



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

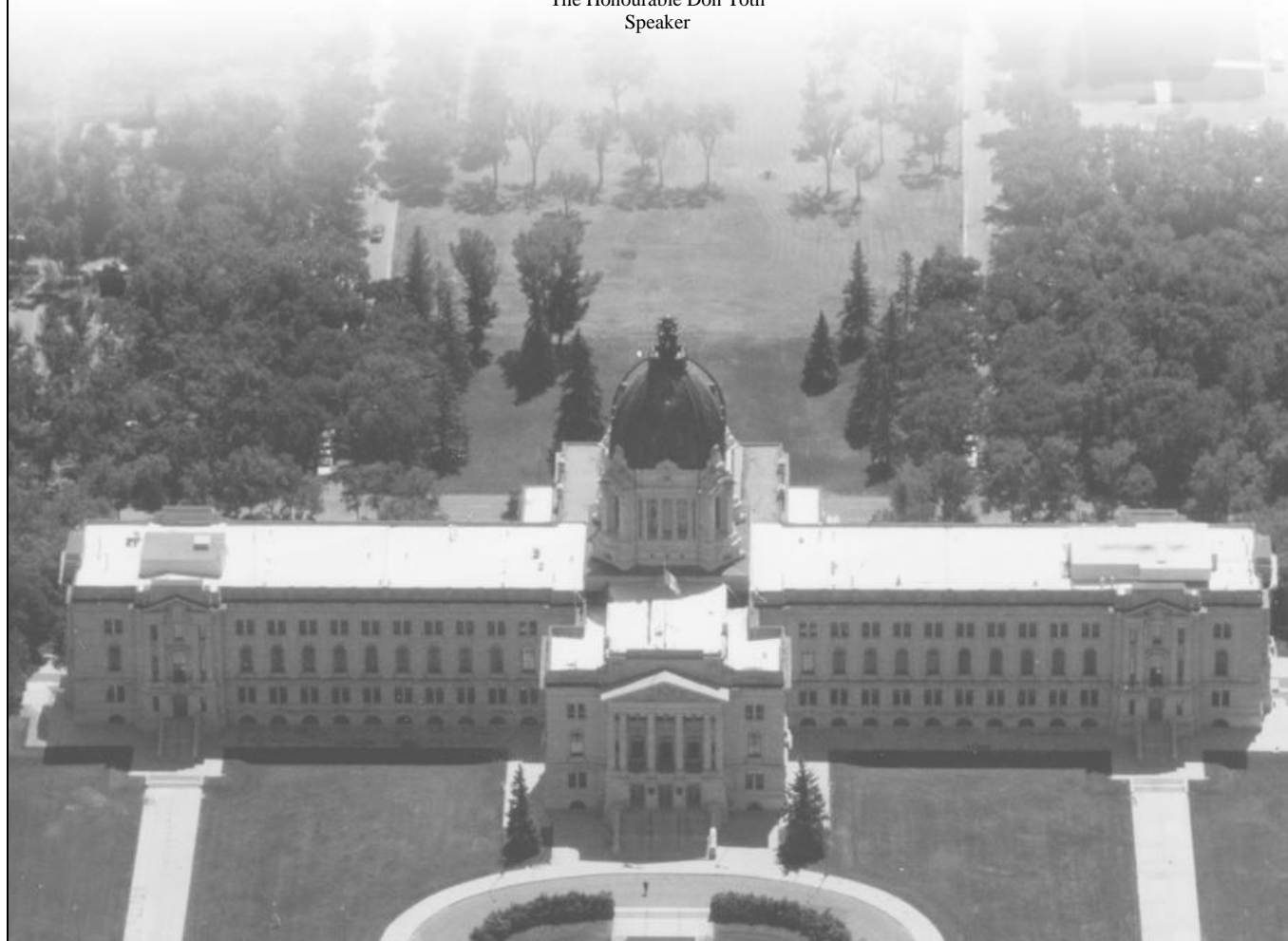
of the

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, 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 met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Michelson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a pleasure to introduce a wonderful group of students from one of the brilliant high schools in Moose Jaw, seated in the west gallery. These are the students from A.E. Peacock Collegiate, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to mention the principal, Mike Boyes, and all of the staff who provide a very positive learning experience for all of the Peacock students. In the west gallery today are 20 students from grade 12, the students of teachers Carrie Kiefer and Adam McInnis, along with their bus driver, Elma Kaus. And I would ask all members to make them welcome to their Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I'd also like to recognize somebody special to me in your gallery, Denise Arnold. Denise is my constituency assistant and does a great job in my office. And I'd ask all members to also welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce three important people from my office here in the legislature. We have Jackie Burchi, Chantelle Coderre, and Megan Armstead. And what makes today particularly special is, it's the second last day for Megan. She's moving on in her career. She's contributed to Saskatchewan and shared her time with us, and now she's embarking on an adventure with the Public Service Commission. So if all members could welcome her to her legislature and thank her for her time.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the member from Moose Jaw North in welcoming the class from Peacock. While Peacock may officially be in the member of Moose Jaw North's constituency, it's pretty darned close to the boundary. And I know it's a great high school that attracts many people from across . . . Many of the students are from across the city. So it's always a pleasure to have students that are here, interested in the democratic process and taking the time out of the busy school year to come and join us here. So I would ask that all members join . . . The class from Peacock.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise

today on behalf of concerned citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned over the safety of our highways. And this particular petition pertains to Highway No. 10 between Fort Qu'Appelle and No. 1 junction. And Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to construct passing lanes on Highway No. 10 between Fort Qu'Appelle and the junction of Highway 1 in order to improve the safety for Saskatchewan's motoring public.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Fort Qu'Appelle and Katepwa, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of eliminating poverty in Saskatchewan. And we know citizens living in poverty have long identified affordable solutions. Recent national and provincial initiatives, including the Saskatoon health disparities report and the Canada Without Poverty, Dignity for All campaign, all call for a comprehensive poverty elimination strategy. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to act as quickly as possible to develop an effective and sustainable poverty elimination strategy for the benefit of all Saskatchewan citizens.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, people signing this petition come from Saskatoon and Melfort, Saskatchewan. Thank you very much.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present more petitions on behalf of the people of Wawota and area who are opposed to the closure of the beds in Wawota's Deer View Lodge. Many of the family members have had members of their families put in places outside of their home community and have difficulty getting to them and supporting them in their last days. They're finding it unfair and actually very dangerous. The petition reads or the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to stop the closure of these beds.

