



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

---

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

---

(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

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

<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, 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, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. 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
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. 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, Hon. Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, 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
Wyant, Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

**EVENING SITTING**

**SPECIAL ORDER**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**ADDRESS IN REPLY**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Gantfoer, seconded by Mr. Wyant, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Broten.]

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

**Mr. Brkich:** — I'm asking leave to introduce guests.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. I recognize the Deputy Speaker.

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**Mr. Brkich:** — To you and through you I'd like to introduce my sister, who has come up from Davidson. She's taking a couple days course here in Regina so she wanted to come to the legislature and see how hard I've been working today and how hard I've been representing the constituents. And I think she has been here before but she hasn't been here for a few years. So I'm hoping she will enjoy the proceedings tonight. And I hope that . . . welcome her here and I hope everybody in the Assembly welcomes her to her Assembly today.

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

**SPECIAL ORDER**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**ADDRESS IN REPLY**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Gantfoer, seconded by Mr. Wyant, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Broten.]

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to continue my response to the Throne Speech that I started before dinner. And actually I'm hoping that maybe I have a chance to see that some of my grandchildren might be watching tonight. So I'm going to say hi to my family as well.

Mr. Speaker, before dinner we talked about Social Services and the children that are under the control, under the care of our government and my ministry, and we talked about the tracking system that we have for children at risk. The member . . . I

talked about the investment of \$15 million for the automated tracking system and I'm pleased to see that the members opposite were listening carefully because they've admitted that we've actually spent \$18 million on that tracking system, and I'm very pleased that we have . . . [inaudible] . . . recognized the importance of children in our system.

Mr. Speaker, we've responded by increasing funding to children and family services by 106 per cent in our first three budgets as government. In 2000, the Children's Advocate indicated a serious gap and a major disconnect in the way child welfare was being delivered, being delivered under the previous government who had actually done nothing to this system for 16 years. And we responded last year by initiating a comprehensive child welfare review system. The recommendations are being brought forward right now. And this review panel actually did a more comprehensive system review than has ever been done in Canada, and I'm sure that the members opposite and the general public are looking forward to the recommendations.

The foster family homes in Saskatchewan has been an issue for as early as 1986, but it had never been recognized and never been dealt with under the previous government. They left foster homes . . . The crowded foster homes ballooned to as many as having 21 children in one house. Our government has reduced the number of children living in foster homes with more than four children by over one-third in the last three years. We've also reduced the number of homes with more than four children by one-third since the NDP [New Democratic Party] left office.

Mr. Speaker, it's rewarding, as the Minister of Social Services, to deal with children and to deal with the system when we know that there are vulnerable people and that we have a chance to actually help them. The members opposite had ignored this file for a very long time, and I think it's time that they recognize that there is a responsibility as government to deal with people who need help.

I'm going to give you a list of some of the investments we've made in the system since we've become government. We've invested \$5 million to hire 60 new child protection workers. We've increased foster family rates by 21.5 per cent. We spent \$1.6 million to enhance respite for foster families. And we've invested \$8.2 million in the last two budgets to fully fund the operating cost of 144 new residential spaces for children who are at risk. Mr. Speaker, we've also increased funding for extended family caregivers by 41 per cent. We dedicated \$1.3 million in annualized funding to Family Finders program, enhancing our commitment to kinship.

Mr. Speaker, it really isn't enough that the NDP ignored vulnerable children, but it's also curious that a party that really professes to be the champions of the poor so effectively ignored people that were actually in poverty. During their time in office, the NDP failed to increase shelter rates for 13 out of 16 years, despite inflation of over 30 per cent. Mr. Speaker, apparently trying to . . . [inaudible] . . . themselves, they failed to increase the seniors' income plan for all 16 years.

Mr. Speaker, our records on the issue could not be more starkly different. Since November of 2007, our government has

committed over \$40 million for enhancements to income support programs. In 2008 we became the very first jurisdiction in Canada to index shelter rates. We adjust them twice a year to the cost of living. And we did the same for rental supplements. Taken together, the shelter rates and the rental supplements give eligible clients up to 100 per cent of the average market rent. They actually get 110 per cent for those with permanent disabilities.

We increased benefits for the Saskatchewan employment supplement and increased income threshold for those to quality. It was the largest income increase in the program's history. We doubled the seniors' income plan and nearly doubled the number of seniors eligible. But most importantly, Mr. Speaker, the government understands that reducing poverty requires more than just a one-dimensional approach.

To reduce poverty, we have to grow the economy and to put more money back into the pockets of everybody. We've increased the minimum wage. We've taken 80,000 people off the tax roll. We've doubled the low-income tax credit. We doubled the caregiver tax credit. We've doubled the infirm dependant tax credit. We doubled the supplement to the disability tax credit. We've increased the disability tax credit. And we've decreased property taxes. We've introduced the active families benefit.

Mr. Speaker, our approach is working. More people are working in Saskatchewan now than ever. We have the second lowest unemployment rate in Canada, and wages are up 5 per cent in the last year. Saskatchewan has jumped from eighth to second in the nation in the rank of best performing labour markets.

Mr. Speaker. *The Globe and Mail* reported on October the 21st, and I'm going to quote, "Under Premier Wall's leadership, Saskatchewan has amassed an impressive record of economic growth during difficult times."

Of course, growth creates both opportunity and challenges. But rather than forgo the opportunity of growth like the previous government, we've chosen instead to rise to the challenge. We understand that growth and economic opportunity for all our citizens can put some pressure on the housing market. At the same time we've acted to bolster income supports, as I mentioned earlier. We're investing in affordable housing. We've increased funding for our housing programs by 45 per cent since the NDP left office.

And since November of 2007, we've completed over 700 new affordable housing units across our province and have 1,250 in various stages of development.

To put this in context, the NDP completed only 58 units in their last full year in government. As former Social Services minister Bob Pringle said of affordable housing under the NDP, this issue was not addressed. When the NDP finally got around to dealing with the issue in 2007, they actually did conduct a housing task force but they kept the findings a secret.

Our emphasis is on action. While the NDP pays lip service to affordability, we're building more new units. In the coming weeks we'll be coming forward with even more. And we'll be

announcing details of our new Head Start on a Home program, which we expect to create over 1,000 new home ownership opportunities for struggling families. We expect this program to take the pressure off the rental markets as these families move into their first homes.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to my responsibilities as Minister Responsible for Social Services, I'm also responsible for the Public Service Commission. We have a number of initiatives coming forward from PSC [Public Service Commission] that I'm extremely excited about.

As it was mentioned in the Throne Speech, in the very near future we'll be introducing the public interest disclosure Act. Our party first brought forward this whistle-blower Act in opposition in 2001. We expect these efforts to culminate in the introduction this fall of an effective and thoroughly designed Bill that will increase the public's confidence in government. It will be a major step to protecting public servants who selflessly put our province's best interests first in the execution of their duties.

I'm also excited about two more initiatives we have under the Public Service Commission. One of them is the lean initiative. It's engaging the ideas of public servants on how to make government more effective and putting those ideas into action. This initiative is not about job reduction. It's about practical, common sense improvements to the way we do our work in government.

And complementing this is our workforce adjustment strategy. The Premier has committed to a leaner government and that's exactly what we're working towards. Saskatchewan's citizens expect us to manage their money responsibly. The workforce adjustment strategy gives us an opportunity to manage vacancies created as a result of retirement or other voluntary circumstances. And through this process we're able to achieve efficiencies without impacting services and without mass layoffs.

We've challenged the public service and they're already delivering. A 4.4 reduction in FTEs [full-time equivalent] towards the overall goal of 15 per cent will be achieved this year, the first year of a four-year plan. And of course we're going to be sensitive to the fact that some vacant positions need to be filled quickly, especially when it comes to the front-line workers.

Mr. Speaker, these initiatives, all the initiatives that we have as government, work well together. We're working to ensure that we have a more efficient government, that we're listening to the people in the province, and that we're accountable.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite decided to spend money on initiatives like SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] instead of the wait-list. They decided to spend money on mega bingos instead of the money that we spend on things like Habitat for Humanity. On the old road, Mr. Speaker, there was no connection made between government waste and government neglect for the people that they represent.

Mr. Speaker, we have a commitment to the people that have

elected us. We've committed to ensure that we spend their money wisely, that we look after the people that are entrusted into our care, that we look for growth, that we give people an opportunity to work towards a job that they're enjoying in government, and to make sure that the growth happens in all of our province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm extremely proud of the Throne Speech that was brought forward, and I will not be supporting the amendment. I will be supporting the Throne Speech.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to enter into this debate. It's one I always look forward to. We are getting back to work in Regina, though much of our work, Mr. Speaker, happens in our ridings as we talk and visit with our constituents, both in our own neighbourhoods, our own communities, but across the province. And we had an opportunity to do that this summer.

I do want to take a moment to welcome the new member from northwest Saskatoon, congratulate him on his win. We want to make sure he has a good time here — not a long time, but a good time. You know, it is a privilege to be elected. It's one that people vie for and work hard to achieve that place in our society, and it's one that we can't take for granted. All of us here work hard all the time to make sure we bring honour and dignity to the Chamber and also to our communities, that we represent them well and we don't get too comfortable.

I do also want to take a minute to welcome the new cabinet ministers. There was a shuffle in June and I know I am a critic now of a new minister in Social Services. And it is a pleasure to listen to what she has to say and to correct her the odd time, you know. And I had pleasure in correcting the former minister. I won't say the old minister, but the former minister. But it is one that I think the people of Saskatchewan take very seriously, the area of Social Services. It is the area of social safety nets and in Saskatchewan we think we do it well. And if there's an opportunity to do it better, we do it better. And if we're not doing as good as we can, we should make sure that something is done about that.

So I will be talking to the minister and making sure, holding her accountable and making sure she's forthcoming with information because I think what's really important in Social Services — right across the board but particularly in Social Services — because those who are vulnerable also feel they don't have a voice and they don't have easy access to ways of getting information. It's very difficult for them, both because they feel not good about where they're at but also they're not familiar with the same channels that many of us are familiar with. And so it's very important that this minister strives to be as transparent and as accountable as possible, and forthcoming with accurate information.

[19:15]

I do look around and I do see some that have been moved around. I was particularly surprised, particularly around the Environment minister, but as we said today in question period,

maybe she's in Ottawa. She was a good link to the former government, the government in Ottawa. And if she can make those connections, that would be good. We all hope for a positive outcome and the BHP Billiton that . . .

**The Speaker:** — Just to remind the member that a member is not to refer in any form to the presence or absence of members of the Chamber.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for my error, and I will go forward from there. But I was surprised about the movements of different cabinet ministers, particularly the Environment minister who lost that position. We know that the work around the wildlife habitat was particularly difficult for this government, but it was a government initiative. It wasn't just one minister. It wasn't just thought of as one minister, and yet she did pay a price for that.

I also want to take a minute and thank my family. The volunteers in Saskatoon Centre work so hard to make sure that the people's voices are represented. And as well I want to thank my staff, and particularly my constituency assistant, Leslie, who works so hard to make sure that people have access to the government programs and that their voices are heard and that I make sure that every voice is heard and nothing is overlooked.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment and review the Throne Speech, and there's some reviews and some other comments I want to make. But I find this interesting. The theme this year is "The New Road." And last year it was called "Moving Forward." But you know, I see a similarity here, and there's not much new. And what is new is recycled and old promises.

And in fact, you know, *The StarPhoenix* in 2009 had this to say about last year's Throne Speech. It said . . . The headline was, and I quote:

Throne speech sets the stage to repeat history.

For a party still so relatively new at the task, the government's speech from the throne spends an inordinate amount of attention looking back.

Well you would have thought that these folks would have read the reviews from last year, paid a little attention, and said, you know, they got a little flak because they spent too much time looking backwards and not enough time looking forward. There's a question of vision here. But they didn't pay attention, and here we have the same, same, same issues.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I like what some of the members on this side were saying. The member from Saskatoon Eastview talked about road signs and that the folks in the government really don't seem to be paying attention to some of the road signs along the way about some of the things that are going on in Saskatchewan. And they don't seem to really care, and this is really, really unfortunate.

And the member from Saskatoon Meewasin talked about the high road and the low road. And it seems that this government has taken the low road, not the high road, when it comes to dealing with people in Saskatchewan.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, what I would say that this new road, this new road really is a toll road. It's for those who can afford things in Saskatchewan. But there are many, many people who cannot afford all that this government is putting out. And I have some real, real deep concerns that these folks are excluding too many people in Saskatchewan. For example right off the bat, you know when they talk about some of the achievements . . . And we are all proud when more people come to Saskatchewan. We want to see this province grow and the population grow. That's a very good thing.

But one of the most startling statistics I never hear this government talk about — and I did not hear the Minister of Social Services talk about this in her opportunity to talk about some of the challenges this ministry has, this department has — and that is the continuing growth of the Social Services caseloads.

Now I don't know what's happened between March and September of this year, and we will find out through written questions. Has that gone down? But we saw prior to that, 18 months of continuous increase in the caseloads — 18 months. I don't know when you could go back in Saskatchewan history to when that kind of growth was happening in Social Services. Was it in the '80s? I don't know. There was a peak in the '90s, I know, when the federal government downloaded some of their programs to the provincial government, and the provincial government had to pick it up. But 18 months of growth — not a word though, not talking about those kind of challenges. So when I say this seems to be more like a toll road, those people are feeling very excluded.

Now the other . . . And I'll go through this; I've got some bookmarks here. But, Mr. Speaker, it talks about the average wages are going up. And that's great to hear, that average wages are going up for many people. But you know what? I was shocked this summer when I saw that this government has decided that they would freeze the minimum wage. Now it will be until 2012 before we see the next increase in minimum wage. We're talking about the vulnerable people at the lower end of the wage scales, facing all sorts of challenges, and this government's not taking this very seriously at all — not at all. And they say, wait three years until your next increase.

And in fact the irony of this, Mr. Speaker, was in 2007 when we were in government and we laid out a plan to increase the minimum wage to 9.25 an hour, and it would reach what I call the low-income cut-off that we all felt, if it was indexed, there would be small increases every year so it'd keep pace, and you would never see those huge increases again. And in fact we had members from the government saying, good idea; we're with you on that. Nobody wants to see these huge increases again.

