the House of Commons, but that's not the case. So once federal dollars are taken out of this province and the 7.2 million that have been taken out by the federal government, we hope

full-heartedly, wholeheartedly to see that that funding is restored to make sure that this institution gets back on its feet.

There were problems there for sure, Mr. Speaker, but it's interesting to talk to the people that were in the trenches on this issue from day one in terms of some of the faculty, Mr. Speaker, and the kind of things that they fought for and endured and the questions that they had at different passes in terms of the actions of this government and the federal government.

But I'm not going to say anything more on it right now, Mr. Speaker, because I want to make sure that the deal gets signed . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And again the Minister for Advanced Education is yelling from his chair. And this is a minister who very happily used the students as some kind of media opportunity and then, you know, and made different undertakings to them that were not lived up to, but has continued to talk about how concerned he is about the students and, you know, to the point where the students came to the legislature, Mr. Speaker, with a letter saying how much they resented how fraudulently represented they were by the words of that minister. So why not? I guess I'll leave it at that, Mr. Speaker.

I wish that this university succeeds, I hope that this university succeeds, and I hope that they have partners working in good faith with them around the table, Mr. Speaker, good faith and respect. Because this institution is something that should be bringing this province together, not being used as a political punching bag and not being used as a photo opportunity for crass politicians that are out to get a gig. That's the last I'll say about that for now, Mr. Speaker.

In conclusion on the budget, Mr. Speaker, the different things that we see in this document, again we'll see how the numbers play out over the year to come. And again, with past being prologue, we worry mightily that what looks like bad news now is going to be disastrous news come the mid-term and that again we'll be into another round where the people pay the price for the mistakes of that government opposite.

So in terms of the numbers in this budget, we find them to be a — reflecting on the ruling that you delivered this afternoon, Mr. Speaker — we find them to be not a true statement. We find them to be not a true statement of the fiscal realities of this province. And we think that when the cheque comes due, there's going to be a price to pay and the terrible thing about that, Mr. Speaker, is that it won't be those people paying the price. It'll be the people of this province.

But we're going to fight from our side for that interest of the people. We're going to fight with our leader who stacks up very well against what passes for leadership across the way, Mr. Speaker. And you know, well I guess I'm getting a second wind in my speech here, Mr. Speaker. I've got a number of things that perhaps should get on the record here.

Okay. I guess just one other thing that is sort of particularly dumbfounding in this budget, Mr. Speaker, over the years there's been a lot of work and effort and, you know, creativity put into a very innovative sector of our economy. And we've got members on that side of the House that like to talk about an innovation economy. And what is not the film industry if but an

innovative, creative part of the economy?

We've got a member over there that likes to quote Richard Florida a lot. And, you know, you don't have to delve too deeply into Richard Florida to find out what kind of role that, say, the people attached to the film industry play in a creative economy and how that benefits a vibrant city or a vibrant culture, Mr. Speaker.

[21:00]

But in terms of the inaction that this government has displayed on making sure that the industry is competitive, in terms of the lack of action that they've taken in terms of making sure that the tax credit is processed appropriately so that you can get the cash in hand to finance deals, you know, that was the problem over the past two years, you know, and increasingly so. And you know again, Mr. Speaker, there has been a downturn in production, and what's telling though is that the reaction of other jurisdictions has been very different from our jurisdiction.

You know, we've got a government over there that won't take meetings, and when they do take meetings say, oh well, you know, wait for the budget. And then when the budget comes down it's like, well you know, that's the budget. You know? It's not working in partnership with an industry, Mr. Speaker. Again it displays some kind of weird mixture of arrogance and foolishness or foolhardiness that I don't quite understand, but that you see in a lot of the things that those people opposite do.

And in terms of the film industry, again members opposite were quite happy to trot around the set of *Corner Gas*, and whatever sort of photo ops they could weasel their way into, Mr. Speaker, you know, they're quite happy to do that. But when it came time to support the industry, what did they do? You know, it's almost like flash back 10 years to when we were having debates in this Chamber about the building of the sound stage. And we know that the members opposite were huge detractors of that project. But of course when it became a success, Mr. Speaker, then they were quite happy to show up on the set and try to pal around with Brent Butt and all of this.

So . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, well I hear one of the chief critics of the sound stage bellowing from his chair. You know, there's the guy that runs the witch hunts for the government over there. You know, this is the thing that's sort of odd, Mr. Speaker. When the members opposite go to the polls, they try to keep that member under his desk or far off the centre stage. And they want to have the member for Swift Current out there saying, no, no, no, we're a very moderate, reasonable bunch of people. You know, disregard all the things that the member from Wood River said over the years about the sound stage.

And they'll get up in front of the Arts Alliance at different conferences and say that no, no, no, we're very reasonable people. We read Richard Florida. We like the creative economy. But the actions of the members opposite, and certainly the words on the record from the members opposite, tell a very different story. So we find it not surprising at all, Mr. Speaker, that the words of someone like the member from Wood River a decade ago seemed to be catching up in this budget with the cutting of the Saskatchewan Communications Network.

And again, Mr. Speaker, if ever there was a case of, you know, penny-wise and pound foolish, it's this government writ large. Because in terms of the importance of the Saskatchewan Communications Network, in terms of being a pillar of this creative industry for this province, an industry that attracts a lot of young, creative people and that attracts people to this province from around the world, the importance of that industry or the importance of that institution to this industry has been made very clear by industry partners throughout the past few days.

And you'd think that they would have their own officials telling them that, Mr. Speaker. So if they're not telling them that, how does that work? And if they are telling them that, then why aren't they listening?

One of the last times they did an economic impact analysis of the broader spinoff of SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network] was in 2007-2008. And we asked the officials about this in the budget briefing, Mr. Speaker, the day that the budget was delivered. And the officials couldn't deliver any information on a broader analysis that had been done in terms of the multiplier effect of SCN and its importance to the film and video industry. You know, it was just this sort of straight dollars and cents, the straight jobs that are attached to it — that's it, that's all; no more, thank you very much.

And of course the last time that they did an economic analysis of the impact of SCN on the industry in terms of bringing dollars, not just from other partners in the province but from around the country and indeed throughout the world, it was a ratio of about 10 to 1. So for every \$1 that was spent, you got about 10 more dollars back in terms of economic activity.

So again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of is it, in this case, the arrogance that's driving this government or is it the foolishness, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to tell which. But we do know that there's an industry that has already had enough to deal with in terms of the action or the inaction of this government. And now, you know, when they need to be thrown a helping hand or reach out a helping hand, they get the anvil thrown on it.

So in terms of the young people that are contacting my office saying that, I'm going to leave the province, this is the government that likes to say, you know, with the brain gain. We had, you know, the previous speaker rattle on about the brain gain. Well how does this work for the brain gain in this province, Mr. Speaker, in terms of those young, creative people? And that they're also highly mobile, Mr. Speaker, so what does that do to an industry? What does that do to — you know, as the member from Greystone, I'm sure would talk about — the creative culture and a vibrant city and a vibrant economy? What does it do in that regard? Perhaps he could tell us in his speech when that comes up.

**An Hon. Member:** — You bet I will.

**Mr. McCall:** — Yes, I bet he will. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, in the meantime we've got people with real lives that are sitting here wondering what the heck they're going to do, how they see their career playing out in front of them in Saskatchewan. And they're very worried, Mr. Speaker. And the thing that we find hard to understand on this side of the House is that this is an

industry that's been a point of pride for the past 10 years.

And again, those members opposite, pretty quick to show up for the photo ops, pretty quick to show up for the palling around and the glad-handing. But when it comes time to have a real understanding of what the industry needs to survive and sustain, those members, you know, missing in action. Or maybe this is what the handful of people that actually make decisions over there have to say, so they'll trot out the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy to wear the decision of what the in-group over there has had to say.

Oh yes, the member from Wood River thinks this is very funny. He's just laughing it up at the efforts on his government's behalf to drive an industry out of this province. And I guess that's part and parcel of the contempt that will bring you down over there. You know, it will. If you want to be that arrogant and that sort of callous, there's a price that gets paid for that. And your day of reckoning is coming sooner and sooner every day.