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

This is 150 more signatures to add to the ones I previously presented this week, and these signatures are from people in Kennedy, Kipling, Windthorst, Wawota, Whitewood, Manor,

Regina, Kenosee, Kenosee Lake, Maryfield, and Langbank. I so present.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition in support of fairness for Saskatchewan university students, a petition that calls on the expansion of the graduate retention program. The prayer reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition are from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to present a petition with respect to the future of Saskatchewan's potash resource, considering that Saskatchewan has a 1,000-year supply of the world's highest quality potash and that the people of Saskatchewan are the owners of this strategic resource and deserve to receive the maximum benefit from its development, mining, processing, and sale. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Saskatchewan Party government to publicly demand the following terms and conditions on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan of any owners bidding to take over PCS: to ensure that Saskatchewan people receive the maximum net benefit, a golden share and preferred shares so that the public participates in both the corporation's future decision making and its profitability; public guarantees on a strengthened head office presence; support for Canpotex and long-term targets for potash production and employment; Saskatchewan representation on the board of directors; public agreements to ensure no loss of royalties; public commitments to meet world-class standards of corporate and social responsibility; and an independent potash review commission with the power to monitor and enforce all of these terms and conditions.

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

Mr. Speaker, today's petition is signed by folks from Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a government ministry has directed SaskWater to cut off supplies of water for domestic use to Furdale customers, and the same government ministry has directed that customers may no longer

treat non-potable water using methods approved by Sask Health. Now these residents, in dealing in good faith with SaskWater for over 30 years, have paid large amounts for their domestic systems and in-home treatment equipment. And the alternative water supply that was referred to by the government ministry is a private operator offering treated, non-pressurized water at great cost with no guarantee of quality, quantity, or availability of water, Mr. Speaker. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to withdraw its order to cut off non-potable water to the residents of the hamlet of Furdale, causing great hardship with no suitable alternatives; to exempt the hamlet of Furdale from further water service cut-offs by granting a grandfather clause under *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2002* and *The Water Regulations, 2002*; and that this government fulfills its promises to rural Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the good residents of Furdale. I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan on a matter that's of great concern to them, and that's the financial mismanagement of the Sask Party government. Since coming to office, the Sask Party has squandered a historic opportunity provided to them, historic highs in revenues, and where we are, Mr. Speaker, is back into two years of deficits and billions of dollars of debt growth, Mr. Speaker. This is of huge consequence to Saskatchewan people, and of concern. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly condemn the Sask Party government for its damaging financial mismanagement since taking office, a reckless fiscal record that is denying Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses the responsible and trustworthy fiscal management that they so deserve.

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

Now these petitions today are signed by good folks of Regina, Air Ronge, Swift Current, North Battleford, Carnduff, and Buchanan. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Reaction to Potash Decision

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a good day for Saskatchewan. The Premier summed up yesterday's events in two words: Canada works.

Canada works because our Premier and our province presented a clear and reasoned argument that spoke to the heart and minds of Canadians. Canada works because it is strong enough to be both a free market, free trading economy, and protect its national interest. Canada works because Canadians from coast to coast supported Saskatchewan's position — business leaders and working people.

Canadians barely knew what potash was a few short weeks ago. Canadians of all political stripes — a Conservative premier from Alberta, a Liberal premier from Quebec, an NDP [New Democratic Party] premier from Manitoba — all supported the position taken by a Saskatchewan Party premier. Heck even the tired, old Saskatchewan NDP came on board, begrudgingly. And Canada works because this time, unlike some federal governments in the past, this time our federal government listened to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as the Premier said in Toronto last week, it's not about choosing between Canada and Saskatchewan; it's about standing up for Canada and Saskatchewan. That's why both flags fly over our legislature. That's why yesterday was a good day for Saskatchewan and Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

National Diabetes Month

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. November is National Diabetes Month. Nine million Canadians live with diabetes or pre-diabetes. Pre-diabetes refers to a condition where a person's blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. The growth of diabetes in Canada is at epidemic levels.

November is the time to be reminded that there is no cure yet for this widespread disease. Diabetes can be well managed and it's considered a chronic disease, Mr. Speaker. However the disease brings with it additional risk factors for those affected, which can compound the problem. If left untreated or improperly managed, diabetes can result in a variety of complications including heart, kidney, and eye disease to just name a few.

The first step in preventing or delaying the onset of these complications is recognizing the risk factors as well as the signs and symptoms of diabetes. Mr. Speaker, this is especially important here in Saskatchewan where diabetes is significantly higher in the First Nations population. First Nations people across Canada continue to struggle with diabetes prevalence rates that are among the highest in the developed and developing world. Among the First Nations people, diabetes is not uniformly distributed across the population but more often it affects women, the elderly, and the obese.

We need to work together to have an effective strategy to combat this disease. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in recognizing those who fight the battle against diabetes, encouraging people to reduce their risk factors and to get early and consistent treatment as they live with the disease, and that we fight for a cure.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Estevan United Way Telethon

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise in the Assembly today to honour my constituency of Estevan. I feel truly fortunate that the great people of my constituency continue to give me the privilege of representing them in Regina.

[10:15]

Mr. Speaker, last month the Estevan and District United Way held their 34th annual telethon. The organization set a lofty goal. They wanted to raise \$300,000. Mr. Speaker, at the end of 35 hours the generous people of Estevan and surrounding area surpassed the goal and raised \$350,000, all of which stays in the community, servicing the local member agencies. It is truly astonishing what the hard-working people in my constituency can do. Estevan has been the first community in Canada to reach their targeted goal 33 out of the last 34 years.

I would like everyone to join with me in congratulating James Trobert, Chair of the telethon. I would also like to congratulate all the volunteers that contributed to the success of this year's United Way campaign. And, Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying, another important part of each successful telethon are the donors. Their generosity is what makes these campaigns flourish. I am proud to say that Estevan is number one again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Television Appearance

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] compared the Premier's staged celebration of Tony Clement's statement last evening to the speech of an Oscar winner accepting an Academy Award. Not surprisingly, Mr. Speaker, the Premier's enthusiastic thank yous to the Harper government on Saskatchewan's behalf almost outnumbered the Sask Party extras who had been stage-managed to stand behind him and clap when he walked before the cameras.

Once there, he gave a bow of thanks to the Harper minister who's given BHP 30 days to sweeten its takeover bid for PotashCorp. Then he eagerly praised Tony Clement and the federal Conservatives.

Mr. Speaker, the last thing this province needs at this crucial time of decision on a major natural resource is an acting Premier. We need someone in the lead role who knows how to deliver a better deal to the people of Saskatchewan, no matter who owns the company that develops mines, exports or sells our potash.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people deserve more than an actor that governs by polls, grandstanding with a script. They deserve a leader and a team that not only believes in what it says but has a plan to deliver.