Well here we are in a three-year wage freeze. And it will be three years before anybody sees any kind of increase. And this is deplorable. And I think that this is proof that this is, the new road is the toll road.

They talk about their 100 long-term addictions recovery spaces in the province. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is déjà vu from the 2007 Throne Speech in December. In fact some people were just in my office asking about this campaign promise. What happened to the 100 beds for addictions?

Well what happened in 2008 was, apparently there was a study, a study done. Quietly there was a way they had to figure out, how are they going to get around this 100 beds for addictions? Well they had to have a study. In 2007 there wasn't a need for a study. They were just going to do it. But in 2008-2009 there was all of a sudden a need, but really what the need was, they needed a way to figure out how to dodge the cost there.

They make a big deal, and we have the minister taking credit today again about the Saskatchewan seniors' income plan and how they doubled that. And we thought that was a fair idea. But how can you make it sustainable? And last year we saw a cut of over \$2 million from that budget. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if that's a record cut. They may have done a record increase, but I think they also did a record cut. And we know the year before, over 3,000 seniors were cut from that program. We don't know what happened this summer, and we're waiting to hear from the written questions how many seniors were cut from that program this summer. But you know, to cut \$2 million from a budget of some 20 million, it's got to have an impact. It's got to have an impact.

And, Mr. Speaker, they talk about the home safety audits, work also continues. Well you know what? I've got to ask you, Mr. Speaker, I don't think work has started on providing home safety audits because we know many low-income seniors have asked about that and they've not seen anything actually, actually done about it.

Now the one that I think . . . And we all stood in the House, and I remember the day the minister announced this. The assured income for disability was a very good program, had lots of potential, but we're seeing a program stalling here. Now they're talking about, how can they get more people enrolled? But people are having some real questions, because the original intent, the original intent for many of the people from the community was this was going to be a way to ensure that people living with disabilities had some way to for sure to be living with an adequate income. And all we're seeing is a name change at this point.

And we hope and we really demand of the government they take this seriously, that somehow they have to do something about how much money is provided for people living with disabilities. The idea was this was going to be some way of getting adequate income into the hands of people living with disabilities. And it's just sad to see that it's starting to stall out. It's got a name change, but it's got to be much more than that, and we're imploring the government to do much more than that. And this will be something that people remember a year from now when we talk about . . . You just can't change the name of the program; you really have to deliver the goods. And we think the government's failing on this mark — failing, and failing the people most vulnerable here in Saskatchewan.

But one other area that I have deep concerns about is the Head Start on a Home. Now they talk about 1,000 new homes, and it was interesting to hear the new minister talk about her stats and, you know, I really have to challenge her on some of the numbers that she used about how, when we did our home start program, we had 2,500 homes over five years. Now some were not finished, and we can think about the Monarch Yards in Saskatoon that were opened by the new government but were

started by us. And so we have some questions about how accurate the numbers are.

But I have a real issue about this Head Start program because I hope that there's more to it than just 1,000 homes over five years. That's nice for home ownership, but what about rental units? There's got to be something about rental. There's got to be something about seniors' housing. There's got to be a very full, complex housing strategy because this is a complex issue. And it's just not going to be solved with 1,000 homes over five years. That essentially works out to 200 a year. And while that's a nice start, it's got to be much more than that. Housing is a much bigger problem than that. And I will talk more about that, about what's missing.

Now I want to talk about the legislative agenda, and I'm glad to see that many of the ministers are here because there was one that I was looking for around *The Residential Tenancies Act*. This government has made a big deal out of some of the response to the Pringle report, and one was that to get a notice for a rent increase, you had to give six months notice. It came to our attention that there is a way around that. There is a loophole in the legislation.

And I've asked the minister about that in committee last year, and the ministry and the minister both acknowledged that there is a loophole. And there's only one way to plug that loophole, and that is for a legislative amendment. And so I am looking for this government to do something about that. And I hope that we will see that in the next few weeks so that we can all go back and tell our constituents that the government has listened. They didn't realize there was a loophole. They thought that it was six months notice and that was straightforward. But as was brought to our attention, I'm reminding the minister across the way that we are looking for a legislative amendment to that.

Now I do want to go on. And I know the member from Meewasin did a very good job talking about photo ID [identification]. And that has been raised very well, and I see that the government is rethinking their intentions on this. And I really do hope they think about rethinking their intentions. But they do come clean on this because too many people have too many questions about what are the real intentions. Are they going to do it through regulations? Is it going to be legislation? You can't put in legislation, then say we don't really need to enforce it. You either do or you don't. You know, what is it that you're really going to do?

I do have some serious concerns when the minister says, we're going to be doing active consultation. This government is very well known for the types of consultation it does behind closed doors. And they don't really get out and talk to people in a public setting about what are the challenges around ID. ID is becoming more and more of a bigger issue, bigger challenge for people right across this country. And we're seeing that as an issue.

And in fact we see this in Alberta when they had their, I think it was a 20-point plan to end homelessness — it was announced two years ago — one of their points was around ID and providing ID for those less fortunate. Interestingly, just a couple of weeks ago, Alberta now has issued ID. There is an Alberta ID card. Now I've not seen it. I don't know what it looks like; I

don't know the details. But they're being very proactive because they're looking at the whole issue, not just the issue around elections, and this is very important.

I did ask the Minister for Corrections about this issue around people coming out of jails. I was shocked, shocked to hear that people were coming out of jail without ID. I did not know that. The minister didn't know that either. We assumed that anybody coming out of jail would have ID. It's in all our best interests that when somebody comes out of jail, one less barrier that you can have to getting a job, getting a place to rent, getting back into society, is to have ID. Well you know what? That is not the case. And the Minister for Corrections was going to look into this and so I think this has to happen.

The other issue is, for example, when you're going to vote, we understand that people can be sworn in to vote that we know. For example, I know the member from Regina Lakeview; I know him to live in a certain place. I can swear him in if I'm at the same place. But if you're in a hostel or a shelter where there may be 10, 20, or 30 people, only one person gets to be sworn in. So at the Salvation Army hostel or shelter in Saskatoon, this was a real concern because we were hearing complaints that only one person could swear in another person. They could not swear in the whole group. I think we have to look at issues like that when it comes to voting and making sure we have full participation in voting.

[19:30]

Now it was very interesting when I first started to become more familiar with this issue around ID. It was around the last civic election in Saskatoon. And I know the member from Northwest may find this interesting, that it was easier to vote for the mayor of Saskatoon than it was to get a library card in Saskatoon because you had to have more complex ID for your library books than you had to to vote. Now I'm not sure if that's necessarily the best situation. I think you should have better access to library books. There should be a balance in this.

But I hope that the government takes some time and does some full consultation over this. And I think what's very interesting in this, Mr. Speaker, is that we have the Minister of Social Services who is familiar with Information Services Corp, ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] and some of the challenges they have, and particularly around the birth certificate and how long it takes. And I know we've had challenges. People have come to talk to me about the issues of how long it takes to get a birth certificate so you can get photo ID. And they were really incensed when they found out that if you paid money you could jump the queue to get your birth certificate that day. Now the person said, well listen, can I find out where I am in the queue? If I'm number 40 then maybe I'll pay, but if I'm number 1 and I'm going to get it today, why should I pay? They would not be told where they were in the queue, which seems to me not the best customer service.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping, and I'm looking forward to this government looking at this more fully around the whole issue of ID and what does it mean to all people in Saskatchewan. Those who have issues of being able to afford ID, those who didn't have access to proper ID, like birth certificates, that type of thing.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I look at the conclusion — and this is definitely not the conclusion in my words — but I look at this and this just proves how when you talk about two roads, and you talk about the toll road, here you have . . . They come to our province in search of prosperity that's entrenched and opportunities available to all. Well I'm not sure, when they talk about photo ID and some of those things, that there really is opportunity for all. When we talk about the housing shortages here in Saskatchewan and we've seen people in Estevan and Weyburn and North Battleford, that is not opportunity that is available to all.

There are voices of the most vulnerable in our society now more able to live in independence. I have some real question marks over that, Mr. Speaker, both for the seniors, with the senior income plan who are being cut off, the disability income, the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program, the assured income plan, where we see the lack of attention to adequacy — really some huge issues there. And of course the ever growing caseloads in social services. The voice of our seniors now being afforded dignity and the respect they deserve, and again the whole issue of housing and the seniors' income plan.

And the voices of children who will travel the furthest on this new road. And they don't talk about the children and the challenges of children, that children are actually facing here in Saskatchewan. And I'll talk about some, some of the commitments I was looking forward from this government that has not been kept.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about and I want to quote from . . . I did quote from last year's *StarPhoenix* editorial the day after the Throne Speech. And this year's editorial is pretty much the same, giving this government pretty much a failing grade. The headline, this is October 28th, 2010: "Wall's new road pothole-ridden."

And I quote, "Wall's new road pothole-ridden." And it goes on:

Too much of the throne speech, which is meant to outline the government's legislative actions for the coming year, is devoted to boasting about its accomplishments over the past year [and we heard the minister do that], while there's little that tells Saskatchewan residents what awaits them in the near future.

It goes on, and I quote:

Yet, even some of the actual new initiatives the government proposes are real head-scratchers, leading to question whether these actually are the priorities of citizens or vague tidbits meant to appeal to small segments of the electorate important to the Saskatchewan Party.

And they go on, and I quote:

Similarly, what exactly is the all-fire rush to implement a photo ID requirement to vote in provincial elections and to empower municipalities to do the same, when even Elections Canada is yet to adopt such a measure? Other than raising some hackles . . .

It goes on and talks about the Great Sand Hills and the debacle that happened last spring over the land, the wildlife protection land. Clearly there's a lot of damage control here that needs to be done. But I think that one that really seems to be disappointing, and I will quote here:

Particularly disappointing is the government's commitment merely to review the recommendations from the independent panel that examined Saskatchewan's broken child welfare system, instead of a pledge to act on the recommendations quickly.

And I end the quote there.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps that's the one that's most telling of all, and the minister just skated over that one. We know that this has been a big issue. A huge issue. And what's important is that we serve the families and the children of this province well and we make a commitment to get on with this. And I am concerned that when this government gets the report that they'll sit on the report and we won't see the recommendations till next spring. This is really a shame.

Mr. Speaker, the budget amount for this report was \$800,000, nearly \$1 million. And this is too important that this government fails, but the record is of this government to fail and to ignore. And if this minister sits on this report until March and then comes in and expects action right away, we have some real problems with that. And I think that she has really failed the people of Saskatchewan immensely.

Mr. Speaker, I want to continue. You know, there was another interesting story in here and the minister, the current minister and the past minister and many of the members will point to pre-2007 as some sort of . . . how they have made great gains since that time. But clearly this government has failed and continues to fail the people most vulnerable in Saskatchewan. I want to quote from another article, just on the flip page of *The StarPhoenix*, Thursday, October 28th. And this is a column by Mark Lemstra and the headline is "Actually addressing health disparities vital."

Now we know . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, it's drawn a response. Here we have a minister who called some of the work by Lemstra and Neudorf kind of blue-skying, blue-skying. But here we have I think a pretty damaging report about what's been happening in health care, what's been happening in social services, what's been happening with this government. I'd like to quote, Mr. Speaker:

I wrote last week about a report produced by the Saskatoon Health Region in 2008 concerning the vast differences in the length of hospital stays of patients, based on their level of income.

For example, when residents in the city's six low income core neighbourhoods were admitted from our hospitals for suicide attempts and mental disorders, they received an average of four days of hospital care.

When residents in the five high income neighbourhoods were admitted for the same disorders, they received an average of 44 days of in-hospital care.



These specific statistics were never released to the community . . .

Here is the concern:

And I'm continuing the quote:

What would our reaction be if we replaced the words "low income" and "high income" with some other demographic indicators?

For example, if we produced a report that women in Saskatoon were receiving four days of hospitalization for the same medical disorders for which men received 44 days of care?

How would we respond if we produced a report that found some residents received less than one-tenth of hospital care in comparison to other residents based on if they were rural/urban or Catholic/Protestant, English/French or white/black.

What would the reaction be from politicians, community leaders and advocacy groups?

And it goes on:

If we were talking about any group other than low income residents, action would have been taken in days or maybe weeks, certainly not years.

And this is where this government is failing. This has all happened within their term. This is not 10 years ago, not 20 years ago. This has been happening now, within the last two or three years. They have an opportunity to do the right thing, but they've chosen not to. They've chosen the toll road. You have to pay in Saskatchewan.

He goes on. And these are quotes. These are another epidemic we're seeing here in Saskatchewan that I think we're all very concerned about:

In 2004 [in our time], Saskatoon had 16 residents who tested positive for HIV. In 2005, we had 39 new cases. In 2006 . . . 53 new cases. In 2007, 57 new cases were diagnosed. In 2008 . . . 77 . . . In 2009, Saskatoon had 94 residents testing positive for HIV.

We are seeing an epidemic of HIV [human immunodeficiency virus], and we're seeing it particularly bad in Saskatchewan because it's coupled with malnutrition, poor housing, and poverty. Those are things that just don't give people a chance to heal.

And it's something we can do something about. Housing is something we can do something about. Nutrition we should be able to do something about. Poverty we should be able to do something about. And this is something this government has failed and continues to fail the people of Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there's much I want to say, and of course I do want to talk about potash a bit because we know that we are deeply concerned about what might be the outcome tomorrow.

We are worried that the leak in the papers is accurate, that in fact the Harper government will approve the sale and that there may be conditions.

But we have some deep, deep concerns that yet again the Premier has failed the people of Saskatchewan. He was too late in getting his position out there and that while . . . And he didn't go to Ottawa and he didn't make the case strong enough. And clearly we have some deep concerns, and I know many people in Saskatchewan are not at ease tonight because they thought this Premier could have done a better job, a better job. And this is something that we see a track record, whether it's equalization, the \$800 million that the government failed, the Premier failed us on, whether it's the CO<sub>2</sub> carbon capture project, another failure. The dome, clearly another failure. We have some real issues, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about some of the things that I was looking forward to seeing in the Throne Speech, and I know that many people wanted to speak, but we wanted to see a comprehensive poverty elimination strategy. And the minister got up and made a big deal about goals and how that government over there operates by goals and benchmarks, but yet the one benchmark they won't talk about is poverty reduction. And I think we see people in Saskatchewan wanting something to be done about that.