So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, on this side we've got leadership that's got experience. And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, one of the great areas of experience for our leader was as deputy premier in the early '90s when this province was, you know, nearly put into bankruptcy by different of the members opposite, you know.

And we've heard the member from Kindersley talk about how the conservatives wear the pants over there, you know. So I think that figures in terms of the financial management approach that we've got over there — or the fiscal mismanagement approach, Mr. Speaker because in terms of the \$1 billion deficit last year; you know, second worst in the history of this province — and Lord only knows what's coming down the line this year, Mr. Speaker.

And again our leader was there to help put back the pieces together, help get the fiscal reputation of this province back in a place where our paper wasn't traded at junk status, you know. And again the members opposite, they can laugh it up all they want, but what they're doing over there, we had a decade of that kind of, Mr. Speaker, we had a decade of that kind of activity, Mr. Speaker.

And there was some terrible decisions that had to be made in 1991. And the members opposite are only getting a brief glimpse of what the kind of heartbreaking decisions that that government had to make at that time to clean up the mess of their ancestors opposite. And you know I guess the thing that's terrible about this, Mr. Speaker, is that the hard parts of this budget, they're all by their own hand. They're all by their own mismanagement.

So again on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be working for the people. We're going to be working with community. We're going to be working with our leader who's got a track record that speaks much more highly of itself than the fly-by-night web of fact that the member over there likes to put together in terms of what represents his CV [curriculum vitae]. So we'll stack our leaders up. We'll stack our caucuses up, you know. And again we're coming at you hard because the people of this province are having a hard enough time.

The member from Estevan asked if that's a threat. That's not a threat; it's a promise. It's a promise. We're going to criticize you for the things that you're doing that are hurting the lives of ordinary people. We're going to call you on it every step of the way. So if you think that we're just going to roll over and join the laugh-in that regularly goes on over there in terms of the decisions you're making . . . And, you know, who cares? We've got a comfortable seat in the back of the caucus room or, you know, at the cabinet room, but in terms of the impact on real people's lives, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be there fighting them every step of the way.

And that's why I'm going to be . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, okay. The member from Cannington is again yelping from his chair, Mr. Speaker. And again I'd ask them to look at their own health care record. I'd ask them to look at, I guess I'd ask him, how many long-term care facilities have you deferred, you know.

So again, Mr. Speaker, his record speaks for itself. And again I guess, you know, I wonder why he's such a bitter, sour person, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps it was being part of a party and a regime that nearly ruined this province. And again I guess if you're in this regime, and you're not even with it enough to stay in cabinet to continue on with the decisions, you know, I guess I would be bitter and sour too, Mr. Speaker.

But we're going to be fighting in terms of the interests of the people. We're going to be fighting for the interests of the people. And in this case, Mr. Speaker, this budget, there's no way that we can vote for it on this side. So to conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I'll be voting against this budget. I'll be voting for the amendment put forward by the opposition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Highways, the member from Rosetown-Elrose.

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to join in the debate on the 2010 provincial budget. Before I begin, Mr. Speaker, before I begin, Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out I'm not feeling well today — sore throat, head cold, not sure what I'm coming down with, Mr. Speaker.

So I was just going to mention, I mentioned to my good friend and colleague from Cut Knife-Turtleford that I wasn't feeling well. And he said, well why don't you sit out tonight and come back tomorrow? And I said, I'm afraid I'll be feeling even worse tomorrow. And he said, well rest assured I don't believe you could look any worse tomorrow. So it's good to have friends, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, speaking of friends, my friend and colleague from Weyburn-Big Muddy's anxious to get into the mix tonight, so I won't go very long. He's got some new glasses. He's going for that academic look, and he really wants to show everybody in TV land that. So I won't go near as long as my colleague opposite just did.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take you back to just a little over three years ago. It was November 13th, 2006, to be exact. Incidentally November 13th is my parent's anniversary that night, and it was also my nomination night, Mr. Speaker. It was

a big night for me. The Rosetown Civic Centre was packed to capacity and then some. And I remember the speech I made that night. I'd given it a lot of thought leading up to the event, and I wanted to speak about the reasons that I had decided to run. And there was two main reasons, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, the NDP's complete disdain and lack of respect for rural Saskatchewan. I grew up in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I spent my career in rural Saskatchewan. And I saw what 16 years of NDP government did to rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and I wanted to make sure that that would never happen in this province again.

The second reason I decided to run was because I spent my years through high school and out of high school, when I was younger, Mr. Speaker, watching all my friends leave the province predominantly to go to jobs in Alberta because that's where the jobs were, Mr. Speaker; they were in Alberta. And then a number of years later, watching my friends' children also make that same trek, moving predominantly to Alberta but to other provinces anyway, leaving Saskatchewan once again because they had to, because the NDP government had scared away the industry from Saskatchewan for years.

[21:15]

I remember a young man the night of my nomination, a young man from Rosetown by the name of Drew McGregor. And he gave a very moving speech that night. He was one of my nominators, Mr. Speaker, 17 years old in grade 12. And he talked about the reason he was supporting the Sask Party. And he talked about the fact that his older brother and sister had left Saskatchewan to move to Alberta because that's where the jobs were. And he talked about what that did to his family. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, just a few months later he also moved to Alberta, and I think that proved his point.

I can remember thinking at that time that we could form the government, that we could start to turn things around. But I also remember thinking that I'd hope that people would be patient. It had taken many years of NDP government to get into the position we were in, and I didn't think we could turn it around on a dime. We were at or near the bottom in just about every economic indicator in the country and we had been for years, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our province hadn't got into that predicament overnight, and I was thinking it was going to take quite a while to turn it around.

Mr. Speaker, it's been absolutely amazing what's happened. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country, Mr. Speaker, 4.3 per cent. People are moving here, Mr. Speaker, people are moving back to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Ours is a province that's finally living up to its tremendous potential, potential that's recognized across Canada, such as when CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce] recently announced that Saskatchewan will again lead the country in economic growth this year. A further example is, in its most recent provincial outlook, RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] 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.

People are responding to the opportunity that is Saskatchewan.

In the past two years, we've grown by almost 30,000 people. These people came to Saskatchewan because business in this province created nearly 8,000 new jobs. They came because, as I mentioned, Saskatchewan continues to have the lowest unemployment rate in the country. And they came because weekly earnings in Saskatchewan have reached an all-time high. They came because today in Saskatchewan you keep more of what you earn, thanks to the largest single-year tax cut in our province's history. The impact of our growth can be seen in the nearly 200 per cent increase in housing starts in Saskatchewan in the first two months of 2010. Incidentally, that's the biggest increase in the country.

So where are we now? We have more families, more students, more seniors, more entrepreneurs, more employees, and more than 1 million people all choosing to live and work in our great province. Mr. Speaker, this budget delivers on the promise that is the new Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take some time today to walk through a number of significant sections of our budget so the Legislative Assembly can understand why I so strongly endorse it. The Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure budget for the coming year is \$551 million. I'm extremely pleased to say that that is the second largest budget for Highways in the history of our province.

Our government's commitment to transportation will be evident in the continuing work on several major multi-year projects like, for example, the twinning of Highway No. 11. It'll also allow us to continue or commence 470 kilometres of rural highway upgrades, and it will allow us to do 600 kilometres of repaving. Even in what is generally a restraint budget, our government is continuing with near record levels of investment in transportation.

Mr. Speaker, this budget puts us on the edge of fulfilling yet another promise to the people of Saskatchewan. In the first three years of our mandate, this budget brings our total transportation investment to \$1.7 billion, including a \$760 million investment in capital. In 2007 during the election campaign, we committed to spend a minimum of \$1.8 billion over the four-year term of our mandate. Mr. Speaker, not only are we on schedule, but we're going to far exceed that promise.