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

Snowbirds Celebrate 40th Anniversary

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 40th anniversary of the Canadian Snowbirds aerobatic demonstration squadron. Based out of 15 Wing Moose Jaw, the Snowbirds are comprised of 85 Canadian Forces members, both regular and reserve force, who come from various military backgrounds and experiences.

The Snowbirds are the only air demonstration team in North America to perform with nine jets flying in very close formation. Canadians share great pride with the Snowbirds in their tradition of excellence for these past 40 years. They're one of Canada's most recognized and treasured national symbols.

During this 40th show season, the Snowbirds completed 60 performances at 35 different locations around North America. The Snowbirds have given Canadians great shows over the years, and in turn Canadians have given their support. Their acrobatic grace has remained fresh and continues to inspire awe in audiences all across the continent. Canadians are proud of their first-class air demonstration team.

The Snowbirds are also outstanding international ambassadors for Canada. And I would like to congratulate the entire Snowbird team, as well as the air force, for their long-standing tradition and aviation excellence and showmanship. I ask all members of this Assembly to join in congratulating the Canadian Snowbirds on their 40th anniversary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Potash Workers Acknowledged

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier thanked many people last night as he celebrated BHP's stay of execution. He took time to thank his MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for standing behind him, his 13 Conservative MPs [Member of Parliament] for their quiet support, and the federal Industry minister for his act of clemency.

Mr. Speaker, one thank you he forgot. And that was the workers, the people who pull the potash from the ground and who staff the facilities that produce Saskatchewan's prosperity. It was a glaring omission, Mr. Speaker, since miners and other potash workers have been leading the fight against the hostile BHP takeover from the beginning.

Long before this Premier discovered his social democratic conscience, they were speaking out about the need to protect the people's resource and to get a better deal for Saskatchewan's people.

The Premier's response was to ignore their voices until they resonated so loudly with the public that the Premier started to plagiarize the workers' press releases in his speeches to the chamber of commerce. After all they've done for the province,

Mr. Speaker, it's sad that the Premier didn't take the occasion of BHP's stay of execution to call a truce in the war on working people and to say a thank you to the miners and other workers who are the real leaders in the potash debate.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan see this lack of gratitude from the Premier, and that is why their answer to him in 2011 will be a polite, firm thank you, but no.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Television Appearance

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Moments after Tony Clement made the announcement all of Saskatchewan had been waiting to hear, the Leader of the Opposition appeared on television. He was standing behind Jack Layton and he looked absolutely heartbroken. I thought he was going to burst into tears.

Mr. Speaker, you would think that he would be happy. This was a great day for Saskatchewan. But for the NDP leader, it was never about Saskatchewan. It was about him and about scoring political points. It was clear as he spoke.

In a moment that called for some graciousness and thoughtful reflection, the NDP leader played his only card — a bitter, angry rant. Mr. Speaker, it was embarrassing as he made a fool out of himself. Not only that, he didn't even know what he was talking about. At one point, he talked about a potash mine at Kamsack. And I can assure the NDP leader there is no potash mine at Kamsack. The member from Douglas Park could have embarrassed Saskatchewan, but fortunately, as one CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] reporter tweeted, most of the reporters didn't even know who he was.

Still, Mr. Speaker, we want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for supporting the Saskatchewan Party position. And I have a gift for him, Mr. Speaker. It's a map of all the potash mines in Saskatchewan so he doesn't embarrass himself on TV next time.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. And I want to, before I start, thank all the people of Saskatchewan including the miners, the potash miners, who were some of the first people off the mark two months ago urging the provincial government to take the position of being opposed to the takeover, the hostile takeover of BHP of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the game isn't over yet because we know the BHP company has 30 days to sweeten the bid and to come forward with another offer. And, Mr. Speaker, while the people of Saskatchewan supported the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan very clearly over the last month, it's now time for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan to support the people.

My question to the Premier is this: during this debate, the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan made a commitment, a seven-point commitment, to the people Saskatchewan. Can the Premier guarantee that he has that commitment in writing and that things will start to happen where people will start moving back from Chicago before the 30-day period is up so that we can sweeten the deal for the shareholders here in the province of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in direct answer to the member's question is, obviously we're going to be working very carefully with PotashCorp to make sure that the pledge they've recently made is kept.

Mr. Speaker, we know that when that member was the minister responsible he actually oversaw the dilution, the gutting of what was a golden share that Saskatchewan people had, allowing for foreign ownership of the company and removing a provision that would require that the government approve any sale. Well they're hollering now, Mr. Speaker, because that's their record.

The only bad thing that happened, the only unfortunate event yesterday, Mr. Speaker, is that the Leader of the Opposition found his way to a microphone, Mr. Speaker. Because in those two minutes at the microphone, Mr. Speaker, he didn't do the province any service at all. He was talking about nationalizing the industry. He talked about changing royalties, Mr. Speaker, that are today creating jobs and resulting in expansion in the province. Thank goodness that CBC reporters nor few people there knew who he was.

We want to assure the country today, he's not with us. He does not speak for the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. The Premier may forget that he was working in the privatization department of the Devine government at the time the Potash Corporation was privatized in 1989 and actually wrote the press releases. His name is on the bottom of all the press releases about the privatization of the Potash Corporation back in 1989.

My question to the Premier is this: can he guarantee to the people of Saskatchewan that the seven-point pledge made by the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan will be given to the people in writing during the 30-day period leading up to a final decision by the federal government on the hostile takeover of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan by BHP? Has he got that in writing?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, this member is desperately trying to change the subject. And do you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because in the late moments of the battle that we were waging, that the province was waging, that workers were waging, that the government was waging to prevent this takeover, do you know what the member was saying, Mr. Speaker? He was saying that the effort had failed. He had

thrown in the towel. He had raised the white flag. And then he said to CTV that he was . . . Mr. Speaker, and then he said to CTV that he was going to go to . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, he said he was going to go to Ottawa because "There's a huge opportunity with the number of seats that weren't open for the NDP last week." Can you believe that, Mr. Speaker? When the battle was still being waged, he ran out of the ring. He left the battlefield and he went to see after his own political interests, Mr. Speaker. That's why the people of this province categorically reject that kind of leadership, that kind of leadership says to the people of the province he's interested in his own interests, in his party's interests.

We'll continue to fight for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, again the question to the Premier. The one way that the province of Saskatchewan and the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan can fend off the hostile takeover that is still in play is to improve the net benefit to Saskatchewan in the next 30-day period. That, we can do.