And we know we see the food banks' usage growing right across the province, whether it's Regina, Yorkton, Meadow Lake have all reported that. And we see a report that just came out last week, *Let's Do Something About Poverty!* — people calling for a provincial-wide poverty reduction strategy. So we need the vision and the commitment. We need the government to step up and do the right thing and get to work on this. This is a real missed opportunity.

We need a comprehensive housing strategy, something more than the Head Start program, something that's comprehensive and meets everyone's needs. We saw a campaign on October 19th, the Red Tent campaign, that called for a national housing strategy. We know that any one level of government cannot do it all alone. We need all the levels of government to get on board and do the right thing. We need the federal government to say, let's get housing for Canadians right across Canada. We need the province to do the right thing. We need the cities to do the right thing. We see cities like Saskatoon having a comprehensive housing strategy, but we just don't see the province at the table.

And we see seniors having real challenges. And you know, Mr. Speaker, I have raised this an awful lot about rent control. We need to have a discussion, a real frank discussion about stronger rent regulations that prevent rent gouging. We see across Canada 80 per cent of Canadians living now with appropriate rent regulations that allows seniors, young people, young couples a chance to plan their futures because they know what kind of rents they'll be facing — not the kind of rent gouging that's been happening here in Saskatchewan.

[19:45]

And as we talked earlier, the foster care issue that we're looking forward to the review. And we hope that's not delayed and

delayed and we don't get to see it until it's too late, and that there's some opportunity for the public to be involved. As I said, this did cost \$800,000, and it would be a shame to see it just sitting on a shelf like so many other reports, gathering dust. The children of this province are worth much more than that.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk a bit about this report here. And you're familiar with this report, and the minister's familiar with this report. And all members opposite would be very familiar with a promise that they would reconvene the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade. That was a promise made in 2007, and that has been a promise that has not been kept. It has been broken. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, I had just taken over the supper hour . . . I just wanted to double-check, because the former minister of Social Services told me last year that it went actually over to the Minister of Justice. But the Minister of Justice would be happy to know that I looked in his mandate letter, and it's not there. So it's fallen between the cracks.

Mr. Speaker, this is too important, too important that we allow this to fall through the cracks. This is just not another promise. This government made this promise in good faith to the people, and they should not let this go. They should not let this go.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I was at a conference just a few weeks ago for people living with disabilities and the abuse that they suffer. Three words that do not appear in this document, Mr. Speaker: gangs, Internet, and people living with disabilities. We need to update this work. It's too important to let it fall through the cracks, and I challenge the government. This is where they have failed. They need to do something about this. It was too important to let go.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to close, and I want to close . . . I've quoted from *The StarPhoenix*. I've quoted from different things, from Mark Lemstra, but I just want to close, reading from a letter from a mom who's written a letter about how she feels about how things are going in this province. Now this is where I get the idea of the toll road. And it came across my desk today. And this letter has been given to both the Minister of Social Services . . . She wrote both the . . . She wrote the Premier, and I understand the letter's been referred to the Minister of Social Services. I quote:

Both my husband and I are well educated people. I'm trained as a youth pastor and my husband a heavy duty mechanic. We had hoped to stay in our own province but right now it's a mess for renters, and a free-for-all for landlords.

Please keep pressing the Wall Government to help their people out here in the real world — and hopefully as Mr. Wall ages he can mature into a man who actually listens — not assumes.

Thank you for your time on this pressing matter. I appreciate you actually listening to the people — today we paid an extra \$300.00 more on our rent for October 1st — a \$300.00 that should have went to purchasing snowsuits, boots for our three children or could have been saved. Instead my husband works more and more shifts just to keep up.

We pray you can make a difference with your position and voice.

Mr. Speaker, this is a person, this is a family that's working. They have a job, a very good job. They are well-educated. And their rent's gone up by \$700 this year. That's incredible. That's incredible. We need to do something about that because this province . . . This is not just another road. This is a toll road.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment and voting against the main resolution. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, the Minister Responsible for Government Services.

**Hon. Ms. Ross:** — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to stand and give a reply to the Speech from the Throne. The Throne Speech outlined a new road, a direction set out by our government, a new road of reducing taxes while providing essential services and at the same time providing responsible, strong leadership for our province.

Now I would like to take a moment and join with my colleagues and extend best wishes to our newest Member of the Legislative Assembly, the member from Saskatoon Northwest. I have every confidence that the member from Saskatoon Northwest will do an outstanding job representing the good people from his constituency. Now this summer I had the opportunity to speak with many of his constituents, and they said that they had been well served by him as a city councillor, and they believe that they will be well served by him as their new MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. So congratulations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my constituents in the great constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley. Now I appreciate the confidence that they showed in me when they elected me to represent them in the Legislative Assembly. I would like to also take this opportunity to thank my constituency assistant, Kelly Zazula. Kelly does an absolutely incredible job in my constituency. It is her support and help that makes my job easier. And when I go and meet people, they tell me how much they appreciate the kind and helpful manner in which she treats their concerns. So I want to extend my gratitude to Kelly for the wonderful work she does day in and day out.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my ministerial office staff: Gary, Selena, Sally, and our newest member, Joette. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my family for their support over the past years. My family has been there for me during the good times and they've also been there for some of the most interesting times in this journey of ours. And I couldn't have done it without their unconditional support.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to also thank the Premier for entrusting me with the responsibility of Minister of Government Services. It is a responsibility that I look forward to.

Mr. Speaker, when I was campaigning in 2007, knocking on doors and talking to the residents of my constituency, they told me they wanted a fiscal, responsible government that would keep an eye on the spending and pay down the debt.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the summer of 2009, the Premier asked the members of the Assembly to reach out to the residents in our constituency and ask them what they felt we should do with the benefits of growth. In Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, we went and knocked on hundreds of doors. And the residents? Well they were surprised to see us at their doorstep because it wasn't an election year, and here we were at their homes consulting with them, asking them what they thought.

Now many of my constituents told me that it was the first time that a government had ever asked them what they thought. And this spring when our farmers were experiencing exceptional wet conditions, I talked to many of the farmers in my Regina Qu'Appelle Valley. And they shared their concerns with me, but they also shared with me the optimism of their crop year.

In partnership with our federal counterparts, our government responded quickly to the concerns of our Saskatchewan farm families. An additional 360 million was made available to help those hit by flooded croplands, and the farmers thank us.

I would also like to thank the residents of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley for sharing their ideas, their suggestions on issues that were most important to them. Now the message I heard over and over again as I talked to my constituents is, pay down the debt, more money for infrastructure, and careful spending so that the people of Saskatchewan can benefit from our strong economy.

Mr. Speaker, the new road our government has taken has resulted in a reduction of government debt by \$2.7 billion. When our government took office, the provincial debt was at \$6.8 billion. Now this is a reduction of close to 40 per cent in three years. This reduction will save Saskatchewan taxpayers millions of dollars in interest costs in the coming years. This reduction of 2.7 billion shows that we are a responsible government.

Mr. Speaker, when the federal government decided to suspend the ecoENERGY program, our government allocated an additional 9.4 million to the EnerGuide budget. A new program will be developed when the EnerGuide program winds down in the spring of 2011. The new program will continue to encourage homeowners to make energy-efficient upgrades in their homes. This is what my constituents asked for, and that's what the people of Saskatchewan have asked for when they elected us to office. The people of Saskatchewan spoke and we have listened.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley have shared with me that they were concerned about the education and how upset they were that people from Saskatchewan were paying some of the highest taxes, highest property taxes in Canada.

Now our government has paved a new road for the people of Saskatchewan, a new road where we as government introduced a historic property tax reduction plan. And along the new road, our government has introduced the largest single income tax reduction in Saskatchewan's history. A total of 80,000 low-income taxpayers are dropped off the tax roll. Those who pay no taxes will now benefit also from the new low-income tax credit which replaces and significantly increases the

Saskatchewan tax credit. Again the people of Saskatchewan spoke and we listened.

Mr. Speaker, in continuing down the new road for our province, we will ensure the needs and the rights of patients remain paramount by creating a health ombudsman within the office of the current Provincial Ombudsman.

Mr. Speaker, on the old road there were no targets set to tackle the serious nursing shortage in this province, and on the new road a target to hire 800 nurses was set. This target has not only been met but surpassed. There are 830 new nurses working here in Saskatchewan.

When I was the legislative secretary to the Minister of Health for nurse recruitment and retention, I had the opportunity, along with health care professionals from across this province, to attend health careers across Canada. Now at these events it was my pleasure to represent our province. I was able to share with everyone the good news about Saskatchewan. Meeting the target and surpassing the target to hire 800 nurses has extreme significance and a lot of pride for myself.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming years the number of registered nursing students beginning education in our province will also increase. A total of 130 seats has already been added. An additional 170 seats are on their way.

Mr. Speaker, on the old road Saskatchewan saw a nursing shortage. Along with that nursing shortage was a shortage of physicians. Direct physician recruitment in Saskatchewan was largely responsible of the health regions, their communities, and individual physician practices. On the new road we have the physician recruitment agency of Saskatchewan. Now this agency will coordinate the many facets of recruitment and will be responsible for all of this. It'll be responsible for coordinating recruitment and retention efforts between the health regions, community, and physician practices and act as a central point of contact for a physician seeking to practise right here in our wonderful province of Saskatchewan, improving communications between health regions and communities with graduates from the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan.

They will also be reducing competition for physicians between communities and health regions. They will also provide recruitment expertise to communities, physician practices, and health agencies, especially in those areas with less experience, collaborating with key stakeholders with respect to recruitment and retention programs and the services for physicians.

We are being innovative. We are also succeeding in attracting more physicians to Saskatchewan, and we're going to convince more of our medical grads to set up practice here. That is what we call homegrown satisfaction.

Mr. Speaker, our government is building a stronger Saskatchewan, a better life for Saskatchewan people. Saskatchewan's economy is strong and growing. Chartered banks are predicting national leading growth for Saskatchewan.

[20:00]

Now in my constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, new businesses are opening. New homes are being built each and every day. Regina Qu'Appelle Valley is the place to be. These are the signs of a strong economy, and this new road is marked by steady and continued growth.

Mr. Speaker, a recent survey by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business reported that business optimism in Saskatchewan hit a two-year high, leading all other provinces. Fifty-five per cent of the businesses rated the overall state of business as good, as compared to 36 per cent nationally. On the new road, a red tape reduction will increase the competitiveness of our province's business environment, and this will grow our economy.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, in my constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, new homes are being built every day. Young families with children are moving into the area. Our government recognizes the importance of raising children and how physical activities and healthy eating promotes good health.

Our government recently launched the Healthy Kids School Challenge. We recognize the good work of the schools across the province in providing children and youth opportunities to be physically active and offer healthy food options during the school day. The Healthy Kids School Challenge will increase awareness and provide additional support and encouragement for our students, teachers, and the schools implementing this daily physical activity.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the need for everyone to have the opportunity to participate in the workforce, thus our government has improved child care. Funding has been allocated for more than 2,900 new licensed child spaces since our government came into office. And by the end of March of 2011, the number of child care spaces in Saskatchewan will have increased by more than 30 per cent.

Now on this new road, our government has not forgotten about the low-income earners. As previously stated, our government introduced the largest single-year income tax reduction in Saskatchewan's history with a total of 80,000 low-income taxpayers being dropped off the tax rolls. The amount paid to low-income families through Saskatchewan employment supplements, a supplement for low-income families with dependent children under the age of 18, was increased and the threshold for those who qualify has also increased. Our government has increased Sask rental housing supplement four times and indexed the benefit to the cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, on the new road, our government has not left out seniors. Our government is working to build a better life for Saskatchewan seniors. And we recognize that many seniors on fixed incomes may be struggling to deal with high costs, so we have increased the income threshold for seniors for qualifying for social housing. We have more than doubled the available to low-income seniors through the senior income plan from \$90 to \$190 a month for single seniors, and \$72.50 to \$155 each for a couple. This is the first increase for the seniors' income plan since 1992.

Mr. Speaker, as stated in the Throne Speech, our government

realizes that a lack of affordable homes is creating a challenge across this wonderful province of Saskatchewan. In the near future, our government will be providing information on the new Head Start on a Home program. This new program will see our government working with the private sector in the construction of 1,000 new, affordable homes for low- to moderate-income families. Our government has already helped more than 300 low- to moderate-income families achieving home ownership. Mr. Speaker, since taking office our government has opened over 700 additional affordable housing units plus there are 1,250 more units in development and in the planning stages.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, when speaking with my constituents from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, they wanted to see more money put into infrastructure. Our government listened and responded to those concerns. On the new road, our government announced in 2008 and 2009 budget the largest transportation budget in Saskatchewan's history of 513 million. Efforts to improve and repair Saskatchewan's long-neglected highways continue. In the past year alone, work on more than 1129 kilometres of highways was tendered. And at the end of this summer, the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure will have completed 993 kilometres of maintenance and safety improvements to Saskatchewan highways.

Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I know. You did it all yourself, Jim. Oh, shouldn't have said that. Sorry. I do apologize.

Mr. Speaker, on October the 1st, 2007, Saskatchewan's population was just over 1 million. In the past three years, we have increased Saskatchewan by 40,626 new residents, and they are calling Saskatchewan home. This year we saw the largest year-over-year increase since 1953. Saskatchewan's population grew at the fastest rate of any Canadian province over the past year according to Statistics Canada. On the old road, Saskatchewan was actually losing people. Now our son, John, was one of those very talented young people that moved to Alberta. Now he was helping that province grow. On the old road, people couldn't build their future here. On the new road, we are the fastest growing province in the country. People are looking for opportunities and a great quality of life. And that's what we have right here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I can imagine nothing better than to have everyone in this House vote in favour of the Speech from the Throne that will continue to promote and move our province forward on this very new road. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting in favour of the Throne Speech. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to respond to the Speech from the Throne, but I want to start by congratulating our new colleague from Saskatoon Northwest. Mr. Speaker, I believe many of us going into a by-election three years, Mr. Speaker, into a term, I think we were all concerned because usually that's an opportunity for the electorate to send the government a message if there's something that they don't

like that's going on in the province, if they don't like the direction the present-day government's going. But the message they seem to have sent here is there must be some satisfaction with the government because we increased our percentage of vote in that riding.