I'd like to review our strategy for the transportation system and remind everyone where we've been and the work our government's been doing. Our government's focus with respect to economic development is about getting the fundamentals right. And arguably nothing is more fundamental to economic development in Saskatchewan than good transportation. We're an exporting province with two-thirds of the provincial gross domestic product derived from exports, and we're a global player with key markets on every continent.

In 2009 our canola sales to China were up by 80 per cent to \$553 million. Sales of peas were up by 51 per cent, and linseed sales were up by over 300 per cent. Mr. Speaker, 45 per cent of all Canada's trade with India originates in Saskatchewan. All of this despite the fact that a quick look at a map will tell you that we are located a long way from either of these massive end markets.

In the old Saskatchewan, where people were constantly being discouraged by the limited vision provided by the members opposite, we might have conceded those markets to Ontario or to British Columbia. Mr. Speaker, when people are repeatedly told that they live in a have-not province and they're condemned to be living mostly as recipients of equalization, it's difficult to see yourself competing in a global market. But, Mr. Speaker, the NDP underestimated the people of Saskatchewan in 2007 and they continue to do the same today. In the new Saskatchewan we adapt and we respond to the world around us.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party government responded by transforming the province's transportation system to one that better aligns with our export economy. Last year a record 1500 kilometres of highway improvements were completed or under way over the course of the 2009 construction season. With the support of Saskatchewan's heavy construction sector, we were able to take major strides forward to generate a 5000-kilometre expansion of the primary weight highway network; a total of 235 kilometres in rural highway upgrades to create new primary weight corridors; 11 kilometres of new twin lanes opened; and 22 kilometres of new roadbeds constructed on Highway 11 between Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

We've commenced construction of roadways to carry heavy traffic to and from the global transportation hub and on a new interchange and supporting roads at Lewvan Drive and Highway No. 1. There's been 340 kilometres of repaving on the highways that carry the heaviest traffic, including Highways No. 1 and 16; 970 kilometres of maintenance work completed on paved highways through the province; 55 bridge and culvert replacements.

And to achieve this level of construction, we relied on the strong working relationship we have with organizations like the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association. I attended their annual convention last fall. And here's what this group thinks about transportation in Saskatchewan. I'd like to read you a quote, Mr. Speaker, from the president of the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association, Shantel Lipp. This is a quote, Mr. Speaker:

At the start of the season we said we were ready to meet the challenge, and we were. The volume of work accomplished this season is a good example of how industry and government can work together to efficiently deliver infrastructure projects. Project coordination and early tendering are all factors in getting a large amount of work done in a short construction season. As we look to the work expected next season, we will be building on a spirit of partnership developed this year.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this budget furthers that partnership and the commitment that we've made to all the people of our great province.

I'd like to outline for you some of the key initiatives that are part of this budget. The first priority I'd like to highlight is gateway corridors. Our gateway corridors include the components of the transportation system that connect us to the rest of the world. They include our connections to the main line rail system that moves our exports to ports and to all our global markets. They also include the national highway system routes

that connect us to major Canadian and US markets. Our investments in gateway corridors support economic growth by expanding capacity.

A case in point is the twinning of Highway 11. Highway 11 is a gateway to the North and links the resort sector to Saskatoon, Regina, and the main line rail system. Prior to the 2008-2009 fiscal year, the province was on a pace that would have taken 14 years, Mr. Speaker, 14 years to complete this corridor. That was in NDP days, Mr. Speaker. We've been able to capture \$62 million in federal funding to accelerate the twinning of this corridor to four years. This means the \$62 million provincial investment has leveraged matching federal funding. We will complete the Highway 11 twinning in 2012.

Projects like these help to ensure that the Saskatchewan trucking industry is able to remain competitive in a very dynamic industry. Mr. Speaker, we've worked closely with the Trucking Association and we've listened to their ideas of how together we can enhance their competitive edge. It's why, Mr. Speaker, on budget day, the Saskatchewan Trucking Association put out this news release, and I quote:

Steadfast budgetary support towards highway infrastructure programs coupled with new roadway development, will pay major dividends to the people of Saskatchewan . . .

. . . "Treating highways and infrastructure as a longer term investment shows the government's vision for the bigger picture."

We will invest \$63 million in gateway corridor initiatives this year. This will enable us to advance key multi-year initiatives that will have immediate impact on economic development in the province. These include \$7.7 million to continue construction of the Yorkton bypass that's critical to the development of the new canola crushing plants in that city. We anticipate completing this project in 2010. Six and a half million dollars for year 2 of the Lewvan interchange at Regina that is allowing for the new development of Regina's southwest sector. \$26.1 million to continue the Regina west bypass that will support development of the global transportation hub and accommodate population growth on Regina's west side. In total for projects across our ministry, we're receiving \$113 million in federal funding this year, the largest single-year federal investment in our transportation system ever.

Mr. Speaker, we are also realigning the provincial transportation system to better support economic activity in our province. One component, the rural highways strategy, is designed to enhance the collector system that feeds into gateway corridors, improving connections to international export markets. This will be achieved through a focus on sustainable primary weight expansion and investments to complete strategic corridors.

An example of this is Highway 13. Highway 13 from Eastend to the Manitoba border is an important economic corridor for southern Saskatchewan. This region was hit particularly hard when the grain handling system began to consolidate. At the same time, new industries began to develop that are changing the face of that region. However, transportation infrastructure

was not able to accommodate heavy truck haul. Through Transportation for Growth, we've completed or commenced some \$23 million worth of structural upgrades and rehabilitation on this corridor. This will have significant impacts on both the regional and provincial economy.

As you can see, our government has made progress, tremendous progress in improving the transportation system, one that better supports our economy and provides the citizens of this province with better, safer roads.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan expect their government to manage within its means. We have responded with a budget that is fiscally responsible. At the same time we are mindful of the commitments we have made and the need to make investments that will grow our province. Since coming into office, our focus has been to put in place the fundamentals that ensure growth, enhance public safety, and also keep our promises.

This year's transportation budget continues that work. In addition to construction, we will continue work on the policy and regulatory fronts as well. Over the past year, I have had discussions with my counterparts in Alberta and Manitoba regarding continued harmonization of commercial vehicle regulation. Discussions, I believe, will result in tangible results in the coming year.

We will continue to bring forward the most comprehensive and aggressive plan of maintaining highways, bridges, and culverts in the province's history, and as our cities and their neighbouring communities grow and expand, our government is developing a strategy to ensure high-traffic corridors are prioritized for timely inclusion in the five-year plan.

Most importantly, we will continue our focus on developing effective partnerships. Perhaps the most successful part of Transportation for Growth has been the formalized structures such as the rural highways advisory committee and the northern transportation advisory committee that give you a real and active role in prioritizing investments and determining how they're prioritized. Too often in the past, industrial investment and transportation investment decisions have been made in relative isolation from each other.

We will continue to work with municipalities, contactors, trucking companies, and businesses to ensure the system develops in a manner that responds to the needs of industry and of our communities. Mr. Speaker, I believe our Finance minister has once again done an amazing job on this year's budget. Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all members to support this budget as a clear, progressive, balanced approach to move our province forward. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[21:30]

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm extremely pleased this evening to enter into the budget debate. And at the conclusion of my remarks, I will be moving an amendment to the motion before the House, seconded by the

member from Cumberland.