Mr. Speaker, the way you fend off the deal is to raise net benefit. And the way you do that is to implement in writing and implement the move of people from Chicago back to Saskatoon. If that's done over the next 30 days, net benefit to Saskatchewan, the bar will rise and the takeover will be refused again by the federal government. Can the Premier guarantee this pledge is in writing and that the people are now in a position to move back to Saskatoon from Chicago? Can he give that guarantee?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — By the way, Mr. Speaker, if I may, if that member went down to Ottawa for political reasons to find out how the NDP can win more seats as a result of a potash issue, I hope . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I would ask the members to allow the Premier to respond as the members of the government allowed the Opposition Leader to place the question.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that his party who paid for the airfare and not, and not the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the written guarantee that that member wants existed in the province. Here's what it used to say . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the member's question was on a written guarantee. Here's what it used to be, the guarantee

with respect to PotashCorp. There used to be a law in the province that said the government could direct PCS [Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc.] to sell securities of a purchaser corporation on any terms or conditions, and therefore the government could block a sale, Mr. Speaker, of any of the assets. The provisions used to say that a purchaser corporation was required to have its head office in Saskatchewan. This written guarantee used to say that Canadians had to hold a majority of the company.

That doesn't exist today in the province, and maybe we have to revisit the chance to see if this is possible again. But you know why we'd have to revisit it? Do you know why it doesn't exist anymore? Because that member changed it, Mr. Speaker. That member put us in the state that we're in today and, like so many other things, we may actually have to clean up another mess that he's made, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier believes that it's mission accomplished, but we still don't know his plan to ensure that PCS keeps the commitments that they've made to the people of Saskatchewan. And the Premier himself has said that companies don't keep promises.

So, simply, to the Premier: how does he intend to ensure that PCS keeps their promises?

[10:30]

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was quite a spectacle yesterday when the Leader of the Opposition went down to Ottawa. He stood behind the leader of the NDP, Jack Layton, trying to . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to allow the Minister of Energy and mines to respond to the question.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While he was ducking in and out of the camera shot, the only saving grace . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Well it appears the opposition members are not prepared to ask a lot of questions today. I'd ask the Minister of Energy and mines to respond.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, while he was ducking in and out of the camera shot, similar to what he used to do on the football field before the grade 8 student Roger Aldag flattened him, the only saving grace in all of that was Kady O'Malley, a CBC reporter, tweeted that while the Leader of the Opposition was speaking, she tweeted, "I know I wasn't the only one who was confused into thinking he was a NDP backbencher I'd never seen before."

So that was at least one saving grace, Mr. Speaker, that the people all across Canada knew that he didn't speak for the province of Saskatchewan, and the Premier of this province does speak for Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Furber: — Well, there you have it, Mr. Speaker. They treat the future of the potash resource of the people of Saskatchewan like it's a joke in this Assembly. It's absolutely shameful. It's absolutely shameful. It's not good enough, Mr. Speaker. They don't answer the question.

But we need a plan to ensure that Saskatchewan people receive the maximum benefit from their strategic resource. The Premier has had two and a half months to develop a plan. We now have 30 days before a revised bid to buy PCS might be received. We still don't know what combination of legislation, regulatory and taxation changes or other policy measures the Premier has in mind.

So, simply, to the Premier: what's his plan?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in addition to the fact that it isn't a joke — you're right — in addition to that fact, Mr. Speaker, it was very, very unfortunate . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I would ask the members to allow the minister to respond to the question.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition didn't take a bit of a geography lesson before he went down to Ottawa to speak about this very important issue of potash. When you look at . . . I have a few pictures of the good community of Kamsack. A beautiful sunset. Here's one with the picture of a nice elevator.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I ask the minister to respond directly to the question.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — A beautiful church. What you don't see in any of these pictures is a potash mine. So while he was on the national stage, he embarrassed the entire province of Saskatchewan by indicating that he had vast knowledge of the potash industry. In fact the truth is known now, Mr. Speaker, he didn't even know where it's located.

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

Mr. Furber: — I'll tell you what's embarrassing, Mr. Speaker. It's embarrassing that in the Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan, the Legislative Assembly where we come here to debate ideas, they treat the future of the potash resource of Saskatchewan like a joke. That's the minister responsible, treats it like a joke.

But it's painfully obvious why they have no plan. The Premier had no plan for forestry; it went in the tank. He had no plan for the province's finance; they're in the tank. He had no plan for health care; he put it in the tank. He had no plan for the

economy of Saskatchewan, and it shrank by 6.3 per cent last year. It's all because they had no plan.

So we want them to tell us today what their plan is for potash. We created a potash review commission, a commission that would determine whether PCS lives up to its commitments to the people of the province, and it would be able to impose financial penalties if they do not. But with two and a half months and all of the resources of government, we still don't know how they intend to enforce PCS's commitments.

So, simply, again to the Premier: I hope he stops treating it like a joke today. Do they have a plan at all to ensure that PCS lives up to their commitments?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, indeed this is a very important issue for the province of Saskatchewan. In the next 30 days we will be making it very, very clear indeed, to the people of Saskatchewan and the country of Canada, that our position will not change. That it will remain no, given all of the evidence of concern about jobs and concern about revenue to the province of Saskatchewan and of course the strategic interests of potash . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I recognize the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — All of those things will be taken into account, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to engage with the federal government to ensure that they understand that our position is not going to waver, not going to change one bit.

On direction from the Premier yesterday, I had a conversation with PotashCorp people, discussed with them the importance of living up to their pledge to the people of Saskatchewan that they have made. I think they understand very, very clearly. They have indicated already in writing, they've put it in newspapers all across Saskatchewan, their pledge to Saskatchewan. We fully intend, on this side of the House, to hold them to the commitments that they have made.

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

State of the Provincial Economy

Mr. Taylor: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. So no real plan for the economy. No real plan for resources. Is it any wonder, Mr. Speaker, that yesterday the Canadian Federation of Business survey released here in Saskatchewan indicates business confidence is up across Canada, but it's down here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we are near the bottom of the pack. Small business owners are a great barometer of the economy, and the Sask Party has been taking them for granted. Why doesn't the Saskatchewan Party understand or value the knowledge shown by the small business community in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise and Trade.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let's look at the facts. The facts are that the population of the province of Saskatchewan is at an all-time high — over 1.045 million people, the highest the population has ever been in the history of Saskatchewan. Sixty-three hundred more people are working today in the province of Saskatchewan than were working only one year ago. We have nearly 10,000 jobs posted on saskjobs.ca as of today, Mr. Speaker. We have the second lowest unemployment rate in the entire country at 5.5 per cent. Mr. Speaker, we're projected by private sector forecasters to be leading the country in economic growth going into the next year, and it's because of this government.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. It really must be a surprise to the Saskatchewan Party that Saskatchewan business owners have lost confidence and have lower confidence than most other provinces. After all the Sask Party predicted our economy would grow by 2.1 per cent last year. It actually shrank 6.3 per cent and business owners know that. Only Newfoundland and Labrador saw its economy shrink more than Saskatchewan's. Doug Elliott of *Sask Trends Monitor* said, and I quote, "We just lost all the gains we made," Mr. Speaker.