Where I get the idea that a message is sent in by-elections, Mr. Speaker, I think of the member for Regina Douglas Park, I believe it was, and the former Finance minister, Harry Van Mulligen. And then when a by-election was called, the present Leader of the Opposition ran in that riding. And I believe Harry Van Mulligen won that seat by about 2,000 or more votes in the previous election. And when the Leader of the Opposition ran in the by-election, he won by I think it was about 500 votes. So a message, Mr. Speaker, I believe was sent in that case that he wasn't quite as popular as the previous Finance minister, Mr. Van Mulligen.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes tonight to just talk about some of the good things happening in my constituency. And the one that comes to mind right away was I had the opportunity to go to an opening of a daycare centre in Langenburg the other day. And the present Finance minister, but the previous minister of Education, and I had gone out this spring — a very wet day out there — but they had the sod-turning to kick off this project out there.

And there's a group of young ladies out there, young mothers, that have done a tremendous amount of work in that community to raise money for this new facility — just a beautiful building out there. I think it has the capacity for about 60 daycare spots out there. There's room for expansion into that. And they've done a tremendous job in that community with the help of local community residents but also the RM [rural municipality] and the town and surrounding RMs. They've done a good job out there to put this facility together — just a beautiful building, Mr. Speaker.

Melville's another example of good things happening, Mr. Speaker. We have the new Melville stadium going up as we speak. I believe in about March that building will be completed. We have the Crop Insurance building with the expansion going on that in Melville where there will be about 110 employees, when they're finished hiring for that project, to add to the Crop Insurance building that's already there to administer the AgStability program.

So, Mr. Speaker, some good things happening there. I honestly believe, Mr. Speaker, there's good things happening right across Saskatchewan in small towns. You talk to many people in small town Saskatchewan where probably four or five years ago there was a number of houses in each community that you couldn't give away, Mr. Speaker, or at least 10 or \$15,000 would probably have been top price, where now the biggest problem they have out there is finding serviced lots for new houses that are going up. And people coming from all over Western Canada, in fact for that matter even Eastern Canada, to buy houses in small town rural Saskatchewan because even though they've gone up in price dramatically, they find it's still cheaper than many of the other areas in Canada and just a great place to live in small town Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to touch on a few other areas. I want to

touch on the Minister of Highways for a few minutes. Been receiving a number of complaints about the Minister of Highways this summer, Mr. Speaker, and I noticed one of the members opposite was talking about it a few minutes ago. The biggest complaint I get, Mr. Speaker, is that he's slowing down traffic right across the province because every time you go to go to Regina or Saskatoon, wherever you're going, going west or going east, there's construction going on out there, Mr. Speaker.

And I've taken that issue to the Minister of Highways and I complained, Mr. Speaker, and he insists on putting more money into highways. He won't change the direction. He's going to keep fixing those highways in spite of my concerns. So, Mr. Speaker, you know some of the problems we have with our colleagues on a day-to-day basis — and we get along very well — but they don't always listen, Mr. Speaker. So I guess we're stuck with construction on pretty well every highway in this province — until he gets them all fixed, of course.

I want to talk about health care a little bit. And I really want to commend the member from Melfort on the STARS [shock trauma air rescue service] program, and the Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker. I'm a little biased and I'm from rural Saskatchewan, and I think the STARS program is one of the biggest things to help out rural Saskatchewan, whether it's the oil industry or the potash industry or mining sector right across Saskatchewan, but I'm also thinking of the farming community. When we go out there and we see from time to time accidents with balers out there or, you know, at harvest time we have accidents out there, that program will be able to land a helicopter right out in the field, right . . . We hope it never happens again, but we know from time to time these accidents happen.

I think this is such a great addition for rural Saskatchewan out there, and I believe in the long run it will save lives. Whether it's a heart attack or an accident or whatever the situation, unfortunate situation is, I think rural Saskatchewan will definitely like this program and will benefit from it very much.

So as I said, Mr. Speaker, I believe rural Saskatchewan, the attitude is changing out there. Where it was a few short years ago that people out there, I think, seemed to have that defeatist attitude where we can't because the present day government at that time kept promoting that. They were planning for a decline. I think that was, you know, over the years we've had previous ministers even say, the more people leave Saskatchewan there's more left for the rest of us. And that was the attitude over there.

That's changing, Mr. Speaker. I don't think . . . I go back to my own constituency where we have potash mine expansion. We have seismic work going right across my constituency and many other constituencies in the province where people are out there working, making decent wages in most cases. And actually our biggest problem is we need more skilled labour out there.

I know, Mr. Speaker, in your constituency with the Rocanville mine and mine with IMC, with K1, K2, with Mosaic, just great things happening out there. A tremendous amount of young families moving in. And again when I go back to a place like Langenburg and their daycare centre, young families moving in, I think it's been a long time in this province since we've seen

such a positive attitude going on out there.

I also want to talk about the previous Finance minister, and the Finance minister today for that matter, on the debt reduction because I think we all know when the debt was reduced and paid down from \$6.8 billion to \$4.1 billion, the interest saved alone on that \$2.7 billion is going to health care, education, many of the programs, even some of the farm programs that we've come out with this summer. Those dollars partly come out of the savings because we've paid the debt down, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk somewhat tonight about agriculture. And I know the Leader of the Opposition will be interested in this because the difference between me and him is I'm actually going to talk fact and I'm not going to fabricate the numbers as he's been doing for I don't know how long. He puts out press releases every Friday afternoon, and some of the numbers he comes up with I have no idea where he gets them, but I believe probably he picks a number, puts it in a press release and figures that everybody's going to believe these numbers. Well I have a problem with that, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to deal with the facts here today.

[20:15]

It's been a frustrating year for farmers and ranchers across this province, Mr. Speaker. And I know the member for Kelvington-Wadena, Canora-Pelly, Humboldt, Melfort, even touching in my own area, Mr. Speaker, where the worst of the wet area is . . . Foam Lake, up in Margo, up in that area we toured this spring up there. And I've seen wet when I farmed out there, Mr. Speaker, but I have saw nothing like these people had to put up with this spring. A large portion of their crops couldn't be seeded. I know in some cases that we've talked to producers out there where they might have only got 10 or 15 per cent of their crop, maybe 20 per cent, and the rest of it couldn't be seeded.

Mr. Speaker, they asked us for help and we came to the table. The first thing we did is contacted the federal Minister of Agriculture, got him to come out and take a look at how severe the problem was in Saskatchewan. And with that — and I felt it was one of the quickest reaction times the federal government has ever had was when they responded — and together we come out with a \$360 million excess moisture program. Mr. Speaker, did it solve all the problems in the member for Kelvington-Wadena's area? No it didn't. Same in Canora-Pelly and same in all the other areas. It didn't solve all the problems out there. But, Mr. Speaker, I think many of the producers out there were grateful that they got something to help them pay some of the bills and get through this summer.

Mr. Speaker, it's been an odd year in Saskatchewan for cattle producers also. And we started out this spring by a \$20 million drought payment in the central-northwest part of the province, Mr. Speaker, where in 2009 producers had had a drought in that area, where they had no feed, no pasture all summer, and had additional expenses just to be able to keep their cattle. And I believe it was a \$19 million program that we came out with for a number of areas out in the west-central part of the province to help producers there.

Mr. Speaker, on the one hand there's some optimism, I believe, in the livestock sector. Provincially we have about 180 per cent of the normal hay crop that we would have. Now the quality naturally is not near what we would like to see it when there's been so much rain out there, and it's not in a lot of the areas that I previously talked about here where it was so wet. But overall there is a pretty good supply of feed even though it's lower quality.

The other optimistic thing I think we're seeing, Mr. Speaker, is the calf prices and cattle prices are improving gradually. And I think that's probably a really good sign rather than having them jump quick and then drop back down. In spite of the high dollar, cattle prices are increasing. Calf prices this fall are better than they've been for a number of years. That's the good side. The downside, of course, is we have areas out there short of feed and had a tough summer finding pasture for their cattle and things like that. So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, it's been a very frustrating year.

Mr. Speaker, the crop insurance program, where we tried to make some improvements to the program over the first three years we've been in power, has paid out about \$250 million to this point — a quarter of a billion dollars. Most of that was through unseeded acreages and establishment benefit, the part of the program for crop insurance. As I said before, the excess moisture program has also paid out to date about a quarter of a billion dollars.

So when you add those two together knowing, Mr. Speaker, that AgriStability is going to be up this year, the cost for the provincial government, the cost for the crop insurance claims that are still coming in, Mr. Speaker, for yield claim and quality loss and things like that, Mr. Speaker, we know this is probably going to be a record amount of dollars in the province of Saskatchewan that's gone into the agriculture sector from the provincial government.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, have we solved all the problems? Not for a minute. We hope we have made a difference out there, especially with some of the changes we made to some of the programming, and of course there's more changes that we need to make. Especially after a year like this, Mr. Speaker, where it tests the mettle of every program we got right now to see if they work. AgriStability is going to be a good example to see just how responsive it's going to be and whether more changes need to be made there to make improvements for the industry right across the province.

Mr. Speaker, another program that we brought in the first year we were in, of course, was the FRWIP [farm and ranch water infrastructure program] program for drilling wells and dugouts and pipelines and things like that. And of course the Southwest at that point had gone through four years of drought and really had no response from the previous government whatsoever.

We brought this program in. We put, between us and the federal government, we cost shared a \$15 million program. The problem we had, Mr. Speaker, was that the uptake was so great that the applications that came in were actually closer to \$30 million. So we went back to the federal government, Mr. Speaker, got their okay, and we cost shared on that \$30 million program.

That program, because it went over so good in the Southwest, Mr. Speaker, we've made it province-wide right now and there's, between the federal government and provincial government, there's a \$53 million program over the next four years to drill on farm wells, dugouts, and pipelines and things like that. So over the long haul I think this is a program that will help producers out there over, you know, the years to come. If your well goes dry or it starts to go dry and you've got to drill a new well, well there's a 50 per cent cost sharing with the governments and I think that's a help, Mr. Speaker.

Of course remembering a year ago that we paid the \$71 million to 18,000 cattle and hog producers across the province in 2009, Mr. Speaker, that I think was very much needed out there and I hope, I believe it was appreciated by many in the industry. We come up, Mr. Speaker, with something that had been asked for for many, many years where there was an 80 per cent wildlife damage compensation. And I guess the complaint that most producers had out there was if you insure your house and you happen to have the unfortunate thing happen to have a fire out there, you insured it for 100 per cent; that's what you were hoping to get back. Where in this situation with the compensation program for wildlife, you were only ever covered to the point of 80 per cent. We've topped that up to 100 per cent and that additional 20 per cent is entirely provincial dollars that went in to do that. That was something that producers had asked for many, many years and hadn't got to this point.

The livestock predation compensation program, Mr. Speaker. That's a program where last year we had the coyote program of course, and we have so many coyotes in the province and we still do have many, many coyotes in the province even though we did take out a great number of the coyotes. We still have a number of calves being killed or sheep or whatever it is out there that the livestock producer are raising, from time to time predators are killing some of these animals. Well right now this program will pay you of a portion of the value up to so much for a calf, \$400 for a calf out there, Mr. Speaker. And if you have to take an animal to the vet, we'll pay a portion of the vet bill out there.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that was long overdue because as we know everyone in the province likes the wildlife, but on the other hand farmers are being asked to pick up the tab when something happened out there. It was their loss and nobody was sharing them with that compensation. So I think that was a program that was long overdue and we've tried to help livestock producers right across the province with this program.

Mr. Speaker, swath, bale, and corn grazing damage compensation — just one more part in addition to the crop insurance program and the wildlife damage compensation program that we have out there to help producers with some of these new ways of feeding their cattle in the winter, whether it's swath grazing, things like that.

Gopher control rebate program. The Southwest had a real problem here a few years ago. That's an ongoing, province-wide program right now.

Mr. Speaker, we also brought in the Crown land sale program where we tried to help producers out there buy Crown land leases where they'd been leasing for years, and we feel that it

would just be probably a better situation if they owned many acres of this land under their name. And it would help, whether they're passing this land on to their son or somebody else in their family, that they would have more equity to go out and borrow money to be able to expand their operation.

Mr. Speaker, we also have the voluntary livestock traceability rebate. And I think that was a fairly big issue at one point here where the federal government and some of the other provinces wanted to do a deal with the traceability issue — but not on a voluntary basis, making it mandatory. And we certainly weren't for that. We're working with the industry and trying to get them into the traceability program themselves at their own speed, and I think that's starting to show results right across the province.

We've had principal payment extensions on cattle and hog loans, Mr. Speaker, where producers weren't getting very good prices for either the cattle industry or the hog industry. So we put off the principal payments in that case where they pay the interest, but the principal will be carried over.

Mr. Speaker, another area that I think we've made improvements out there and we've had producers respond to is expanding extension services right across the province. As we know, the previous government I believe cut 31 rural offices across the province, 22 of them being rural service centres out there, but at the same time took away some of the specialities that we had out there and the specialists that actually were still in offices out there. But the government of the day wasn't promoting the knowledge that they had and to let them go out and work with producers right across the province. So I think that's an improvement out there.

One of the other areas, Mr. Speaker, that we've committed to — and we did it in the first year we got into power, and we've done it consistently through — is fully funding the programming, fully funding AgriStability and the AgriInvest programs. And we'll do that again this year, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know the cost for AgriStability is going to be much higher this year, and we've made that commitment already that whatever it is, wherever it goes, we will honour our commitment and help our farmers and ranchers across this province get through a pretty trying year.

I just want to take a minute before I close, Mr. Speaker, and talk about the Leader of the Opposition, who happens to be the Ag critic. And boy, that's kind of an odd situation considering the help that producers got over the last 16 years before we got here and how they ignored rural Saskatchewan.