Mr. Speaker, before I get to the point of moving my amendment, I would like to talk in some detail and depth about the budget before us and make the people of Saskatchewan aware of the things that are contained within the budget, but most importantly, Mr. Speaker, make the people of Saskatchewan aware of the many, many harmful cuts to programs and services that affect the people of this province that are contained within this budget.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to start with some of the fundamentals. First of all, we sat on budget day and heard the Minister of Finance tell us that this was a balanced budget. Well, Mr. Speaker, he stood in this House and told us it was a balanced budget. He told the people of Saskatchewan it was a balanced budget, but the facts say otherwise. Mr. Speaker, if you go to their own document, and it's a summary of the 2010-11 budget, financial highlights, it shows on a summary financial basis, Mr. Speaker, that we in fact have a \$622.7 million deficit. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the Minister of Finance went to school, or I don't know where the members opposite learned their mathematics but, Mr. Speaker, on a summary basis this budget, by their own documents, is a \$622.7 million deficit.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've seen this type of mathematics before in the 1980s. In the 1980s we saw a government that ran continued deficits and increased the debt on a regular basis. But, Mr. Speaker, what's even more incredible than the fact that we are currently running a \$622 million deficit is the fact that the Minister of Finance today stood in the House and acknowledged many things he didn't put in his budget that he knows are going to cost the people of Saskatchewan money in the 2010-2011 budget year, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be hundreds of millions of dollars, bringing the total deficit in excess of \$1 billion by the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan, when they come to hear the budget presented by their government, want to hear the true facts of what that budget contains. Mr. Speaker, by their own document today it's a \$622.7 million deficit. Mr. Speaker, that doesn't contain money for contract settlements for health care workers; it doesn't contain money for contract settlements with teachers. Mr. Speaker, it doesn't contain money for fluctuations in many, many areas of the provincial budget.

Mr. Speaker, but those two items alone — the contract negotiations with the Health Sciences Association, with the 25,000 members of health provider unions; with the 11,000-plus teachers of the province — those contracts alone make this a \$1 billion-plus deficit. Then you have to look at the doctors and the others, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the government knows this budget, even the budget they tabled in this House doesn't contain all the financial liabilities they're going to have to pay out in this year and they should have contained in their original budget. So, Mr. Speaker, why do you do that? Well you do that with the intent of hiding that information from the people. And, Mr. Speaker, why would you do that? Do they think the people of Saskatchewan aren't going to learn after last year? We came in saying we were going to have a surplus budget; the end of the year, we had a \$1 billion deficit.



Now, Mr. Speaker, last year what they did is they tried to make the revenues match their expenditures after they'd already agreed on what their expenditures were going to be. So what did they do? They inflated what the royalty structure would return on potash. And they were out by, not \$1.9 billion, but a total of \$2.1 billion by the time they were done. Not only did we not make any money last year, we had to pay \$204 million to the potash companies. That's never happened in our history, that we had to pay money to the companies for the minerals they're taking out of the ground. It's never, ever been where you have to pay the companies, have to pay the company for the minerals that belong to the people of Saskatchewan. Even the most third world, backward country in the entire world, would you see a government pay a company to take their profitable minerals out of the ground.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is only the first of many, many problems in this budget. We have a government say we've got a balanced budget when their own documents said it's a deficit. Then the Minister of Finance admits that he's excluded a number of things he knows is going to cost the people of the province of Saskatchewan a significant amount of money. So that deficit isn't going to be 622.7 million. It's going to be more than 1 billion by the time it's done. Does this ever sound familiar; sounds a lot like last year.

But, Mr. Speaker, it also sounds like a decade when we had a premier named Grant Devine. And why does it sound similar, Mr. Speaker? Because it seems to be they're doing things in the same way. And it seems to be that the current Premier was tutored by then Premier Grant Devine. So why would I expect a significantly different outcome? Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't, frankly. But the people of the province of Saskatchewan did. They bought the bill of goods that this Premier sold to them about how he was going to manage this province. And, Mr. Speaker, and he's proved, he's proved since the day he became Premier, he couldn't manage a two-car parade.

And, Mr. Speaker, why is that? Well I'll tell you why it is. Because he was trained in a period of time by another guy who couldn't do, couldn't manage a two-car parade either, who drove this province into nearly \$15 billion in debt, which the people of Saskatchewan for many, many years had to sacrifice steeply to pay that debt back.

And, Mr. Speaker, that leads me to my next concern — the debt of the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, we have a government that says there's no increase in debt. Now, Mr. Speaker, I just don't know how they can draw some of these conclusions, Mr. Speaker. First of all, they had to change the accounting practices and procedures within their budgetary documents in order to show that they can say they don't have any debt increase, Mr. Speaker. But even with that, their own documents show an increase in debt.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just refer members to page 62, 62 of their own budget summary. Now ironically their budget summary says, balanced, forward-looking, and responsible, Mr. Speaker. Those are good sounding words, but I wish that the practices represented what they're actually portraying on the front of their budget.

But, Mr. Speaker, in 2009 it showed the total debt would be

\$7.7 billion in the General Revenue Fund. In 2009 it shows that the total debt in the General Revenue Fund would be \$8.1 billion. And in 2011, Mr. Speaker, it'll be \$8.8 billion. It goes on, Mr. Speaker. And I'm going to have to get my glasses out. I'm sorry about the small print here, Mr. Speaker. By 2012 . . . I thought I was wrong, Mr. Speaker. I thought I was wrong because the jump was an entire billion dollars in 2012 to 9.8 billion. By 2013 we're up to \$11 billion. And by 2014, we're up to \$11.9 billion. That's just in the GRF, Mr. Speaker. This sounds a lot like the Grant Devine years, Mr. Speaker, going up by over \$1 billion a year. Shameful. Absolutely shameful.

But, Mr. Speaker, and the other measure that we measure debt by is the amount of debt compared to the GDP [gross domestic product] in the province of Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say this: as a percentage of GDP, in 2009 it was 11.9 per cent; in 2010 it's 14.3; 2011 it's 15 per cent; 2012 it's 15.1; 2013, 16.1. Mr. Speaker, in each of the next five years, debt to GDP's also increasing, Mr. Speaker.

So what does that tell the people of the province of Saskatchewan? Well what it tells them or should tell them is that this government's going further in debt each year. And even though the economy's growing each year because the amounts of goods and products that we produce in this province grows each year as well, Mr. Speaker, what that tells me is our level of debt is increasing faster than the growth of our province, Mr. Speaker.

And that is a very dangerous situation for the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And we've seen that record before, Mr. Speaker. We saw that record during the 1980s under a premier named Grant Devine, a premier that had an individual working for him by the name of Brad Wall, who today claims . . . is the Premier of Saskatchewan. And what's the Premier of Saskatchewan today doing? Exactly what his predecessor and tutor, Premier Grant Devine, did — increasing debt faster than the rate of growth in the province, Mr. Speaker, and putting the people of Saskatchewan further in debt every year that he's going to be in power.

Mr. Speaker, what do the people of Saskatchewan say to that? Well they're not going to let it happen, Mr. Speaker, because they've seen that record before, and they've seen this type of track record. And, Mr. Speaker, they're a heck of a lot smarter the second time around than they would have been the first time because, Mr. Speaker, the first time that slick talk by an individual fooled them. I don't think they'd get fooled twice.

Now, Mr. Speaker, so we have established without doubt, by the government's own documents, that we're running a deficit this year and that many items that contributed to that deficit aren't even included in his budgetary documents. So the deficit will be much larger at the end of the year than the budget that he gave and presented to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

And secondly, Mr. Speaker, we've been able to establish in fact debt's on the rise. And by their own documents, debt is rising each of the next several years, including debt to GDP's rising, Mr. Speaker. Now have we seen this before? Yes. Do we want this to continue? No. Mr. Speaker, the people of this province need responsible government that understands that you have to

live within your means. You have to budget based on your income and you have to live within that income coming into this province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're going to see growth in income. GDP continues to rise each year. You can't increase the debt and increase your spending greater than the GDP, the growth in GDP, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, so we've established we have both a debt and a deficit problem that'll continue to grow under the formula of the current government. And, Mr. Speaker, they're not denying it. It's in their own documents. How can they deny it? Mr. Speaker, so what does that mean? What does that mean for the people of the province of Saskatchewan?

Well I'll tell you what it means, Mr. Speaker. It means that this government's going to sell off the assets of the people of the province of Saskatchewan in the Crown corporations. Mr. Speaker, it means that they're going to sell off Crown assets. It means that they're going to privatize Crown corporations by stealth. So they'll sell off portions of Crown corporations or they will privatize new entities within the Crown corporations, instead of stabilizing and building our family of Crown corporations which the people of Saskatchewan value dearly. Mr. Speaker, what are they doing? And I'm going to give you some examples, and I'm going to quote from their own budgetary documents, Mr. Speaker.