So we know that the Saskatchewan Party has no plan for the economy. No plan to manage the debt. No plan for resource revenues. So, Mr. Speaker, for small business owners, what is the plan to turn this around? How do we ensure that Saskatchewan business owners once again have confidence in Saskatchewan's future?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Again, Mr. Speaker, all we hear from the members opposite is doom and gloom. We hear talking down of the economy. The facts are, Mr. Speaker, that the economy of this province is doing better than it has ever done before . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Again, all we hear from members opposite is talking down of the economy. Even from opposition, they're trying to drive people out of the province, Mr. Speaker. The fact is, we have the highest population in this province we have ever had in the history of this province. We have the second lowest unemployment rate in the entire country. We have the third highest increase in housing starts in Canada in 2009.

With respect to the CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] survey that the member is citing, 19 per cent of Saskatchewan businesses plan to increase full-time employment in the next three to four months; only 12 per cent nationally,

Mr. Speaker. Business owners know that this province is moving ahead. They know it's moving forward.

Those members want to look in the rear-view mirror and go back to a past which the rest of the people of this province do not want to go back to. And it's due to the leadership of this Premier, this government. And that's why we're going to keep moving forward, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. The numbers come from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Mr. Speaker. And when you look at the barometer of business confidence in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, when was it at its highest in Saskatchewan's recent history? Spring and summer of 2007, Mr. Speaker, business confidence at its highest.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is the Premier inherited a massive surplus which he turned into a massive deficit. Now business owners open up documents from the Minister of Finance, and they see that the Sask Party is adding 4.2 billion to our provincial debt by 2014 — a 55 per cent increase in debt, Mr. Speaker. Of course that's going to affect business confidence in Saskatchewan. Deficit budgets, a growing debt, a threat to our future, and Saskatchewan's business people know that.

To the minister: what's he going to do to turn this debt train around and restore business confidence in Saskatchewan, at least to the point where it was prior to the election in 2007?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Enterprise.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite cites the summer of 2007 as being the high point of confidence. What was happening in the summer of 2007? There was eager anticipation, Mr. Speaker, of getting rid of the NDP. And what happened, Mr. Speaker, in November of 2007? We got rid of the NDP, and our province has moved forward in a way we haven't seen at any time in our history, Mr. Speaker.

We see the, as I indicated, the highest population growth of any time in our history, the highest population that we have today at any point in the history of the province. People are coming back, Mr. Speaker, to Saskatchewan after the NDP drove them out.

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

Support for Preeceville School

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the people living in Preeceville are looking for some real leadership on an issue in their community. To the minister: why are elementary school children in Preeceville spending the winter in classrooms with no central heat?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm well

aware of the situation in Preeceville. And of course nothing is more important than the health and safety of the students. I met with the school board yesterday. The ministry officials are working . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Allow the minister to respond to the question. I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — The school board has had the situation assessed, and they're looking at what the answers can be. They have made one application for some repairs, but they will be coming forward with another one. We are welcoming their assessment of what needs to be done. They are also holding, I believe it is tonight, a community meeting to inform the parents of their situation. We have offered to have officials at that meeting, but the school board has said no, they have it well handled at this time.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, it has been known for some time that there is mould in the ductwork in the Preeceville school. The Good Spirit School Division presented an application to the ministry in June of 2010. It is now several months later, and nothing has been done by the Ministry of Education. This is a government that took away school boards' ability to tax and school boards are using their reserves in order to fund ongoing operational costs.

The school board has made a request to the ministry, and when can we expect the Sask Party government to give them the money to repair this unacceptable situation?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Again I'll repeat my former answer. We are working with the school board. The school board put in an application. They do not fully know yet the extent of the repairs. There will be another application, to my understanding, coming forward. The school board met with me yesterday. This was not their number one concern yesterday. However, that is because we are working with them. They're going to hold a meeting tonight with the community to . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The member from Saskatoon Fairview will allow the minister to respond. I believe the minister was giving a direct answer.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — They are satisfied so far with the response from the ministry officials on this particular situation. We're aware that as they have more testing done, they are doing air quality testing. They have shut down certain parts of the system, and we will continue to work diligently with this school board to try to address this problem.

What the school board is going to do tonight is to meet with . . . They're holding a public meeting in the community to help inform the parents better as to what's happening.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, parents in the Preeceville area do not find the Ministry of Education's response acceptable. It is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. It's completely unacceptable when you have younger children attending classrooms with space heaters to keep them warm. It's not safe. It's a fire hazard. It's noisy. And if you have a special needs child that requires calm and quiet, Mr. Speaker, they don't need ambient background noise. This is not exactly a good learning environment.

So my question is very simple. When is the Minister of Education and her officials going to give the Good Spirit School Division the money they need to repair this unacceptable heating system?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I'm going to make one more attempt, Mr. Speaker, to explain to the member, the money is not the issue. We need to know exactly what needs to be done. So is she suggesting that we should ignore the school board? Should we ignore the school board and ignore working with the school board?

My understanding is that the school board is working very hard to assess the situation. We're working with the school board. And I guess she needs to clarify if we should ignore the school board and go to a parent and start repairing this without doing the proper assessment.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, given the magnitude of the announcement yesterday, I would request leave of the House to make a statement about the historic decision by the Industry minister yesterday.

The Speaker: — The Premier has asked for leave to respond to yesterday's announcement. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Proposed Sale of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to all members of the Assembly for leave to just make a very brief statement. The Leader of the Opposition may also want to make a statement, and certainly we'd want to provide leave for that to occur.

Yesterday was an historic day for the province of Saskatchewan and for the country. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important that we take this opportunity in the Assembly to send some strong signals from this Legislative Assembly on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan that would include the following.

Number one, it would say thank you to the Industry minister, Tony Clement, and to the federal members of parliament from our province, to all 14 who have been making the case within the guidelines of Investment Canada that we wanted to be made. We also want to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, the support of opposition members in parties in Ottawa. We want to thank the opposition party here, Mr. Speaker. We want to thank everybody involved with the industry, the people of the province . . . And I went through a bit of a list yesterday. But, Mr. Speaker, that's the first important signal that we need to send from this legislature today.