You know I think of, Mr. Speaker, a number of situations where the Leader of the Opposition actually for a short period of time was Ag minister. But in the early '90s when they cut the GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] program for producers and broke contracts with farmers across this province — me being one of them at that time, I remember, Mr. Speaker — where the GRIP program was a good program at that time. We relied on it. And when the NDP came to power in 1991, one of the first things they did was break that contract with producers.

And I remember it well, because the Leader of the Opposition was the deputy premier at that time, Mr. Speaker, and I presume he sat at the cabinet table and okayed that cut. In fact he maybe

initiated it; I don't know, Mr. Speaker. But he was certainly in a pretty high position at the table when the NDP were in power when they cut that program.

The other area, Mr. Speaker, in the early '90s . . . And we all know this, many on this side. I know the member for Rosetown was involved with an RM out there. Many others were involved with RM councils when they cut municipal funding. Early '90s, Mr. Speaker, Leader of the Opposition was sitting as deputy premier at that time. Again a pretty high portfolio he carried, and must have okayed cutting funding to municipalities, or maybe even again he initiated those cuts. I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker.

Revenue sharing again for municipalities we're going to deal with, Mr. Speaker. We've made the commitment this year to go to 1 per cent of the PST [provincial sales tax] and we're honouring that commitment. And I think municipalities right across this province, whether the urban or rural, are looking forward to that commitment being kept.

Mr. Speaker, I think as the Leader of the Opposition quite often on a Friday will put out a press release and say we should be doing more for agriculture, well yes, I guess it doesn't matter what you do. You could always do more, Mr. Speaker. But I find the hypocrisy amazing coming from that member, because for 16 years, producers across this province had absolutely no faith in the NDP government of the day. We saw our hospitals being closed out there. I think the Minister of Health talked earlier today or yesterday about the 52 hospitals being closed across the province. The Leader of the Opposition sat as deputy premier when every one of those 52 hospitals were being closed in just about every constituency in rural Saskatchewan.

And did they stop there? Did the deputy premier stop them there, of the former NDP government? No, they come back in; they closed the Plains hospital. And you know, Mr. Speaker, why that's important to rural Saskatchewan? Because that hospital was utilized by everybody in rural Saskatchewan from every rural community and every farm, and it was accessible. You could drive in from eastern Saskatchewan and see that hospital. It wasn't hard to get to, and it was actually . . . parking was very good out there. It was just a very good hospital, especially for people coming in where they didn't know where they were going and went to that hospital. And never forget, the Leader of the Opposition was deputy premier when those decisions were made to download on rural Saskatchewan. Never forget that, Mr. Speaker.

So when I hear the new saviour of rural Saskatchewan, the member for Regina Douglas Park, the Leader of the Opposition, telling me and every MLA on this side that he's going to be the new saviour, well I don't believe it. We don't believe it. But even better than that, there isn't one person from rural Saskatchewan that believes one word that he says, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to join in the debate, and obviously I will not be supporting the Speech from the Throne. And, Mr. Speaker, about the only thing I'm happy about when it comes to this

Speech from the Throne, it's the last Speech from the Throne we're going to hear from that Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker. And people are rejoicing throughout Saskatchewan. It's the last Throne Speech you've got to hear from that government, Mr. Speaker.

And one more year, 12 more months, and they're out of there, Mr. Speaker, because of their incompetence, their lack of leadership, and the fact that they have distorted the history of Saskatchewan to a point where now we're paying the price, and we'll continue paying the price. And, Mr. Speaker, people of Saskatchewan are waking up to the fairy tale called the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. It is a fairy tale, Mr. Speaker.

And let me refresh the memories of those people across the way, Mr. Speaker, when they talk about 16 years. It was with interest that I listened to the member from Lloydminster talk about Grant Devine in 1991. Well I don't know how old that member was, Mr. Speaker, in 1991, but I can almost guarantee you he wasn't paying attention to the challenges that Saskatchewan faced in 1991, Mr. Speaker. He was not paying any attention to the challenges that we had to face. And for him to get up there and have the audacity to talk about what's wrong with Saskatchewan, well, Mr. Speaker, the reason he did that is because he is blindly told what to say in the Assembly, and he followed his orders, Mr. Speaker. He followed his orders.

[20:30]

And everywhere you go they're told, this is what you say. And you only mention 16 years. Don't mention past 16 years because guess what? Some of us were involved in government at the time. That's the reason why they say 16 years of government rule, Mr. Speaker.

And they stand up and they self-congratulate themselves and pat themselves on the back. And what they say, oh we did this in our first term. Well, Mr. Speaker, when the NDP took over in 1991, thank goodness they did. In 1991 we were so broke we could barely pay the salaries of people that worked for the provincial government, Mr. Speaker. That's how broke this province was.

And if that party across the way wants to revisit history and only take 16 years out of it, well let me remind them what happened in 1991 when we took over. When the NDP took over this office, Mr. Speaker, took over as government, we paid three times more in interest than what you put in the Education budget, Mr. Speaker. There's almost \$900 million, over \$900 million that we paid in interest, and our budget for education was 300 million. And guess what? The education system had to pay a price for your mismanagement. That's what happened.

And, Mr. Speaker, let me talk about the debt, the debt that you left us. And all of a sudden \$15.4 billion, nothing in the Crowns. Everywhere you go there's just bills and bills and bills and bills left by you guys. And you come along and say, 16 years the NDP didn't do this. Well my goodness, my goodness, to see grown men and women get up and propagate that story, get out and say to the world over and over — ad nauseam I think is the phrase — well, Mr. Speaker, we don't expect that kind of leadership from the people that's supposed to represent the people of Saskatchewan. And I say to all of you, shame on



you — shame on you for propagating that kind of stuff to the people of Saskatchewan because people know the history of Saskatchewan. They know that you almost broke this province. You almost broke this province, and yet you come back and you say to us, oh we're fixing the roads now. We're fixing the roads now. We're putting money into health care now. We're doing this now. We're doing that now.

Well people don't believe you for one second, not one second do they believe you. Not one second because we know, a lot of people know, especially New Democrats, they know that it's not true. Why can't you guys get up and speak once, once with facts in mind? Get up and speak once about facts in mind.

And let me tell you one thing that's really important I've told everybody where I go. You had the NDP who were in power for 16 years, the last 16 years prior to 2007. And of that 16 years, it took us 14 years to clean up your mess, Mr. Speaker. Fourteen years to clean up your mess. And as soon as we started getting things moving, then the economy starts to move. There's money in the bank. There's people working. There's optimism in the air.

All of a sudden you guys come back, to what? Finish off the job. You come back to kill off Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And the only party that is going to stand up to your style of politics is this party on this side, Mr. Speaker. One hundred per cent. We're going to stand up to you guys, and we're going to tell you guys exactly what the history was.

So none of this 16 years because there was . . . Saskatchewan existed 17 years ago. Saskatchewan existed 18 years ago. Saskatchewan existed 20 years ago. Why don't you guys talk about that? You know why you won't talk prior to 16 years? It's because you're ashamed of your history. That's why. You're ashamed of your history. And some of you guys, including your leader, worked for that administration and you know it. The people of Saskatchewan know it, and every New Democrat knows it, Mr. Speaker. Every New Democrat knows it. And I'm going to stand from every stage that I can stand, and I'm going to tell the people of Saskatchewan the truth.

In 1991, Mr. Speaker, this province was almost broke, almost broke. And we had no choice but to take the tough stand and take the tough decisions made to recapture what Saskatchewan's history was, and it's glorious history, and you guys almost ruined it for us. And you can't say for one instance that you guys weren't part and parcel of that group because 90 per cent of you were there, 90 per cent of you guys were there. So we're not going to sit here and listen to your rant about 16 years and your self-congratulatory message about we're doing this, we're doing that. We don't buy it for one minute. We don't buy it for one minute. And, Mr. Speaker, the more you say it, the more we're going to tell people they are full of it, Mr. Speaker. And I'm not going to tell you what you're full of, but you know exactly what I mean.

Mr. Speaker, what's important, what's important is that nowadays, nowadays the people of Saskatchewan gave you a break. They gave you a break. Let's try these guys out. Yes, the NDP had some tough rounds. The NDP did a lot of wonderful things and the NDP . . . maybe it's time for them a break. And they trusted you guys. But you betrayed that trust. And how did

you betray that trust? Well your Minister of Resources there, the guy that's supposed to be a structural engineer, and we find out, as the member from Prince Albert said, he took a two-week welding course. Well he says, hold it. Time out. We can expect this much money from the potash corporations. The Finance people said oh, no, no. We've got to be careful here. No, no, I know what I'm doing. What happened, Mr. Speaker? He was \$1.2 billion off the mark — \$1.2 billion off the mark. And when it comes to you guys governing, oh what's 1 billion or 2 billion here and there? And what is that? It's chump change.

And, Mr. Speaker, if this administration, given its history, has been off even 1 per cent in their projections, we would . . . there would be hell to pay from the media, from every corner of Saskatchewan. But these guys make a \$1.2 billion error, hey, no problem. It's part of governing. It's part of what they are expected to do.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the people of Saskatchewan should expect that. They should expect more from this government instead of self-congratulatory messages that you keep harping on in this Assembly. You should be ashamed of repeating those lines: for 16 years the NDP didn't do nothing. We've done more to rebuild this province than you guys will ever hope to do. And that's the absolute truth.

Thank goodness that the NDP were in power for 16 years because you, if you guys got back sooner, you would have finished off Saskatchewan like you are doing now, Mr. Speaker. And that why this Speech from the Throne is so refreshing because it is their last one. That's the only thing refreshing about your Throne Speech is it's your last one.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again I look at the whole notion of our Premier going off to Ottawa. He's the one-time radio station DJ [disc jockey] from Swift Current. Well I think you need a bit more qualification than that to lead the province. And you're going to go to Ottawa, and you're going to go fight for potash. And that's exactly our point today as New Democrats in this province, is that you ought to make sure you know what you're talking about before you go off to your journey to Ottawa. And let's look back at the Potash Corporation. Let's look back at the potash issue.

When you talk about what you guys, the debt that you put our province in, and the fact that your first full . . . your own budget, you're \$1.2 billion off the mark. And now we see, now we see over the next three or four years, they're going to be in debt how much more? \$4.2 billion more — \$4.2 billion more. You guys are putting this province into debt, 4.2 billion. This is your document. These are your documents. And now we go to potash. And how much more are we expected to lose for the next eight to ten years? Between 2 and \$6 billion. Two and \$6 billion, that's what they're losing in potash alone.

So I think you need more than a welding course and running a radio station to make sure that Saskatchewan's interests are protected, Mr. Speaker. We don't have the leadership from that Premier and that party, Mr. Speaker, and that's it. And about the only thing that you guys have been doing consistently since you've been in government is you've been out of government so long you didn't know how to act like a government. You turn around and say, well that's their fault. Well whose fault is it?

We're in opposition. You guys are government. You've been in government . . . in opposition so long you don't even know how to act like a government.

And you know, I look at your leader's, your leader's record when he goes to Stephen Harper and talks to him about some of the Saskatchewan interests. When it comes to clean coal technology, how much did he get? Nothing. When it comes to the equalization? Nothing. When it comes to the dome stadium? Nothing. And now it comes to the single most important issue on potash. What did you get? Nothing.

And you guys sit there, you say, oh but those guys were in power 16 years. Like, wake up, you've got to stop blaming the NDP for your lack of leadership. That's the problem. You guys got to stand up on your own two feet and figure it out, you know, figure it out. Come on you guys figure it out because the people are saying to you guys, we gave you the opportunity, and all of a sudden they're beginning to realize that you guys don't know what you're doing. You don't have a single idea, a single clue what you're doing as government, and that's a fundamental flaw. It's a dangerous flaw that the Sask Party government has provided, and certainly people of Saskatchewan are beginning to learn, Mr. Speaker. They are beginning to learn.

And, Mr. Speaker, I look at some of the challenges faced by the municipalities, guess what? When we had to rebuild the credibility and the finance of this province, guess what? It was the municipality that sacrificed. And, Mr. Speaker, guess what? The business community also sacrificed, Mr. Speaker. The business community paid extra fees. They paid extra costs because they had to rebuild this province. Every single person, the unions, the working people in this province understood they had to do their share. Absolutely everybody that had to do their share stepped up at the time to make sure we rebuilt our financial credibility in this province. And as a province, we did that together, Mr. Speaker.

So we thank today, we thank today the business community. We thank today the labour movement. We thank today the municipalities that we simply . . . They knew and they saw they had no choice but to do exactly what needed to be done and that was to tighten our belts and to all rebuild this province together, Mr. Speaker. They know it. We know it, and everybody in the room knows it as well, Mr. Speaker.

So I'll say to this is what is really important is that for the last 16 years that we had been in power, 14 of those first 16 years was spent cleaning up your mess. That's what we did, Mr. Speaker — cleaning up your mess. We cleaned up your mess, Mr. Speaker.

And that's the other thing. And nowadays the government . . . [inaudible] . . . have a new phrase. What do they call that? The infrastructure deficit. That's the phrase they use — infrastructure deficit. Well guess what? Guess what? If you have no money you can't buy new highways equipment. So we couldn't buy new highways equipment. If you have no money, guess what? You can't refurbish your power plant. If you have no money, guess what? You can't do a lot of things you want to do in health care. And that, the fact of the matter is, no matter how you phrase it, the bottom line is you nearly broke the province

of Saskatchewan. And now you have the audacity to stand up and say, for 16 years you guys didn't do anything.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we had no money. We had no money. And you know why we had no money? Because you guys left this province on the brink of bankruptcy. Whether it was the Crowns or whether it was the General Revenue Fund, wherever there is money, you guys had the knack of finding it and spending it like a bunch of drunk sailors, Mr. Speaker. Let's spend. Let's spend and let's spend some more.