So what do we see them doing? We see them in SaskPower with the Northland Power deal: approximately 261 megawatts of power, Mr. Speaker, it's being produced and built by an Ontario company, Mr. Speaker. And we're hearing for rates as high as 20 cents a kilowatt hour is what SaskPower will have to pay for each kilowatt of power, Mr. Speaker, considerably higher than when we produce it ourselves today.

But the most important and most significant thing about this deal is, Mr. Speaker, SaskPower are experts in producing natural-gas-generated power within the corporation. We don't need to pay a private company from Ontario that needs to make a profit. Its shareholders are largely from outside the province of Saskatchewan. We don't need to pay them to make a profit, Mr. Speaker. We could keep that money right here in Saskatchewan.

[21:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan value keeping that money within the province. They don't want Ontario shareholders to be the benefactors of their dollars. They would prefer that money to stay in the province of Saskatchewan. It makes sense, Ken. It makes sense. It makes sense to the people in my community. It makes sense to the people of the province, Mr. Speaker. If it doesn't make sense to the minister responsible, then I don't know what we can do to help him, Mr. Speaker, because it's common sense.

Why would the people of Saskatchewan want, why would the people of Saskatchewan want to pay an Ontario company and shareholders that may be from anywhere in the world, Mr. Speaker, hundreds of millions of dollars for the production of power in the province of Saskatchewan, when our own Crown corporation are experts in the delivery of that power? And, Mr. Speaker, why would the taxpayers of Saskatchewan want to pay

higher utility rates to pay the shareholders a profit in a private corporation, when any profit that would be made, if it were done by our own Power Corporation, would remain in the province of Saskatchewan to benefit the people of our province? Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that's important.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, what are they doing in our Crown corporations? I'm going to use SaskTel to illustrate this point, Mr. Speaker. They are selling off portions of our Crown corporations. They're taking profitable business units that have made a return for the people of the province of Saskatchewan, and they're selling them off. And why are they doing that? Because they put a policy in place called Sask-first. Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter that the policy doesn't make good business sense. It doesn't matter that the policy doesn't make good economic sense, Mr. Speaker. They've got an ideological drive to destroy our Crown corporations through divesting of profitable shares, interest in companies, Mr. Speaker.

Now one of the most recent is the Hospitality Network, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Hospitality Network provides phone and television services in hospitals, Mr. Speaker, both core practices of a telecommunications corporation. Telecommunications corporations provide phone service. SaskTel provides a phone service within the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, SaskTel also provides Max, a cable service in the province of Saskatchewan to the people of the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, we had an entity called Hospitality Network that provided those services in hospitals around the province and around the country, Mr. Speaker. It's within the core business of SaskTel. We do it for people in the province, Mr. Speaker. It's profitable, making about \$4 million a year, Mr. Speaker. And what did we do? We sold it. We sold a company that was making an annual profit to the people of Saskatchewan which would be used to reduce our own internal costs of phone services in the province, Mr. Speaker. But we sold it. We've owned this company for many years; there's no risk continuing the business. It had been profitable for many years, returning approximately \$4 million a year to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, but we sold it. We just sold it.

**An Hon. Member:** — They sold it. They sold it.

**Mr. Yates:** — Well that's true, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't we, it's they. It's the Sask Party government sold it. And they sold it, Mr. Speaker, without any good business case to do so. Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just quote from the government's budget document. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about their budget summary, page 14:

SaskPower plans to add 200 megawatts of wind power to its generation profile as early as 2013. Wind power will help to satisfy a portion of the province's future power generation needs as well as provide a source of renewable, clean power.

Well that we agree with. We think renewable green power from wind power is good. But then it goes on to the next paragraph and says, "Consistent with the Government's direction to facilitate private sector involvement in the economy, all of this generation will be procured from the private sector."

So, Mr. Speaker, here again we have a government who, because of its ideology, is saying all of the power generated from wind power will be done by the private sector, Mr. Speaker. I go on to quote another quotation from their budget document on page 19, Mr. Speaker. And it's under the title Crown capital investments, and it says the challenge of maintaining our power structure "... will require a major re-investment in the Province's electrical infrastructure and SaskPower intends to partner with the private sector to ensure the reliability and long-term security of the system."

Mr. Speaker, so again we're not talking about our own utility, our own Crown corporation building our infrastructure, maintaining our infrastructure, looking after and securing and building our Crown corporation. No, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about privatizing our Crown corporation and privatizing the services of our Crown corporations.

And are they telling the people of Saskatchewan this in a forward way, a straightforward way that the people of Saskatchewan understand their intent is to privatize SaskPower and privatize SaskTel operations? No, Mr. Speaker, they're trying to do it by stealth. And Mr. Speaker, I again would like to go back to their budgetary document and go to page no. 25. Mr. Speaker, it says that "Consistent with the SaskFirst Policy, SaskTel, SaskEnergy and SaskPower will sell non-core out-of-province assets to support required capital investment in Saskatchewan."

Mr. Speaker, so not only are we going to privatize operations of power generation, Mr. Speaker, not only are we going to sell off out-of-province, or sell off ... [inaudible]. Mr. Speaker, it says they're going to continue to sell off profitable business units within our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, which will destabilize our Crown corporations and lead to this government, Mr. Speaker, doing what they said they wouldn't do. They will lead to the privatization of our Crown corporations. Even though they say they won't do it, Mr. Speaker, they're doing it right before the people of Saskatchewan's eyes. And, Mr. Speaker, their own budget document confirms they are going to continue to do it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, then we heard today, now privatization won't only be confined to our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. We heard today that the Minister of Health is going to privatize core health services, Mr. Speaker. And what was his reply? What was his reply when the members of the opposition challenged him that the people of Saskatchewan cared, Mr. Speaker? We challenged that the people of Saskatchewan cared about their health services. What was his response? No, they don't; they don't care. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think he'll find out that the people of this province do care. Mr. Speaker, he will find out, I'm sure, in November of 2011 that the people of Saskatchewan do care.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we need to talk a little bit about health services and what they mean to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. In the budgetary plan in 2007, there was money for ambulatory surgical care centres in both Regina and Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, one of the first actions of the new government was to cut that funding. Mr. Speaker, that would have provided new surgical capacity within the public sector, hospital sector in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and allowed considerable more

surgeries to be done.

Now this government, this government promised that they were going to deal with surgical wait times, Mr. Speaker. Then two years into their mandate they say, well we'll deal with that over the next four years. And, Mr. Speaker, what we see today is their plan to deal with surgical wait times is about doing it in the private sector, Mr. Speaker. And when asked today what his financial plan was and to table for the members of this legislature his cost structure, Mr. Speaker, he said he didn't know what the cost structure was. He didn't know if it would be cheaper.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've got another plan that hasn't been thought through, another plan that we don't know what the cost implications are, another plan that we don't know how it will benefit the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, he's prepared to pump money into the private sector, to privately owned clinics and privately owned surgical facilities, Mr. Speaker, but he won't do it in the public system. He won't do it within the public system that the people of this province ... Medicare was started in this province. People value publicly owned, publicly funded, and publicly delivered health care services, Mr. Speaker. They value those services.

And I hear some of the members chirping from their seats at the back, Mr. Speaker. Why don't they, if they want to say anything, get into the debate, Mr. Speaker? We'll be prepared to debate them anywhere, anyplace, Mr. Speaker, because what they're doing in this province, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province won't take. The people in this province won't take, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, the more they chirp, Mr. Speaker, the more they understand that they're wrong — they know they're wrong, Mr. Speaker — and the more they tell the people of the province that they really don't care about the things they're doing to the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a few minutes talking about the future tax structure of the province, Mr. Speaker. We saw a shining light into the future on Saturday over the weekend when the Minister of Finance at a public meeting and dinner of the chamber of commerce in Saskatoon talked about harmonizing the sales tax, Mr. Speaker. Talked about debating, said it was time to debate the harmonization of sales tax, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, within a couple of hours we had the Premier trying to slam the door shut. We hope the Minister of Finance got his head out of the door before it got slammed shut so he didn't get hurt. We have some concerns; we don't want to see the man hurt. It was so quick that, you know, Mr. Speaker, the Premier says it's no go. Well, Mr. Speaker, one minute the Minister of Finance says it's up for debate. It is a go. The next minute, we've got the Premier saying no.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what we saw was a moment of truth, a moment of reality where the Finance minister actually exposed what the government's true agenda was. Mr. Speaker, we've seen many examples in this House, many, many examples where the government said they weren't going to do something. And, Mr. Speaker, lo and behold, they do it.