This was a bold decision that was made by the federal government because under different parties in power, this kind of a decision has never happened. Sixteen hundred or so proposed takeovers — one denied for national security reasons; none ever denied on a net benefit test similar to this. This was very historic and maybe, Mr. Speaker, maybe it signals a new phase for our country, and especially for Western Canada where so much of the natural resources of Canada are located.

Maybe that new phase is a Canada that says to the world, we will continue to be a free trading country. We will continue to be an open market country. We will continue to welcome foreign investment, foreign direct investment. We will continue to approve takeovers when they happen, Mr. Speaker, but we will also be strategic in terms of serving the long-term interests of our country.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that we send that signal from the legislature today to the world that has been watching what's going on in our province, and to the nation and to the rest of Saskatchewan. And that signal is this. This province remains open for business. This province remains absolutely focused on a growth agenda that is resulting in population growth, that has resulted in a nation-leading job creation record over the last number of years, that is resulting in, Mr. Speaker, our province leading in so many categories and chartered banks from across saying we're going to lead the country again next year.

We need to send a signal today that this decision doesn't change the fact that Canada remains a strong economy, stronger than almost any other of the G8 [Group of Eight] countries, Mr. Speaker. We need to send a signal that Canada can, like other free trading, free market countries, stand up and say that while we welcome foreign investment, while we approve takeovers, there may be some deals that are different because we happen to have 53 per cent of the world's potash in this case, not just in the country but principally just in one province, Mr. Speaker — 30 per cent, as we know, of the reserves at stake in this particular deal.

This is a balance that other nations have struck. Mr. Speaker, I would note, I would note for the record today, and as we send this signal to the rest of the country, I hope they note that in Australia in 2001 when their government said, no to Royal Dutch Shell's attempt to take over Woodside in a natural gas play — not yes with conditions, but when they said no, Mr. Speaker — what happened to investment in Australia? It increased, Mr. Speaker. Australia continued to welcome other takeovers and foreign direct investment.

Mr. Speaker, these two principles can coexist. They do in

nations around the world, whether it's the United States of America or Australia or New Zealand or Spain or France. These two principles exist together and they should. And today because of the decision the federal government has made, they exist in our country as well.

Mr. Speaker, we also need in our province to remain focused on another very important part of the message that speaks to our economic future. And that is that private companies, private mining companies, private oil companies are welcomed in this province. They create jobs for Saskatchewan families. They create wealth. They provide a tax base that allows us to provide every single public service that we want to be able to provide for our citizens. And so we offer those messages today.

Thank you to the federal government for this decision. Thank you to Canadians for their support of Saskatchewan. Thank you to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

And finally this decision changes nothing about this, what I would say, economic anomaly that has been Saskatchewan over the last three or four or five years where we have been an engine of growth, not just for our country, for our continent. This decision changes nothing of that. This is the province to be. Whether you are an investor or whether you are a worker looking for opportunity, looking to fulfill the Canadian dream, there's no better place to do it than the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave to make comments on the statement made by the Premier.

The Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has asked for leave to respond. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Premier for his comments, and while we agree and have agreed on this position for some time, I just want to say as well that the work that has been done by members of this Assembly and the staff on both sides in positioning Saskatchewan and the position of the government and the opposition, I think has been brilliant.

And I really mean this when I say, thank you to all members of the Assembly who have spoken on this issue. And while we may disagree on nuances or going forward positions, the fact of the matter is, Saskatchewan people won. Now we can argue who can take credit for that, but in a way it doesn't really matter because at the end of the day, controlling resources and getting the right deal for the people of Saskatchewan should and does go beyond the political toing and froing that we do here in the Assembly.

And I honestly believe that the toing and froing on politics is an important part. I never apologize for that. But the fact is there are occasions when there are bigger issues at stake, and I'm proud to be part of this occasion where, along with the Premier, on his motion, we supported; we made our statements. And

while we disagree on many things, on this we fundamentally stood together. And I think it made a difference.

And I want to thank the unions and the workers who came to us early on with their position that this wasn't good for working people who mined the potash. And I think we can win on this over the next 30 days. But again I think there's more work to be done.

Where I do disagree with the Premier is that everything is the same in the world when it comes to resources and resource control. In the last three or four years, in the last five years, and especially since the collapse to the world economy, the world banking system, there has been a fundamental change in Canada's psyche about control of resources and about proper management for the future of resources and proper royalties and taxation.

And how I get there is the fact that if you look at many modern countries in the world, the role of corporation, public, private, and co-operative, is fundamentally different than what we were preaching when the Mulroney government was in power, where it was wide open globalization — get out of the way; let the free enterprisers do their thing. And then every country who allows that, everything will be satisfied.

Believe me, the position we have taken here today and over the last few weeks is fundamentally different, I believe, than it would have been two years ago or five years ago because I think things have changed. And if I look at the next federal election, my bet is, is that control of resources at the provincial level is going to become a major issue in the next federal election and the next provincial election.

I say that because the people of this province and right across Canada believe, going back to the days of the national energy program when the Liberal government of the day tried to claw back the 1930 transfer of resources from the province back to the federal government, was rejected, and rejected by mainly Saskatchewan under Allan Blakeney and Alberta under Peter Lougheed. And again at that time we closed ranks, even though we were of different political persuasion, and we won that battle.

Today the world is changing again to the point where I think control of resources — not only energy but steel and copper, magnesium, uranium — the day of just wide open free enterprise, I don't think that's on today. I think things have changed and are changing. And I think there is a will that not only should the federal government be more open and transparent about how they make these decisions because I think the Premier would agree with me that this process doesn't make any sense. The fact that the corporation finds out the decision before the Premier does shouldn't be allowed to stand. That doesn't make very much sense. We own the resource. How is it that an Australian company finds out the decision of the government before the people of Saskatchewan?

So there's many things. And the motion that the federal NDP is debating in the House of Commons today about a new process . . . And I was pleased that in question period yesterday Prime Minister Harper said, and to his credit, that he agrees that this whole process needs to be reviewed about how decisions are

made about resources that belong to the province. How is it that a committee in Ottawa, appointed by Ottawa, makes the final decision about how we manage our resource?

So I believe that parties that get it right in the next federal election about control of resources, following examples of countries like Brazil and Norway who don't hesitate to say that they need to maximize royalties, taxations; they have to have restrictions on companies coming in . . . If you go to Norway, there's a long process of how you get into the offshore oil. You have to prove that your human right record is impeccable and, if it isn't, you can't come in. And that's why many companies don't drill for oil in Norway. Your labour record. Do you support unions?

[11:00]

And some people would argue, well if you're forced to do your business in Norway with its state-owned oil company, no oil company is going to come. They'll all run away. Well the fact is the oil companies worldwide are lined up in the queue to do business with Norway with all of the government regulation, high royalties that are in place. Why? Because they have the resource.