And guess what? Guess what? People are starting to realize that. Well we've seen this act before. We've seen this act before. And all of a sudden you guys are going to try and do it all over again — \$1.2 billion off your mark the first budget. Oh what's that, 1.2 billion?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm telling the people of Saskatchewan this one. This government and these people have betrayed your trust on many, many fronts. They have betrayed your trust on many fronts. Because why? They continue to propagate something that is not true at all and secondly they continue putting this province deep in debt and when they go off to Ottawa, we're going to go fight for potash. My point to the Premier, the leader of their party, is you shouldn't bite the hand that pats you on the forehead, on the head. You shouldn't bite the hand that pats you on the head because what happens, Mr. Speaker, he might get angry at you. Harper might get mad at him. So let's just keep toeing that line.

And one of the most amazing things that I find too, which I find absolutely incredible, is that every time one of the Conservative MPs [Member of Parliament] had a fundraiser or had a dinner or had a gathering, who was up bellying up to the old food tray? Their Sask Party candidates, the Sask Party people. Right on. Come on down, come on down and have some food and give us some money for our old federal campaigns.

So today now I want you guys, if you can't get a darned thing out of Ottawa, if you can't get a darned thing out of Ottawa, at least don't go giving money to campaign. Please stay away from those dinners and those fundraisers because they don't listen to you guys anyway. My goodness, you know.

[20:45]

And at one time, Mr. Speaker, I was really . . . When I was courting my wife, I went to visit at her mother's place and her mother didn't like me. And I sat at the table and I ate the food that was there, you know, and I was very polite. But guess what? I didn't go back there. You know, I didn't go back there, Mr. Speaker. And maybe you guys should stop going to these fundraisers for the federal PCs [Progressive Conservatives] because they're not listening to you guys, you know. They're not listening to you guys.

So (a) let's be factual here. You guys put us in debt, so stop claiming that the last 16 years you had nothing to do with. You put us in debt. Secondly, stop trying to pat yourselves on the back because everything that you've done or spent the last couple of years, the people of Saskatchewan, the working people, the business people, the municipalities in co-operation with the NDP, they gifted that to you guys. They gave that to

you guys.

And I can just see you guys on election day. You became the government. Oh my goodness, where in the heck did you get all this money from? Where did you get all this money from? And oh my goodness, everybody's working; the economy is booming. How could we build on this?

And a short three years later, Mr. Speaker, we're now looking at a \$4.2 billion deficit that these guys are going to have us over the next two or three years. And the numbers are starting to slip in terms of the employment and the Social Services caseload is going sky-high.

Well you know, there's something fundamentally wrong here, boys and girls. You guys are not thinking things through. You are not thinking things through. So it leads us to the conclusion is you guys don't know what you're doing. That's very, very simple. You don't have a clue what you're doing.

So anyway the Throne Speech talks about the two roads. So I can see the old Minister of Energy and Resources driving along with your leader saying, oh my goodness, there's a fork in the road here. So what do we take here, left or right, left or right? Well we can't take left. Well where in the heck do we go? Well you guys are so busy arguing which road to take you're going down the centre. All of a sudden you're stuck in some mudhole and the cows are around you mooing, saying, what are you doing in our field? And I think the road less travelled on that you guys talk about, well that's a field, you know, full of manure, and cows wondering what the heck you're doing in their field.

So my point is, you guys couldn't decide which road to take. You couldn't decide which road to take, and what happens? That lack of leadership, the people of Saskatchewan are now paying for it and will continue to pay for it.

Mr. Speaker, we can't afford these guys any more. We can't afford them any more because they're putting our Crowns into debt, they're missing their marks, their targeted financial marks from potash by a billion or so here and there. No big deal as far as they're concerned. And they keep patting themselves on the back. They keep talking about 16 years. Why don't you guys talk about the real issues facing the people of Saskatchewan?

When your leader tried to shake down BHP for an extra billion dollars, what did he ask for? Did he ask to help people with housing in the inner cities? Did they ask to try and train Aboriginal people in the Far North? Did they ask for some technology to help people become more competitive? Did they ask for any of the social programs that are important to the people of Saskatchewan? Did they pay down debt with that money? No.

Do you know what they did? They said, oh we're going to get a domed stadium. A domed stadium. Well my goodness, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot more pressing priorities when you have men and women and children in homeless shelters that can't afford even rent. Maybe that money should have went there instead. How about that? How about that for an excuse? How about helping people develop . . . have a response to health care? How about that instead of a domed stadium?

The Riders play 10 games a year; 10 games a year they play. How about we house our people? How about we provide proper health care? And how about we be fair to all people and all regions of this province once and for all? If you're going to shake down a big corporate citizen, why don't you do it for the right reasons? Then maybe the people would respect you.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it is very, very sad. It is very, very sad when you see grown men and women speaking like that and making up that kind of, propagating that kind of myth, that for 16 years we couldn't do the things that they're enjoying to do now because the hard work was done during those 16 years. The hard work, the sacrifices, and the leadership was shown during those 16 years, Mr. Speaker. And I'll tell the Sask Party another thing. Any day of the week, any day of the week I'll compare our leader's experience in business, Mr. Speaker, in agriculture, in leading this province, any day of the week compared to that leader from the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, because we have seen nothing from failure and failing to deliver.

And, Mr. Speaker, Stephen Harper is not listening. He's not listening. You guys should never ever go to any Conservative MPs' fundraisers again. At least make that commitment to the Assembly tonight. At least make that commitment because these guys are not standing up for Saskatchewan. They're standing against Saskatchewan because they're all so afraid of Harper that even the Conservative MPs won't stand up. And our Premier won't stand up to Harper and say, you leave our resource alone for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Not one mention of taking on Ottawa in the Throne Speech. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a shame. That is an absolute shame.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I look at the challenges of finances and I tell people of Saskatchewan this all over, all over, Mr. Speaker. This Saskatchewan Party government is putting us in debt. They are putting us in debt as we speak. And to hear some of the members talk about oh, when I was elected the debt was at six-point-some million; now it's 4.2 million. No, no, no, that's the easy part. Let's look at the next year or two years down the road. How come you guys don't say yes, we brought it down but we're taking it up 3 billion . . . [inaudible] . . . where it was when we took office? How come you don't say that? Why are you hiding that fact that's marked right down in your finance documents? Why aren't you telling people that?

Sometimes the truth will set you free, you guys. Sometimes the truth will set you free. Don't be telling people we reduced debt by 40 per cent. You're not reducing debt by 40 per cent. You took that money, you paid down the debt, and guess what? You're putting us \$3 billion more in debt than when you first took over office. Why can't you say that? Why don't you tell the people that's the challenge we have? But you guys won't. You guys simply won't. Do you know why? And people always say this to me. It's because you're not providing leadership and you have no experience, and you don't know what you're doing. That's the bottom line.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I look at all these, this notion here of the Throne Speech, and they didn't talk about the challenges financially. They didn't recognize the work that the unions, the business community, and the municipalities and the school divisions and the health districts . . . They never talk about the

sacrifices those groups made. They just say, oh we were doing all these wonderful things.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the other thing that stood out in the Throne Speech — and this is a throw in from them because right now we're so busy with potash, they thought they'd sneak this under the radar so nobody knows it's there — this whole notion of a driver's licence picture ID for voting. Like where in the heck did that come from? Where did that come from, you guys? Who stood up and said to you guys, which focus group said, oh we need photo ID to vote?

You know what happened? Nobody told you guys to do that. And some of the backbench, the backbenchers are saying, oh my goodness. Oh my goodness. What's that about? Well let's not question anybody. Oh no, no. Let's not . . . We'll just simply follow. We'll just simply follow. And I told a backbench last time, you should have a backbone and ask the questions why you're doing this.

You know from the senior citizens who many of them can't afford to have their own picture ID, they're going to ask you guys, why are you doing this? For what purpose? What is the reason? Where is the logic? It hasn't been a glaring problem, Mr. Speaker.

And from the immigration community, we're trying to attract more people here as an immigration centre. Well they're coming to Saskatchewan; they need a picture ID to vote. What are you going to tell them? They're going to say to you, well where is this coming from?

You know from the low-income families, some people don't have a driver's licence. You know they can't afford to go get a picture ID or a passport photo. They're going to ask you guys, well where is that coming from? You know?

And then from the First Nations and the Métis community, they're going to ask you guys, well where did that come from, too. And, Mr. Speaker, you know, from the students that have a struggle paying their tuition, there's more cost to vote. They're going to ask you, well where did that come from, too. Why are you guys doing that? What is the specific purpose of demanding photo ID for voting purposes? Where did that come from?

The speech that I heard from the Minister of Justice on the reason why he had this photo ID concept, that could've come out of the 1940s or the 1950s or the stage where you guys . . . where people were denied the right to vote. And shame on you guys trying to circumvent the electoral process. Let these people vote. Why are you trying to stop them from voting? What is the purpose of that? My goodness.

You guys can't be discouraging people from voting, and that's what this thing does. When you ask people for a picture ID, you're discouraging people from voting. Because a lot of people are going to say, well I'm not going to get an ID to vote. You know? And that's just plain silly to ask them to do — to get an ID to vote. They were born in this country. They're part of this province. They've worked, they've lived, they played in this province, and they should have a right to vote.

And I'm telling every one of these groups — the seniors

groups, the immigration community, the low-income families, the First Nations, the Métis people — next election you guys come out and vote in big numbers, and remember those that tried to deny your vote are sitting right across the way there. And that's called a Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker. They tried to deny your vote. It's an affront to democracy.

And again the question is, where did this come from? So it leads me to the conclusion you guys don't know what you're doing. You don't know what you're doing. And why would you do that? Because you don't know what you're doing. It kind of rotates, you know. People say, why are they doing that? Because they don't know what they're doing. Why are they doing that? Because they don't know what they're doing. And that's how it works, you guys. That's how it works.

And when I see a couple of the ministers who are cloaked in an honour song or given an honorary title, when they stand in this House and vote for a Speech from the Throne that denies First Nations and Métis people the right to vote because they don't have photo ID, I say to them, shame on them. And they ought to return that gift from the First Nations community if they're going to deny them the right to vote because they simply don't have photo ID, Mr. Speaker. They ought to return those gifts and those badges of honour, or those cloaks of honour, whatever they're called, or their hope blankets. Turn those back.

Because what you have done is you have taken the goodwill of First Nations, of Métis people, of the immigration community, of the low-income families, of the students, and of the seniors and all these groups that tried to reach out to you guys. And you have slapped them in the face saying no, guess what? Before you vote next time you have to have a picture ID, otherwise you don't get to vote.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that has got to be the worst thing you can do in this day and age. This is not the States in the 1950s. This is Saskatchewan 2010, Mr. Speaker, 2010. And that kind of action, bringing that kind of action and making it part of your Throne Speech, like my goodness, what were you guys thinking? Why would you do that? Because you don't know what you're doing. And that's the sad reality.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other thing we noticed from this side of the Assembly, and this ought to be a concern for many of the members there; ought to be a concern for many of the members there. I noticed the member from Martensville who had done a tough job in terms of her role as the Minister of the Environment — and she made some mistakes, granted, made some mistakes — and she was stripped of her ministerial responsibility and placed right in the back row, the furthest seat in the back row.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are many of us in the political lives that do a lot of work for our parties, for our government and for our people. And some of us will fall on swords and some of us will lose a lot of popularity for decisions we make — and that's part of leadership. I'm not arguing about that.

But when you do that, you shouldn't be treated in that fashion at all. You should be respected for the work that you did and actually the sacrifice that you made for your government or

your party. And what was done? She was moved from that area to the back row. And I say, shame on your leader and shame on the Saskatchewan Party for treating a member of your cabinet and your caucus in that fashion.

And don't forget there's going to be other people paying that same price, because the fact of the matter is you guys still don't know what you're doing. And the people of Saskatchewan cannot, cannot take any more chances with you. And I go down the list of all the people whose trust you have betrayed, Mr. Speaker, every single one of them: the First Nations community, the labour movement, all the unions out there when you said you weren't going to do any of the labour legislation and you did. You know, all the students that were asking for help, the low-income people that needed housing, you know, the chiropractors whose service you delisted — the list goes on. Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang.

[21:00]

And all these groups have a long memory. And they say to you guys that it's going to be our turn come 2011, Mr. Speaker. And they're going to get up, they're going to organize, and they're going to speak out against you guys, because the fact of the matter is you guys don't know what you're doing. And these guys are going to teach you a lesson in politics, and the lesson is you should never, ever betray the trust that was afforded upon you by these groups and other groups in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to quote from the *Seniors' Voice*. And this is a quote from their thing there: "The price that good people pay, for their indifference to public affairs, is to be ruled by evil men." And that was Plato. Now if Plato was here he'd say . . . Well he would be told, I would tell this Plato guy, I would say, hey, Plato buddy, the people want to vote. The people want to vote, but they need a photo ID to vote. So you know this . . . They're not indifferent to public affairs; they're just not allowed to participate in public affairs. So can you make up another quote? Because this doesn't fit.

So Plato would say, well how in the heck does that work? I'd say, well you got to go back to . . . Because Plato's a pretty smart guy. So I kind of put here, the price that good people pay for their indifference to public affairs is to pay their fees to get their photo ID and then be ruled by evil men. End quote.

Now Plato has to come back and redraft that whole, that whole quote because 2010 he would see a party that's so determined, so determined to deny people's right to vote. Because why? That constituent of people — whether it's First Nations, whether it's seniors, whether it's low-income families — don't vote for the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. That's why they're doing it. Loud and clear, that's why you're doing it.

You know, and I'd tell Plato, take a new quote because I could sure use a hard-hitting one. And I think he's going to give me one in the near future, Mr. Speaker. And I plan on using that in this Assembly quite often, Mr. Speaker, quite often.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would point out as well that in northern Saskatchewan, in northern Saskatchewan . . . The Minister of Highways was just chuckling away as his colleague made mention about the roads and the construction going on. Mr.

Speaker, in northern Saskatchewan there's dangerous road conditions that have claimed many, many lives. My colleague and I from Cumberland were in Stanley Mission speaking about some of the challenges that Stanley Mission people face, and there were some very compelling arguments, very compelling arguments.