Now I could go through a litany of examples starting from the present going backwards, Mr. Speaker. I could start from the

days before they were government moving forward, but, Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to use a few examples. We heard in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, many times prior to the election that members weren't going to, as an example, institute changes to the construction and labour relations Act, Mr. Speaker. What do we see after they form a government? Changes to the construction and labour relations Act, Mr. Speaker. So they say, before an election, they won't do it. They say before an election they won't introduce essential services, and I believe that was the Minister of Health saying that. And what are one of the first things they do after they form a government? They introduce legislation on essential services, Mr. Speaker.

It's not that the legislation, Mr. Speaker, is the issue. What's at issue here is they say they won't do it to the people. They tell the people of the province of Saskatchewan and the people believe them. When asked directly, Mr. Speaker, they asked directly of ministers — or then members of the legislature, leaders in the opposition caucus — whether they would do things, and they said no. They stood fast and said, absolutely no. And then they form a government, Mr. Speaker, and they do exactly what they said they wouldn't do.

Then, Mr. Speaker, since they've been the government, we've seen many examples of the very same thing, where they said they wouldn't do it and then they did do it. So, Mr. Speaker, what do the people of this province believe? We heard that we were going to build a children's hospital and then the funding's pulled. We heard we were going to build 13 nursing homes in rural communities and then the funding's pulled, Mr. Speaker. People of this province believed what the government told them when they said they were not going to do something; then they did it. They believed them when they said they were going to do something; and then they don't do it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that leads us to today. It leads us to today when we ask questions in this House about the amalgamation of the GST [goods and services tax] and PST [provincial sales tax]. And we asked those questions because the Minister of Finance opened the door again. He told the chamber of commerce in Saskatoon that it was on the table. It was up for debate. It was in play. Then all of a sudden two hours later, the Premier says no and slams the door shut, Mr. Speaker. But we don't believe him any more. We don't believe him because, Mr. Speaker, so many things they've said were not in play, they did.

And, Mr. Speaker, we believe we saw a moment of truth where the Finance minister took a brave step to tell the people of Saskatchewan what was their true agenda. Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate for the people of Saskatchewan that today, today we are facing a government that will harmonize the sales tax. And the people of this province need to know and understand that that's the agenda of the current government. They can say no, but the Finance minister says yes. They can try to backtrack now, but he didn't have to say anything. He didn't have to say it was in play. He didn't have to say it was in debate, Mr. Speaker, but he did. He told the people of the province of Saskatchewan that a harmonized sales tax was in our future.

And, Mr. Speaker, let's talk for a few minutes about the implications of a harmonized sales tax on the people of our province, Mr. Speaker. There are many things today that are exempt from provincial sales tax, Mr. Speaker. If we harmonize

the GST and the PST, Mr. Speaker, we're going to have to pay tax on things like restaurant meals. We're going to have to pay tax on children's clothing. We're going to have to pay those taxes on utilities. We're going to have to pay those taxes on books. We're going to have to pay those taxes on many things today that are exempt, costing the taxpayers of Saskatchewan hundreds of millions of dollars — Mr. Speaker, hundreds of millions of dollars in new taxes on the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

[22:00]

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a couple of minutes and just explain for the people of Saskatchewan what the implications of a harmonized sales tax do. Mr. Speaker, what it does is shift the tax base off business and onto the consumer. Mr. Speaker, the most recent numbers we have would estimate between 450 and \$470 million would be shifted from businesses to consumers in new taxes. Mr. Speaker, that represents about \$1,600 for each Saskatchewan family, \$1,600 annually for each Saskatchewan family. Mr. Speaker, that's a significant amount of money. And the people of this province have a right to know. In fact not only do they have right to know of such an enormous tax shift, Mr. Speaker, and have a right to know about the government's plan to do so.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have the Minister of Finance say it's in the works, and we have the Premier saying no. Well, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, the track record of the current Premier and government, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province need to be aware that we're facing, if they win the 2011 election, a harmonized sales tax in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, that's of grave concern to the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take some time now to talk about a number of very harmful actions by the government in the budget that we have before us, Mr. Speaker — 125,000 chiropractic patients in the province of Saskatchewan who, up until budget day or up until April 1, actually two days from now, Mr. Speaker, have had their chiropractic care treatments supplemented by the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. A portion of the treatment was paid for by the government. Mr. Speaker, chiropractic care in our province, those 125,000 people face a significant increase in the cost of getting chiropractic treatment starting on Thursday. Mr. Speaker, that's hardly fair. Mr. Speaker, chiropractic care in this province, costs \$10.4 million to supplement to chiropractic care — the increased services within the regular health services system, Mr. Speaker, and through doctors and emergencies and physiotherapy.

And a study done by the New Democratic Party government in 1991, when the province was facing perhaps its worst fiscal situation in history as a result of eight years of Grant Devine, Mr. Speaker, even then — when we had a federal government prepared to take away our rights as a province to make us a territory because we were bankrupt, Mr. Speaker, as a province — even then, chiropractic services were not removed. And they weren't removed because of a study showing that that \$10.4 million that was going out to chiropractic care would cost over \$30 million in the regular health system.

Mr. Speaker, cause and effect, Mr. Speaker, needs to be analyzed before making a decision. Mr. Speaker, today we have a government that made a decision, we don't believe properly analyzed because, had they looked at that decision, Mr. Speaker, and looked at the various studies done, they would not have made that decision because it won't save them money in the long run. It will cost you money. So, Mr. Speaker, if you're in a budgetary situation where you want to save money, you don't cut something that's going to cost you more on the other end. It doesn't make economic sense. It doesn't make good budgetary sense, Mr. Speaker. And they can laugh. They can laugh, Mr. Speaker, about these types of things. They can talk about money going to the pulp mill, Mr. Speaker, a proposal to assist keeping a forest industry in Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, in just two short years the members opposite, now the government, were left with \$2.3 billion, and last year on top of that they ran a \$1 billion deficit.

They've got no, they've got no ability to talk to anybody about financial management, no ability to lecture anybody about fiscal prudence, and no ability to lecture anybody about how to run a government. Now, Mr. Speaker, governing is about making choices, and those choices affect the people of the province, each and every one of them. But it's about making choices today, and people have a right to understand what the impact of those choices will mean in the future. And we have a government before us today that are willing to mortgage the futures of our children and our grandchildren again.

And we saw this record one time in the 1980s, Mr. Speaker. It's getting to be rather difficult to see some of the actions that we are seeing by this government who once again is prepared to mortgage the future of our children and our grandchildren, Mr. Speaker, by changing the budgetary accountability, by changing accounting practices so you don't have to account for the full amount of money in a capital project, hiding the true deficit and debt through accounting changes and procedures, Mr. Speaker. It's like smoking mirrors . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . It's not funny. It's not funny, Mr. Speaker. It is not funny at all to the people of the province of Saskatchewan when you have a government who's trying to hide from you what really is going on within their province. And it's going to affect their futures, Mr. Speaker. It's going to affect the children, the grandchildren, Mr. Speaker. The people of this province care, but they need to have the true facts in front of them in order to make an informed decision.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a minute talking about a minor item in the budget, but it goes to the very spirit of a government that would cut things with the intent, Mr. Speaker, to hurt those less fortunate in our communities, with the intent to take advantage of those that have less in our communities, Mr. Speaker. It's a minor thing, Mr. Speaker, but they cut funding for central vehicle agency vehicles, for third party NGOs, Mr. Speaker. And many of those NGOs needed, needed the availability of CVA vehicles to offset increased costs in their organizations, Mr. Speaker. They couldn't afford to buy vehicles. They couldn't afford to lease vehicles, Mr. Speaker, without having the support and help of the government.