Now nowhere is it more true that people have to live by what the people of Saskatchewan want when it comes to the management of our potash. And I say clearly, if we want higher royalties, they're not going to run away and go somewhere else. The reason I know we can have a little higher royalty, because if the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Potash Corporation has \$500 million in share options, then I know there's a little bit more we can take in royalty. Because no manager of any company that I know of — oil, gas, banks — get \$500 million in share options. That's our money. That was our resource and we're giving too much of it away.

Should we own a piece of the potash mining and operation in this province the way the people of Norway or the people of Brazil or the people of many other countries do? My position is, quite clearly, I think we should. I think we should have an earned interest in potash in Saskatchewan. I think the royalties should be somewhat higher and should be reviewed on a regular basis. I disagree again that you leave royalties the same way for 16 years. And I'm not being argumentative. I just don't agree that that's the way you should manage a major resource.

So today is a day to celebrate, and we'll all try to take credit. And good for the member from Swift Current. And we'll take what credit we can take. That's how politics works. But it's a day to celebrate. But it's also a day to review and reflect on the way we go forward with all the resources of the province, not only here, but right across Canada because I think that is going to be one of the fundamental issues that people in Canada vote on when they go to the polls in a few months here in Canada and for sure here in the province of Saskatchewan in the next election.

So my final concluding comment is again to thank all the members of the Legislative Assembly, but most of all the people of the province, who were behind us and kept pushing us to this conclusion.

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 member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was a bit disconcerting yesterday to be in the midst of a Throne Speech when a historic development was happening in our province. And I do want to congratulate all of the citizens of our province, along with all of the politicians and the people who work in the potash industry, for the work that they did that led us to the historic decision yesterday by the Government of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that I appreciate very much the comments that came from our Premier today as well as our Leader of the Opposition because I believe, along with the Leader of the Opposition, that the world has dramatically changed since the collapse of the financial markets of a couple of years ago and that people are starting to think more strategically about their resources, not only in this province but across the country and indeed internationally, Mr. Speaker.

In my remarks yesterday, I talked about some of the people that have come to my constituency with real issues, real issues around housing in particular, Mr. Speaker. And this is a province that while there are some people that are doing very well in terms of the economy, there are other people that are having a difficult time making ends meet.

And I certainly am of the view, and have been for a very long time, that one of the public policy jobs of the people who come to this Assembly is to try and make life better, not only for some people in the province but for all people in the province, Mr. Speaker. I think our strategic resources, whether it's potash, uranium, oil and gas, those resources give us an opportunity to enhance the lives of our citizens, particularly those that are struggling, Mr. Speaker.

In this Throne Speech, the government has talked about taking the road less travelled. And when we talk about taking a road less travelled, we need to acknowledge that in this province we have one of the highest labour force attachments of women with children five years of age and younger. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say that we have some ways to go as a province to ensure that children who are five years of age and younger have a place to go that is safe and secure and of high quality.

Now the government has indicated in this Throne Speech that since November of 2007 they have created 2,900 new licensed child care spaces and all of these spaces will be in place before the end of March, which is the end of this particular 2010-11 fiscal year. I want to report to the legislature that there are

literally hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of children waiting — and their parents — waiting for child daycare spaces in the city of Saskatoon.

And, Mr. Speaker, I've had an opportunity to go through some of the press releases that the government has issued — I may not have all of them — but at the moment, the 2,900 just doesn't add up. And I've asked the government in a written question to tell us where those spaces are located because I know this: that if you are a student going to the University of Saskatchewan and you have small children, that the likelihood of you getting your child into one of their two child daycare centres is very remote, Mr. Speaker.

The students' union has made it a priority for the students' union at the University of Saskatchewan to dramatically increase the numbers of spaces, of their child daycare spaces in order that parents who attend the university can have their children in those spaces. And, Mr. Speaker, they put in submissions but they have not yet been successful with the Government of Saskatchewan. And I would encourage the government to think carefully about how we continue to support parents, and their children, who are trying to either attend post-secondary education or are trying to keep their job and don't want the hassle of trying to figure out how they are going to have their children looked after in a safe and secure and quality environment during the day.

And we know that there are people that have come to the city of Saskatoon. The city has grown, and yet we have not seen the accompanying growth in the number of child daycare spaces in the city of Saskatoon. And this presents a real problem. So while we talk about resource revenue in the province of Saskatchewan, it's obvious the government wants to have a lower tax system for citizens in the province of Saskatchewan. We still need to enhance programs to support citizens, and one of the ways that we are able to do that is through resource revenues.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that it's clear that not only did the people of this province push back BHP Billiton in its endeavour to take over the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan — and we should all view that and what happened yesterday as a success — I really do think we need to rethink how we treat our resource revenues and how much we get from our resource revenues in order to support our citizens because we know we have some significant infrastructure issues in the province of Saskatchewan and we have some significant social problems in the province of Saskatchewan. And we need to figure out how we're going to address those problems in the long term, not only through public policy measures but also through financial instrument, as the Premier likes to talk about financial instrument measures, in order to have the revenue to pay for those important programs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that this has been a very difficult year for people on the farm in Saskatchewan, and I note that in the Throne Speech they've indicated that there's already been a quarter of a billion dollar payout in crop insurance, with many post-harvest claims to be processed.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is one of the areas that presents a real challenge to the provincial budget. And at the end of the day

it'll be interesting to see what the deficit and debt looks like at Crop Insurance given the huge issues that rural Saskatchewan is facing, particularly in terms of flood in the spring and frost in the fall. And I think that's one of the vulnerabilities of the provincial budget, that we will see a significant increase in the deficit and debt at Crop Insurance. And I think probably the quarter of a billion dollars that the government refers to in its Throne Speech will be small in comparison to what we're going to be looking at once the mid-year report comes out in November.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that is becoming increasingly troubling in the province is that while the government says that it has reduced the amount of government debt, they do not take into consideration what's happening in the Crown sector. And I think it's important for citizens to understand that when the former government talked about debt, we talked about GRF [General Revenue Fund] debt and we talked Crown debt, the total debt of the province. And while it's true the GRF debt has been reduced, the Crown debt has not been reduced and in fact is going up.

So I think instead of having billboards around the province indicating that government debt has been reduced by 40 per cent, I think we need to be very, very honest with the citizens of our province indicating that in fact Crown debt is part of government debt and Crown debt is going up in the province of Saskatchewan. And when you look at the summary financial statements that the government's presented, they indicate that government debt is going to go up as well. It's going to go up another \$4 billion, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in this Throne Speech, the government says that life is still affordable in Saskatchewan. I just want to say to the members opposite that life is not very affordable for a number of our citizens that are on fixed incomes or work in the service sector.