Mr. Speaker, we talked with people in Stanley Mission. We talked to the people in Patuanak. We talked to a number of folks in Turnor Lake and, Mr. Speaker, these roads in Southend, these roads are very, very dangerous. They're not properly fixed. They need to be repaired. And this Minister of Highways is chuckling at the fact that he's doing a bunch of road work in some of his area.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm telling the Minister of Highways that I challenge him to a northern debate. I challenge him to a northern debate on highways. You pick the time and location, sir, and you come there with all your officials, and I'll show you exactly what you're not doing and the harm that you're causing to the people of northern Saskatchewan and the damage and the dangerous road conditions that many of their vehicles and their families are subjected to. And then for once you will see that this is not a game.

And the reason why, Mr. Speaker, I say it's not a game is because there's one section in our area that I announced three years ago, and we announced it'd be done. Well guess what, Mr. Speaker? They announced it twice already and it's still not done. And this is not 150 kilometres worth of road. This is about a 12-kilometre stretch — 12 kilometres. And they haven't done a darn thing to fix roads anywhere in northern Saskatchewan, anywhere in northern Saskatchewan. And they say, oh, we're talking to the — what do they call those guys? — the area transportation committee. Well people in the area transportation committee system say we've given them their priorities and they're simply not listening.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again I'll tell the Minister of Highways, you got to figure this out. Because the fact of the matter is the Pelican Narrows people, the First Nations people of Pelican Narrows, of Dillon, of Southend, of Stanley Mission, of Cumberland House, and the list goes on, of all the people in the North, don't they deserve safe roads? Aren't they important to this government and don't they count?

Now when we start telling people it's time to get up and speak up and start telling the government what they need, we tell them, come to the Assembly. Come to the Assembly and fill up these balconies and tell the people of Saskatchewan that you're tired of driving your loved ones, your children, your grandchildren, your family on roads that ought not to be driven on and roads that every single person should be ashamed of across the way, Mr. Speaker. You should all be ashamed of the conditions of the road and the fact that you subject Saskatchewan people to that kind of dangerous conditions, and shame on every single one of you.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out in my closing moment here that if you look at the future of Saskatchewan, it's going to be bright. It's going to be bright. But the fact of the matter is you got to have a government that reflects value. And I look at some of the experience we have on our side of the Assembly. I

look at our leader who has got international experience, that ran corporations, that ran a Crown corporation, that has a lot of experience in government, and I look at the member from Nutana, the member from Regina Lakeview, and you look at all these fine members of the NDP caucus and, Mr. Speaker, they have more experience, more vision, more planning in their little finger than the entire Sask Party caucus could ever hope to achieve.

And that's why the people of Saskatchewan in the next election need to say, we tried these guys; they failed miserably. They failed miserably and they betrayed our trust. And they run to Ottawa to get help, and guess what? They're not getting any kind of help. They're being told no. Why? Because people in Ottawa know who they can push around and who they ought not to push around.

So, Mr. Speaker, again I'll tell the people of Saskatchewan, we've seen what these guys have done. We've seen them propagate this myth that Saskatchewan never existed before the 16 years we ruled the province. And, Mr. Speaker, they refuse to admit the fact that they're putting this province into debt. The fashion in which they treat some of their most senior members that fall on the sword for them, Mr. Speaker, that denotes confusion. That denotes lack of leadership. That denotes absolute incompetence, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why this Throne Speech doesn't hold any water, Mr. Speaker. And that's why your 16-year argument is absolutely silly. It's outlived its purpose. You won the 2007 election. You're not going to win the 2011 election because people can see right through your system of propagating that whole myth, Mr. Speaker.

Now I'll point out again that, in my final moments here, I want to congratulate the member from Saskatoon Northwest on his victory. And, Mr. Speaker, he'll soon find out, he'll soon find out that sometimes when he gets up to say something we would encourage him, being a new member, not to follow the line unless they're absolutely true. And the fact of the matter is, always use facts, facts to guide your words. If some of your colleagues came along here, they tried that for a moment and they're slapped back into line. You will follow what you're told to say, period.

Now my final comment I'll make is that, remember that fork in the road? Now you got these two guys stuck in this farm field, and don't know where in the heck to go. And I say, well that's typical, because they don't know what they represent. I look at some of you guys. Some of you are reformers, some of you are Liberals, some of you are Conservatives. You know, like I keep saying to you guys, well what the heck are you guys? You know, you guys got to figure it out. Are you right wing? Are you left wing? Are you right of centre? Are you centre? And you know what, you guys are so confused. You're so confused. You don't know what you guys represent. You don't know what you represent. So come on, you guys. As my neighbour would say, figure it out. Figure it out. Because you're not playing with monopoly money here; you're playing with the people of Saskatchewan's future.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think what's going to happen very soon, very soon, is the people of Saskatchewan are going to wake up to

some of the things that you guys have been trying to do. And they're going to say, that's it. That's it. These guys betrayed our trust. They've been over-promising and under-delivering, and Ottawa doesn't care what your Premier says. So at the end of the day we stand alone. We stand alone. And if we're going to stand alone, it's time the people of Saskatchewan elect an experienced, visionary, tough government, and the only place you're going to get that is on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, not that side.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that I re-emphasize that I will not be supporting the Speech from the Throne for the reasons I've identified and I'll be voting for the amendment. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great, great pleasure to stand in this Chamber and give my support to the Speech from the Throne. And I want to tell everybody they can put their headsets back on, because I don't think I can quite carry the volume as the last speaker.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate our newest member from Saskatoon Northwest. He won a resounding victory with an even higher percentage than the last election. Kind of lets you know how the people really feel about the direction of this government — contrary to the last speaker — and the direction that our Premier is taking. I've found the member from Saskatoon Northwest to be a friendly, personable type of person, and I know he'll do a good job of representing his constituents, although I didn't realize, Mr. Speaker, that he and the member from Yorkton were twins and very hard to tell apart earlier on.

Anyway there is one thing I do question about him though and that's his choice of his seatmate. But however he will soon learn that sometimes his choice can be a little misguided.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my wife Terry for her support. All of us here know that we spend a lot of hours, we spend a lot of hours being away from our family. Of course on the other hand there is that possibility I'm doing her a favour by being out of her hair. You know the old saying, out of sight, out of mind.

I would also like to thank the . . . I would like to thank the people at Carrot River Valley constituency for the honour of being their representative. It is truly humbling to speak on their behalf and bring the concerns of all of the citizens in what I consider to be the most unique, forward-thinking, picturesque constituencies, not just in Saskatchewan but in all of Canada, and I feel blessed to live there.

I also have to thank the CAs [constituency assistant] that do the yeomen work in the office. Shelley Meyer who has been the CA for 12 years is returned from maternity leave with a healthy baby boy named Jaxson. She will be work-sharing with Cindy Warner who has been with us a bit more than a year. These two women not only have great office skills, but have managed to put up with my antics which at time I am sure stretches their fortitude. Heck, they'd even learned to laugh at the appropriate

time when I tell a joke. Well, most of the time anyway, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank our executive for backing me up all the way through. We have a president who has been there for years, Carol Stewart. The executive is a great executive who stands behind both myself and the party all the way through. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to use a quote from *Alice in Wonderland* that was said by the Cheshire cat. And I quote, "[When] . . . you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." Think about it. When you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there. Does this not remind you of the NDP? They had no idea where they were going. And I might add, still don't. And they sure never fixed the road to get them there or anywhere else.

Mr. Speaker, recently a vice-president with the NDP who used to have a blog called Humble Opinion . . . I'm sure you remember it, Mr. Speaker, as it was brought up last session. To refresh your memory, I will quote from it. And I quote, "Almost anybody can be a guest blogger. There are only a few guidelines. It cannot be scandalous unless you are talking about Brad Wall or Ralph Goodale."

Now this same NDP vice-president just came up with another good one, Mr. Speaker, in our local paper. *The Nipawin Journal* on October the 20th of this year, he wrote a dandy letter. And I will quote a portion of it. And I quote, "How come Fred Bradshaw never tells his premier to fix the roads in northeast Saskatchewan? Why has our area of the province not benefited from nurse recruiting efforts?"

Mr. Speaker, kind of takes you back to the Cheshire cat, the NDP philosophy. Any road will get you there. Maybe it should be trail.

[21:15]

In the past year alone, there were more than 1100 kilometres of highway work tendered along with 800 kilometres of maintenance and safety improvements made. Mr. Speaker, since 2007, in Carrot River Valley constituency alone, major work has been done to Highway No. 23, also making this highway into a nine-month primary, which is a godsend for the farmers and the loggers in the area. Highway 55 between Carrot River and Nipawin, and then again on to Prince Albert. Highway No. 3 between Crooked River and Hudson Bay, and also between Tisdale and Melfort. Highway No. 35 south of Tisdale.

Mr. Speaker, our highways under the NDP were the laughingstock of Canada. Now these highways are being noticed. The people that are moving back here from Alberta have told me this. Of course under the NDP this didn't happen. For our colleagues across the floor, note I said, the people from Alberta that are moving back here.

Mr. Speaker, I give our Ministry of Highways a thumbs-up and our minister a thumbs-up for the tremendous work that they and he have done on this infrastructure boondoggle left by the previous administration. I would suggest that this NDP vice-president take off his blinders, jump off his soapbox, get in his Lada along with dear leader, and drive the roads of Carrot

River Valley. Maybe, just maybe, he would agree there's a huge improvement but I doubt it. His orange-tinted glasses would dim his vision. When you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there. This government is going the new road.

Mr. Speaker, the other point brought up in that letter was that health care in the Northeast had not benefited from the nurse recruiting efforts. Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. You have to realize that the NDP left rural Saskatchewan in a sinking quagmire, not just on their roads but also on the health care issue. The fix for the NDP health care system in rural Saskatchewan was to close 52 hospitals, two of them in Carrot River Valley — Arborfield and Carrot River.

I have no doubt in my mind that, heaven forbid, had the NDP won the 2007 election, Nipawin Hospital would have been the next one on the list. Just look at the facts, Mr. Speaker. In 2007, the last year of the NDP — thankfully — Nipawin had 13 registered general practitioners. In 2010 they have 20 registered practitioners, a 54 per cent increase since 2007.

Mr. Speaker, our government, our Premier, and our Minister of Health have done a marvellous job to try to rectify a very serious lack of compassion on the part of the previous administration. When our government said they would go into a nurse recruitment strategy and hire 800 more nurses by the end of our first mandate, the NDP said, no way — pie in the sky. Mr. Speaker, after just three years that number is surpassed. Actually the last number I had was 830. This government also increased the seats for registered nursing students — 130 already and another 170 coming.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's talk physicians. In 2007 under the NDP, there were 60 College of Medicine seats and 60 residency seats — the second smallest school in all of Canada. Mind you, at the rate people were leaving this province under the NDP, I guess you could see them shooting for small. Under our government, since we know we're growing and will continue to, the College of Medicine seats will be raised to 100 seats and the residency seats will be raised to 120 by the end of our term. This, Mr. Speaker, is a new Saskatchewan, the new road.

Mr. Speaker, with the addition of the STARS program announced in the Throne Speech, although not perfect, we are light years ahead of the NDP in providing decent health care to rural residents who have been sadly neglected.

Mr. Speaker, this government has taken the bull by the horns, so to speak, in the MS [multiple sclerosis] liberation trials. Saskatchewan has the highest number of MS cases in all of Canada. So we took the initiative to commit \$5 million for these clinical trials. People who have MS are certainly pleased to have a government put their money and compassion where their mouth is. And I know, Mr. Speaker, that every one of us here knows personally somebody who has MS. They're happy, Mr. Speaker. It's a new Saskatchewan, the new road.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP ran ads half the summer saying that the children's hospital in Saskatoon was cancelled — this even though they knew the money wouldn't be going out until it was decided where the hospital was to be built. Don't let facts stand in the way of a good story, or an ad in this case. Well, Mr. Speaker, guess what? Contrary to the ads and the NDP rhetoric,

the Saskatoon children's hospital is going ahead. I commend this Health minister and his staff on a job — although not complete — well done. This government is committed to a new road.

Mr. Speaker, for this NDP vice-president to question our government's ability to manage roads and health care, he had better take a long, hard look in the mirror. And I feel sorry for the mirror. Mr. Speaker, what I'd really like to do is I would like to see that NDP vice-president, who comes from White Fox, challenge, challenge the election next time in Carrot River Valley constituency and see how he fared out. He would see what the people of Carrot River Valley feel.

Mr. Speaker, Carrot River Valley has some of the most productive farm land and progressive farmers, not only in Saskatchewan but probably North America. That said, these farmers were not immune to mother nature's wrath. As good as these farmers are, some of them were caught with excess moisture, destroying crops and increasing the expenses. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our Premier and Ag minister covered all of Saskatchewan to see the damage first-hand.

This government understands farmers and understands their trials and challenges. This government immediately stepped forward with an acreage payment to help these farmers in these difficult times, not ignoring them as what happened under the previous administration. Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a new road, one of a responsible and proactive government. We have our Ag minister and his office to thank for this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have often said the reason I got into politics is because of my children. And how could it be that with all the resources that we have in this province, our children had to move away in order to gain meaningful employment? No more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, no more. This is a new Saskatchewan, the new road.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the new Saskatchewan, our population is growing to an all-time high of 1,045,622 people, with a wage rate that is the third highest in Canada. Our school enrolments are up for the first time in 17 years. Let's see. When did the NDP come into power, Mr. Speaker? This is great news for my daughter Gina who is in her fourth year of education with the University of Regina. The way things are going, she'll pretty well be guaranteed of a job in this province, the province of her birth, not Alberta, not BC, or, worst case scenario, Ontario. This, Mr. Speaker, is the new road.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things that has made a big difference in this province is the education tax on property. The farmers and property owners of this province have been paying a disproportionate share of this tax for years. Now the NDP never denied it and always said it was something, something should be done about it, but they never got around to it. Mr. Deputy Speaker, now this is being done. We will finish this commitment off this spring. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because we got around to it — not just talk and bluster, noise and posture, but actually getting around to it. It's a new road, Mr. Speaker, a new Saskatchewan.

**An Hon. Member:** — Are you done?

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Not quite.