But what did we do? Do we care about third party NGO organizations, Mr. Speaker, delivering services to First Nations children, to vulnerable children in our communities, to

vulnerable adults, Mr. Speaker, to transition houses? Mr. Speaker, do we have any, did we see any care whatsoever from the government? None. They cut this, and it's such a petty little issue in the budget, Mr. Speaker, it goes to show the nature of the government before you.

**An Hon. Member:** — It's mean-spirited.

**Mr. Yates:** — It's mean-spirited, Mr. Speaker, absolutely. As my colleagues . . . I like to use the term mean-spirited.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what else do we see from this government? We saw a government who decided unilaterally, without thinking through and without understanding the full consequences, a government decided they were going to have a program called four by four. They were going to reduce the size of the civil service 4 per cent in each of four years for a total of 16 per cent, Mr. Speaker, about 1,800 positions.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when the official opposition raised that issue in the House before their budget day, what did they go do? Because we know they hadn't printed their budget; they went and moved it from 16 per cent to 15. Mr. Speaker, they were trying to hide the fact that we knew what they were planning in their budget. Well, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter if we knew what they were planning in their budget. It matters about what the impact of that budget implication is on our province and on the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's not attainable. And they will find that out. They will find that out because it's not attainable for a number of reasons. One, through attrition, many of the people who retire . . . And I do admire the fact that they're trying to do that through attrition and in a more humane way than just cutting thousands of jobs. I do commend the government for attempting to do something in a humane way. For that, I would give them credit. But it's not achievable in the manner in which they're thinking they can do it.

And I would like a few minutes to explain that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the members opposite. I'll tell you why. When a snowplow operator in the Department of Highways retires, Mr. Speaker, he needs to be replaced because our communities in rural Saskatchewan need to have safe highways in the middle of the winter, Mr. Speaker. They need to have the ice removed. They need to have the snow removed, Mr. Speaker. They need to ensure that in fact that those roads are going to be maintained in a safe standard. Mr. Speaker, it's the same thing with a home care worker. Mr. Speaker, if a home care worker retires, Mr. Speaker, they need to be replaced. They need to be replaced so our parents and grandparents get the types of services they need to maintain, continue living in their own homes, Mr. Speaker. That's absolutely important to the community, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, members opposite can say they have this great plan to do things by attrition, but I think they will find within a year, I don't think it'll take them more than a year to find out that they can't do it in the method in which they plan to do it, and that it's not achievable, Mr. Speaker. And then they will move to more draconian methods to try to achieve their targets.

And, Mr. Speaker, what they have to keep in mind, what they

have to keep in mind as well, Mr. Speaker, is there needs to be career planning for the civil service. There needs to be the ability to maintain a knowledge base and a service base throughout the civil service, Mr. Speaker, for the people of the province of Saskatchewan. These people deliver valuable services to the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, there are children today in foster care, children today that are in the protection of the government, the Department of Social Services, Mr. Speaker. And we need to maintain those services to protect children. We need to ensure that children are properly educated and looked after in our communities and within our province, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, to just say you will cut jobs and not replace jobs or retirements, Mr. Speaker, leaves many programs potentially, Mr. Speaker, volatile as we move forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on top of that, we see a government that is prepared to attack the civil service, Mr. Speaker. And I'm going to use a couple of examples, Mr. Speaker. One would be through their essential service legislation. And I'll say this, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to challenge the minister to review some of the cuts, Mr. Speaker, and find out how many of the jobs he decided to cut, prior to being cut, were deemed to be essential. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the minister to look at that because he will find that many of the positions that he deems don't need to be there, he also deemed to be essential. Mr. Speaker, that tells us how ridiculous, how ridiculous their essential service program was, when the job's not essential when you cut it, but it is essential before you cut it. Mr. Speaker, if it's not needed, Mr. Speaker, how can it be essential? How can it be essential if it's not needed?

So, Mr. Speaker, all I ask of the minister is to think before they make such draconian legislation that's so encompassing that it takes away any balance in the collective bargaining system at all, to understand, understand that if you're going to make something essential you shouldn't just cut the job and say it's not needed because why would it have been essential if you don't need it? I think, all I'm asking the minister is to review because he will find that many of the jobs that are being cut were actually deemed essential. And all I'm saying is, Mr. Speaker, I think the minister should review what he's doing and see whether or not it really makes a lot of sense.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a minute or two talking about the firing of a civil servant who they believe provided information to the opposition. Mr. Speaker, they fired an individual and they're saying . . . what they're trying to do is send a message to the civil service, is if you talk to anybody in the opposition, you're going to be fired. It's an intimidation tactic. We saw this type of intimidation tactic once before by government, and that was the government of Grant Devine.

And I'm going to talk about an individual. I'm going to talk about an individual who served many years in this Assembly, 24 years as one of my colleagues. I wasn't here the entire 24 years. But, Mr. Speaker, we saw this when my former colleague, Mr. Van Mulligen, Harry Van Mulligen was going to be moved to Prince Albert unilaterally because of something he said against the Grant Devine government. Mr. Speaker, he stood up to the Grant Devine government, and what was his punishment going to be? They were going to move him

unilaterally to Prince Albert, knowing full well he couldn't go, which would end his job in the government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, that was shameful. It was absolutely shameful, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing the same type of tactics today. Now will they work? No they won't, Mr. Speaker, because people will be afraid of a bully for a short period of time, but then they start to stand up to a bully. Then they start to stand up.

And, Mr. Speaker, you can push around some people for a period of time. You can hurt people that have families and children, and that's exactly what they did with this individual. You hurt a person with a young wife and child, Mr. Speaker, that they don't know what their future's about. But that individual will get his day in front of an arbitrator and hopefully in front of a court, Mr. Speaker. And it's going to cost a lot of money. It's going to cost a lot of money. Unfortunately it's taxpayers' money. It's not their own. Unfortunately you're playing with taxpayers' money.

[22:15]

But, Mr. Speaker, does anybody over there care about an individual? Does anybody care about that person's family? How would any of you like that done to their families, Mr. Speaker? I tell you and I give you . . . I tell you something today, Mr. Speaker. If we were the government, we wouldn't treat any of their family members or anybody in that manner. We wouldn't do it. We wouldn't do it. And I'll tell you why we wouldn't do it, Mr. Speaker, because that is not a humane way to deal with people. And we wouldn't do it, and we won't do it moving forward, Mr. Speaker. We won't do it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I hear the members up there getting upset because even they don't feel good about what they did. Many of them do not feel good about what they did, Mr. Speaker. And I actually admire those that don't feel good. I really do. Because then I see some grain of humanity, some grain of humility there, and I think there are many members over there who actually don't feel good about that. And for that I respect, I do respect them for not feeling good about deliberately hurting people. That I respect.

Now, Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to spend a few minutes talking about a number of things contained within the budget that are of a fairly serious concern to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Looking at the time, I probably won't be able to conclude my remarks tonight. I will probably need an hour or so tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, because I have considerable more that I'd like to talk about.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to go to the summary documents of public debt on page 62. Now, Mr. Speaker, it says that the forecast, the actual for 2009 was \$7.701 billion, Mr. Speaker, public debt. Forecast for 2010 would be 8.097 billion, and the estimate for 2011 is 8.792 billion, Mr. Speaker. This is in their own document, in a document where they say there's no increase in debt.