Mr. Speaker, potash — I don't know what I can say that hasn't been said. This government and the opposition have both clearly said that the potash belongs to the people of Saskatchewan. We do hope that the federal government will come to the same conclusion; however, that decision is out of our hands. I will say our Premier made one of the most compassionate and compelling speeches that has ever been made, stating our province's position. This speech resonated not just across Canada but around the world. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our Premier is putting Saskatchewan on the map.

Mr. Speaker, I am basically running out of time. I would like to mention though one of the good things. I would mention one of the very good things that has happened in the Carrot River Valley constituency and that is that our mills are opening up even in these tough economic times. The Weyerhaeuser mill has reopened in Hudson Bay and C & C [C & C Wood Products Ltd.] or Edgewood Lumber, which has mills in both British Columbia and Alberta, have purchased the mills — the stud plant in Carrot River and the plywood plant in Hudson Bay. They are slated to be opened . . . The stud mill will be open July the 4th of 2011, and the plywood mill will be opened up on November the 1st of 2011. These are companies that are coming to Saskatchewan because they see a new Saskatchewan. They're willing to put their business into Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to talk about education. We have a commitment from this government to improve education in northeastern Saskatchewan. Cumberland Community College is getting a new facility worth I believe it is \$7.2 million. This will help the people of northeastern Saskatchewan continue on their education, upgrade their education, and we have our Minister of Advanced Education to thank for that. And I know he worked very hard at getting these things done for our new Saskatchewan, our new road.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the time has come for me to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And my colleagues agree with me. The time has come for me to sit back and say, I support, I support the Throne Speech. I do not support the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[21:30]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And like it's been said so many times already this evening, this afternoon, it's a pleasure to enter into the Throne Speech debate. This is one of the opportunities for members to outline some of their concerns, some of the highlights of their constituency, to talk about some of the things happening at home, and also to address the very important topics that have been featured in the Throne Speech which is common practice at this time of year.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's with some real pleasure and some trepidation, I suppose, that I enter into this discussion because there are some very important things I want to highlight. After having heard so many of my colleagues and members of the opposition, there are so many elements that I



want to respond to. There are so many areas of identification that have happened as part of the Throne Speech that I'm not sure that I could get it into whatever little time we have left this evening. So I am going to struggle a little bit, I am sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be as succinct as necessary. However if we run out of time tonight, I've been assured that I can have most of tomorrow afternoon to conclude my remarks. And I don't hear anybody saying no, so I'm going to take that as general agreement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the 12th Throne Speech that I've had the opportunity to hear presented in this legislature. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've heard comments from the opposition that they didn't think this Throne Speech was up to the standards that they may have expected. Well I can tell them for a fact that of the eight or nine throne speeches I heard coming from them when they were the government, I can remember the pallid haze settling over the entire province, just disappointment in the people of this province with the lack of enthusiasm, the lack of initiative, the lack of drive that was evident in throne speeches presented by those men and women, the inertia that affected the economy and the society as a result of the pallid speech that would come forward from that government every year.

Mr. Speaker, there was no enthusiasm in this province for anything that was undertaken by that government because their sole purpose in presenting the Speech from the Throne was to elaborate mediocrity. This was a government at the time that felt that you didn't want to raise expectations too much because you may not be able to accomplish the very objectives you were setting out for yourself. And so we would belabour under this sort of neutral government that really just couldn't get it into drive, that just couldn't push the agenda forward too much.

One of the things that has captivated the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that with a new government there is a new excitement, a new can-do attitude, a new determination, a new opportunity to see this province become what it was always intended to be. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you look around this building, the wonderful architecture we have here, the size of this edifice didn't happen by accident. This building, 100-and-some years ago, was created to meet the expectations and the dreams and the desires of the people who founded this province. They thought Saskatchewan would be the leader of the provinces in Western Canada. They saw the potential here. They saw the resources here, and they knew the people would come. This building was dedicated to a dream, and the dream has never been realized. We are just now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the cusp of realizing the dream of the people who founded the great province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech may not invigorate the members of the opposition. It may not motivate them as much as they would like. But, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that this speech, by its content, is far and away superior to the mediocrity we heard from those men and women when they were the people writing the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to get too far into my remarks without backtracking just a little bit and to comment again about how great an opportunity and a privilege it has been for me personally to represent the constituency of Cypress Hills. I

know everybody feels that they represent the finest constituency, the greatest people, the most beautiful part of the province, and if you didn't feel that way, you probably shouldn't be in this job. But you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really am privileged to be here.

And as I said earlier, I've been in this job about eleven and a half years now. In fact I think it's just . . . It will be 12 years ago on October the 30th that I won the nomination to be the Saskatchewan Party candidate in a by-election that was expected in that next spring. And so my public role has been limited to this 12-year adventure, but it's been an outstanding adventure for me. And I'd like to thank the people of Cypress Hills for, over four elections, giving me the opportunity to represent them in this legislature.

I had some time tonight, and I thought I'd just take a few minutes to do some quick calculations. And I'm just going by memory and estimates, but I think my constituency's about 250 kilometres from top to bottom — from the Montana border to the South Saskatchewan River north of the community of Leader. And it's about 150 kilometres from just outside of Swift Current, where I buttress up against the Premier's constituency, to the Alberta border. Now if you do the math, I think that comes to about, well, 34 500 square kilometres which would translate into about 14,700 square miles.

And if you do the math, you see that I have about one voter per square mile, one voter per square mile. And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's quite an outstanding fact when you compare it to large urban ridings, especially in huge metropolitan centres. But I've had the privilege of knocking on the doors of just about every one of those voters. I've driven hundreds and thousands of miles through large rural areas, knocking on doors and visiting with people in town and in vast open geographical areas where the ranchers and the farmers operate. And having had that privilege has allowed me to very clearly understand the needs and the desires and the aspirations of the people of Cypress Hills. It is, as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, primarily a ranching and a farming constituency. But the growth in the oil and gas industry recently and the swell of tourism in the Cypress Hills area has been truly incredible. And so our economy and our lifestyle has been enhanced by new opportunities for employment and some great new business opportunities.

And one of the other things I want to say about Cypress Hills right now is that on a weekly basis I have the privilege of sending a letter of congratulations to a new business owner/proprietor someplace within my constituency. And I think that that's a real sign not just of the helpfulness of the people of Cypress Hills. It's a real indication of how strong the provincial economy is, how it's growing — not just in urban Saskatchewan but in rural Saskatchewan — and how people are benefiting in large measure from the policies of this government and the opportunities that have been provided to them through the province of Saskatchewan and its great natural advantages.

So I'd like to put on record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my pleasure at being able to serve on behalf of the people of Cypress Hills. I'd like to recognize, though, some people who are very important in terms of my success in that endeavour of representation. I have three ladies working in the office. They

job share as constituency assistants. And so again tonight I'd like to recognize Beth Humphrey, who's been with me for about 10 years; and Glenna Gordon, who's been in the office for six or seven years; and Carol Miller, who's just into her second year now. And these three ladies work overtime, and I'm not saying that lightly because I'll phone the office after hours and they'll often pick up the phone. These ladies work on my behalf in a very diligent and thorough manner.

And we have a little rule in my office, and that is that when somebody phones, if we can't answer their question when they phone, we promise to have an answer for them within 24 hours, 48 at the most. And so I put them under a pretty serious obligation to represent me personally and our office as effectively and quickly as possible. I think the one snag in that rule, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that I sometimes don't get to those return calls quite as quickly as I insist my staff do, but nevertheless we have made a tremendous effort to respond as quickly as possible to the constituents of Cypress Hills.

And that leads me to comment. I heard the member from Saskatoon Eastview, I believe it was, earlier today standing in her place and saying that she travelled all through rural Saskatchewan and she heard hundreds of people say that the MLAs on the government side never return phone calls. Well she can't say that in my constituency. She cannot say that truthfully and honestly about my constituents because my constituents hear from my office within 24 hours or 48 at the maximum. And so if that's the standard I have set in my office, I'm almost certain that every one of my colleagues has a similar standard, because they believe in serving their constituents.

This is a job of service. You don't just assume public office for the sake of a paycheck. You assume public office because you want to serve the people of your community, of your constituency. And I found that assertion earlier today quite insulting, frankly, because I don't believe it. I don't believe it's true. And I know it isn't true in the constituency of Cypress Hills because of the quality staff I've got and their dedication to public service.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd also like to acknowledge the support of my wife and family. My wife has, as I've commented previously, been my biggest supporter. And when I feel a little bit grumpy or down in the dumps, she's there to encourage me. And if I get a little bit too full of myself — and that has happened on one or two occasions — she reminds me of my need for humility and that I'm here as a public servant. So you know, there aren't many good men in positions of leadership that don't have the backing of solid wives who keep them in line. And I know that that's also true if you reverse the roles.

But nevertheless, my wife has been exceptionally good in terms of sharing me with my public responsibilities. She might be at home tonight watching this — that is, if hers wasn't one of the many hundreds of TVs shut off after the bluster and volume we heard from the member of Athabasca. But nevertheless, I'm thinking that she probably hung in there just because she knew I was going to make this speech tonight.

I have a daughter who just left Saskatchewan this summer, late summer, to attend university in Ontario, and that was pretty hard. And I guess the explanation I would give is that she found

the program that she wanted to pursue in a different province. It wasn't that we didn't have the right schools here or the right quality of education or the affordability or any of those things. She was looking for a very specific program. But I'm confident, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when she's done her education in Ontario, she will come back to Saskatchewan.

And I have a son and a daughter and two grandchildren living in Alberta who I would desperately love to see come back to the province of Saskatchewan. And we never, never fail to recruit when we're visiting them in Red Deer, but we haven't made that argument substantially or substantively enough yet that we've accomplished our goal. But I'm sure that at some point in the future they will recognize Saskatchewan as the land of opportunity and return here as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know we are constrained by time tonight, but I do want to just read again the opening page of the Speech from the Throne because I think it really does speak to the changed dynamics in this province, the changed mentality, the changed attitude that we have seen in Saskatchewan over the last few years. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if there's anything that is important in the success of any jurisdiction, any province, any company, any organization, whether it be profit or non-profit, it's about attitude. And the attitude is so apparently refreshed and invigorated in this province that the people of our province are saying, the sky is the limit. We aren't going to be handcuffed by the old attitudes. We're not going to be restricted by pettiness and the petty jealousies that have afflicted this province previously. We're not going to be held back because people don't think we can be what we aspire to be.

[21:45]

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if there is one thing that I like about this Throne Speech is that while it may not be the most grandiose speech, it talks about moving the province forward in a significant and important way in a few selected areas. And as I have more time maybe tomorrow, I want to address those areas of importance for the province of Saskatchewan.

But if I may just have the indulgence of the House, I'd like to pick this up on page 1 where it says:

Two roads diverged in the wood and I,  
I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference;

And now the Throne Speech goes into a few of the indicators of that difference:

Today, in the new Saskatchewan, we are on the road less travelled.

It is a new road for our province — and it [really] has made all the difference.

This new road is marked by strong and continued growth.

Our population hit an all-time high of 1,045,622 people, [that's] 16,498 more than last year — [that's] the largest year-over-year increase since 1953.

A recent survey shows Saskatchewan business owners are some of the most optimistic in . . . [the nation].

According to the most recent Financial Post/CFIB rankings, Saskatchewan has three of Canada's top ten entrepreneurial cities — Lloydminster, Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

Prince Albert. I thought that was a city that was going to shut down when the mill closed. The entrepreneurial spirit of that city has carried it forward in a very dramatic and exciting way.

Saskatchewan recently set a record for the most people working in our province.

There are now 6,300 more people working in our province than one year ago.

Chartered banks are predicting nation-leading growth for Saskatchewan.

And the benefits of that growth are being widely distributed.

For the first time ever, wage rates in our province are rising above the national average, with a percentage increase that is third highest in Canada.

However, this growth [Mr. Deputy Speaker] is not an end in itself.

Growth simply marks the way to a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish I had written those words, but they're very, very symptomatic and emblematic of what is happening in this province today. And it's happening because of the fortitude, the good decision making, and the leadership of the Saskatchewan Party government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would be happy tomorrow to elaborate on these comments, but for the time being I would move that we adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Cypress Hills has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The House Leader has moved that this House stands adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — This House now stands adjourned

until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 21:48.]



**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**EVENING SITTING**

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**Brkich** .....5795

**SPECIAL ORDER**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**ADDRESS IN REPLY**

**Draude** .....5795

**Forbes** .....5797

**Ross** .....5802

**Bjornerud** .....5804

**Belanger** .....5808

**Bradshaw** .....5814

**Elhard** .....5816

# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

## CABINET MINISTERS

---

**Hon. Brad Wall**  
**Premier of Saskatchewan**  
**President of the Executive Council**

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

**Hon. Bill Boyd**  
Minister of Energy and Resources  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Telecommunications

**Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff**  
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations  
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Gaming Corporation

**Hon. June Draude**  
Minister of Social Services  
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women  
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

**Hon. Dustin Duncan**  
Minister of Environment  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Water Corporation  
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

**Hon. Donna Harpauer**  
Minister of Education  
Provincial Secretary

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison**  
Minister of Enterprise  
Minister Responsible for Trade

**Hon. Darryl Hickie**  
Minister of Municipal Affairs

**Hon. Bill Hutchinson**  
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport  
Minister Responsible for the Provincial  
Capital Commission

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

**Hon. Ken Krawetz**  
Deputy Premier  
Minister of Finance

**Hon. Tim McMillan**  
Minister Responsible for Crown  
Investments Corporation  
Minister Responsible for Information  
Technology Office  
Minister Responsible for Information  
Services Corporation  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Government Insurance  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and  
Gaming Authority

**Hon. Don McMorris**  
Minister of Health

**Hon. Don Morgan**  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety  
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Workers'  
Compensation Board

**Hon. Rob Norris**  
Minister of Advanced Education,  
Employment and Immigration  
Minister Responsible for Innovation  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Power Corporation  
Minister Responsible for Uranium  
Development Partnership

**Hon. Jim Reiter**  
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Transportation Company  
Minister Responsible for The Global  
Transportation Hub Authority

**Hon. Laura Ross**  
Minister of Government Services