Mr. Speaker, I don't quite understand. I don't think the people of Saskatchewan understand. And as I pointed out, by their own documents, Mr. Speaker, it shows debt increasing each of the

next several years through 2014, including the debt to GDP ratio, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, how can you say debt isn't going up when it actually is? How do you do that? I don't understand, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how you try to make people believe things that aren't factual, Mr. Speaker. They simply aren't factual by their own documents, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in numerous, numerous places within their own documents, Mr. Speaker, there are contradictions to what they have said publicly to what their own documents say.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go to page 79 talking about their schedule of borrowing requirements, Mr. Speaker. It shows that their borrowing requirements for this year will be \$1.067 billion, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again we have the opportunity to see that the government's own statement and change of debt shows a substantial increase in debt, Mr. Speaker. So this is a budget that has a substantial deficit as well as substantial debt, Mr. Speaker, that they're trying to pass off as a balanced budget.

And, Mr. Speaker, what are we seeing on the other side? What are we seeing on the program side of this budget, Mr. Speaker? What are the people of Saskatchewan experiences as a result of this budget?

We're seeing increased property taxes because the government hasn't lived up to their commitment to the one full per cent of PST which municipal governments have counted on. They have made their budgetary decisions, they have made their budgetary decisions based on a promise by the Government of Saskatchewan that they're not keeping, Mr. Speaker. They made their budget estimates based on a promise from the Government of Saskatchewan that they're not keeping.

Mr. Speaker, you can say anything you want, but the facts are clear. They made the promise; they're not keeping it . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well sure they do. They know you're not keeping your promise. We know they know.

Mr. Speaker, we also see proposed tuition increases of around 5 per cent from the universities, Mr. Speaker, by any estimate at least 5 per cent. And the minister may argue with me, but I'd like him to because then he might give us the insight to what they're actually going to be.

Mr. Speaker, we're seeing a \$2 million cut to early childhood development. We're seeing literacy initiatives cut by \$200,000. We're seeing Saskatchewan, we're seeing Saskatchewan going from the most affordable province for people earning \$25,000 a year or less to fifth in just over two years — from first to fifth. Boy, what a drop — first to fifth, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we've seen in this budget that's of grave concern to the people of the province is where the cuts are. We see targeted cuts based on the members' ideology, in our belief. And if the members opposite disagree with that, Mr. Speaker, I hope that they make points in their budget speeches, Mr. Speaker.

But we see the Aboriginal business development program has been eliminated, a loss of 786,000 people to help Aboriginal

people in this province gain employment. Mr. Speaker, First Nations and Métis pre-K [pre-kindergarten] education has been cut by \$237,000. We see the Northern Trappers Association grant eliminated. We see Aboriginal relations in the Environment department cut by \$180,000. Well, Mr. Speaker, those are significant cuts to programs to help Aboriginal people in employment and education in our province. Now, Mr. Speaker, is this a targeted, orchestrated cut to hurt Aboriginal people in our province? We believe so, Mr. Speaker. If it's not, if it's not, Mr. Speaker, let the members defend what they're doing.

Mr. Speaker, the great defenders of agriculture, the great defenders of agriculture, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the great defenders of agriculture. Mr. Speaker, they're cutting \$93.3 million from the farm income stabilization program. Now, Mr. Speaker, \$54.3 million is lost to municipalities due to the broken promise on PST; 16.9 million in cuts for grants to rural municipalities for roads, Mr. Speaker; 2.8 million cut for the building communities fund; 1.3 million cut for enterprise regions; \$3.3 million cut from the Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative. Mr. Speaker, that's not to mention the 13 long-term care facilities in rural Saskatchewan that have been cut.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk to you a little bit about some of the other cuts we see in this budget, Mr. Speaker. As the hour grows closer to the end of the evening, Mr. Speaker, I am cognizant that I must move my motion by . . . Oh, pardon me. I'm told I can continue on tomorrow and actually move the motion tomorrow in my speech, Mr. Speaker. That's good to know . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thank you very much. Amendment, pardon me. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we saw a \$3.1 million cut from the Watershed Authority. We see \$2.2 million has been cut from the industrial environmental protection program. We've seen \$4 million in funding for green initiatives programming diverted to recycling program.

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing cuts across the board that hurt the people of this province. Mr. Speaker, and I want to talk for a minute about a program that is so important to both the film industry and the cultural industry in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and that would be, Mr. Speaker, the SCN.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan had one of the few actual licences under the CRTC [Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission] to deliver television services, to deliver television programming in the province of Saskatchewan, one of the few governments that actually had a licence. Mr. Speaker, we're giving it up. We are giving it up, Mr. Speaker.

We don't think it's a good idea to give up a communications tool like the SCN, Mr. Speaker. It will save about \$5 million a year, but it is significant to the film industry in our province, Mr. Speaker. It is significant to the arts and cultural organizations in the province of Saskatchewan to get across their programming, Mr. Speaker. They have an opportunity in order to profile, Mr. Speaker, the achievements of the cultural organizations in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

They're taking away SCN, Mr. Speaker. They cut over \$500,000 from heritage programs, Mr. Speaker, and they cut the film development tax credit . . . Pardon me, has not been changed to be competitive with other jurisdictions, putting our film industry at a significant disadvantage.

Mr. Speaker, we've also seen cuts in our park capital of over \$4 million, and funding for regional parks has been cut in half, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what does all this tell us? This tells us, Mr. Speaker, that we have before us a budget that on one hand, on one hand is not laying out the facts to the people of the province of Saskatchewan in a way that is honest and straightforward so they can understand them, Mr. Speaker. They're saying we have a budget that has a surplus when we have a deficit. They're saying we have a budget with no debt increase that has a significant debt increase in it, Mr. Speaker.

We see a budget that hasn't got significant expenditures in the upcoming months in it that are going to be there, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking there about salary increases for teachers, health care workers, Mr. Speaker, and others.

And, Mr. Speaker, we see a budget, we see a budget that leads to greater privatization in the health care system. We see a budget that leads to greater privatization in our Crown corporations and the sell-off of assets in our Crown corporations. Mr. Speaker, destabilizing our Crown corporations so that the members opposite, the Government of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Party government led by Brad Wall, a premier . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Please address by the constituencies and not by their names.

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, you are absolutely correct and I apologize for using the member's name, Mr. Speaker. Led by a premier, Mr. Speaker, the member from Swift Current, who has the intention of destabilizing our Crown corporations to sell them off. To privatize them, Mr. Speaker, privatize the very assets the people of our province value and cherish.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that they put that agenda before the people of Saskatchewan when they were elected in 2007. It's not what they said prior to being elected but it's what they are doing today. And I don't know who the engineer over there or the architect of their program is. It is selling off our Crown corporations by stealth and selling off business unit by business unit, and destabilizing our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. But I'll tell you this. Before they were elected in 2007, they said they wouldn't do it. And they're doing it, Mr. Speaker. They're doing it.

They said before that they wouldn't privatize the Crown corporations, and what are they doing, Mr. Speaker? They're doing just that. The Northland Power deal, Mr. Speaker. I've made numerous references to in their own budget documents to talk about future power generation in our province will be done in the private sector. Not by the very Crown corporation the people of Saskatchewan built and cherish, Mr. Speaker.

Why do we have SaskPower? Because when SaskPower came

into being, Mr. Speaker, when it was created as an entity in this province, no company would come in and deliver electrification to rural Saskatchewan. It was a much-needed utility for the farm families of our province, Mr. Speaker. And they cherish it, Mr. Speaker.

And members opposite can say we're talking back in a Stone Age. We're not talking back in the Stone Age. We're talking just a few short years ago, Mr. Speaker. And many of their parents and their grandparents will remember not having power in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, until a man by the name of Tommy Douglas decided it was time to do so and he created a power corporation, Mr. Speaker, owned and operated by the people of this province, whose assets are owned by the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. And they went out and they did what some thought was impossible to do in any profitable way. They provided electricity, electrification to every farmyard in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They provided a quality of life improvement in this province that we haven't seen in many, many years.

And at that time the people of this province cherished that. Just as they built the telephone company, Mr. Speaker. Just as they built in SaskEnergy, a natural gas distribution company, Mr. Speaker. These Crown corporations are owned by the people of Saskatchewan. They cherish those Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, and they do not want to see them ruined or sold off.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The time of adjournment having been reached, this House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.]



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