And I noted that the minister of I think it's Enterprise Saskatchewan indicated that there are all these jobs on the SaskJobs website. And, Mr. Speaker, a lot of those jobs are in the service sector. We need to have people who work in the service sector, but those are not higher paying jobs, Mr. Speaker. Those are jobs that are a little bit above minimum wage. And the members opposite need to know that when you freeze minimum wage for a three-year period while the cost of living is going up, that there are a lot of people who get a little bit above minimum wage but their incomes are tied to what the minimum wage does. And when minimum wage goes up, their wages go up. So I really believe that the government needs to rethink, rethink the minimum wage in the province because it's so important for those people in the service sector who are making a little bit above minimum wage, but their wage is tied to that minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the government is quite proud of is the number of nurses, registered nurses that they've increased in the province of Saskatchewan. They've increased the number of seats in our nursing education program. But I want to state to the government that there are a number of nursing students who are graduating, and they are having a difficult time getting full-time employment. And so, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where health regions have not

received the budget that they expected to receive in this fiscal year. They are ratcheting back services and programs. They are not filling positions, and that has implications for those new grads that are coming out of the nursing education program not getting jobs.

[11:15]

And so I think that this is an important public policy discussion because the minister has said he doesn't want to affect front-line services. But the reality is that if you're a health region and you're not getting enough money to cover your costs, one of the ways you manage those costs is by not filling positions in the health region and ratcheting back services in order to deal with the reality of not having enough money, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the government has said that they're pleased that they've been able to increase the number of seats, spaces for children in the pre-kindergarten program. And I note that the Minister of Education got to go to I think it was Russia and represent the ministers of Education in Canada because of early learning and care. And one of the reasons why, I guess the reason why she was invited was because Saskatchewan was the first place in Canada to move child daycare over to the Ministry of Education. And Mr. Speaker, there were some very important reasons why that public policy decision was made under the Calvert government.

Mr. Speaker, we need to have an early learning and care strategy in the province of Saskatchewan. And that early learning and care strategy needs to be not only for children who are 5 years of age and younger — and so that would be child daycare; it would be pre-K [pre-kindergarten] — but it would also be for children that are 5, 6, 7 years of age, Mr. Speaker.

And the province of Saskatchewan did develop the strategy when we believed that the Martin government was going to send \$150 million to Saskatchewan. But with the election of Prime Minister Harper, that program was cancelled, and we're in the, I guess, dubious position where we're now trying to put together an early learning and care strategy to support children.

And we know all the research and all the science shows that it's important. We know that children's brains are basically wired by the time they're 5 years of age. And there are a lot of supports that can be put in place to support young children and their families, Mr. Speaker.

And I would really encourage the Government of Saskatchewan to bring forward an early learning and care plan for the province of Saskatchewan in order to support children and their parents in the province of Saskatchewan. And we also need to think very carefully about going to a full-day kindergarten program in Saskatchewan because we know that the sooner you can get supports in place for children, the better the learning outcomes for children in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech also said that they have addressed long-standing concerns by doubling the seniors' income plan for seniors. Well, Mr. Speaker, they may have doubled it, but it's not enough for those seniors, particularly living in larger centres, to deal with escalating rent increases.

And I would say to the government that there are low-income seniors that are struggling to make ends meet because they simply, through the old-age pension, the Guaranteed Income Supplement, and the Saskatchewan Income Plan, they simply don't have enough money to make ends meet. And we need to think very carefully how we can support seniors in the province of Saskatchewan, given the context that we live in and given that there are seniors that are seeing their rents go up and in fact double in some cases.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the Government of Saskatchewan dealt with in the last session was the decision to change *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* and take over 3 million acres out of protection. Mr. Speaker, the member from Martensville had the dubious task of trying to shepherd that legislation through the Assembly. And I have to tell you this, that I find it very difficult to understand why a younger woman that came to this Assembly representing the people of Martensville was given the task of being very, I guess, harsh. She was one of my harshest critics when I sat on those benches, but she was an effective critic.

She then was put into cabinet by the Premier to be the Environment minister. And while we disagree on many fronts in terms of the government's environmental policy, this was a woman, a female cabinet minister, that was given this role. And when the wildlife protection Act came into this Assembly, the amendments . . . I know how this works. This was not her Bill. This was the Bill of the Government of Saskatchewan. And shortly after this House adjourned, she was put out of cabinet.

But I think the most disrespectful thing, Mr. Speaker, not only was this woman, this female member of this Assembly — and not many of us get to be here — not only was she put out of cabinet but she was shuffled off to the very far corners of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And I find that disrespectful and not acceptable to one of our woman colleagues in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to put it on the record that I think the member from Martensville has been treated very poorly by this government and by our Premier, Mr. Speaker. And I think that it needs to be remedied, that she didn't deserve this, regardless of the legislation that she brought into the Assembly. So, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to put that on the record.

And I know that her family are friends with the Premier apparently. And the Premier took great pains to talk about her father, who she succeeded in this Assembly, but it doesn't matter what happened over there. This woman didn't deserve to be treated the way she has been treated, Mr. Speaker.

But in order to make up for this, the Premier is now saying to the people of Saskatchewan that he wants to introduce some more parks or protect more spaces, so he's taken over three . . . And I will say he, the Premier, has taken over 3 million acres out of natural protection which, by the way, was brought in by the Devine government and Colin Maxwell who was the minister responsible at the time. But he wants to take that land away from protection, but he wants to create some more parks, I guess.

And one of the areas that they're looking at is the Great Sand

Hills. And, Mr. Speaker, I was extremely pleased to be part of a government that brought in international scientists to really take a look at the Great Sand Hills and determine how we could protect that part of our province. And if the government decides to protect it, we'll be looking very carefully to see which part of the Great Sand Hills is permanently protected by the Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it was interesting that this Throne Speech spent very little time on the future of the Potash Corporation and the potash industry. And we all know the results of yesterday. But I think that we ask some very important questions for the people living in the city of Saskatoon.

I represent the east side of the river where a number of Potash Corporation people work, people who work in head office. In fact I've had the distinction of representing some of the vice-presidents that have recently retired — Betty-Ann Heggie and John Hampton, Betty-Ann in charge of corporate governance, and John was the vice-president responsible for legal work. Mr. Speaker, once they retired, those jobs, those positions were moved to the United States, Chicago. And in fact if you go along the Chicago freeway you will see a suburb of Chicago where PCS headquarters is located.

And, Mr. Speaker, there has been a hollowing out of PCS in the city of Saskatoon, a hollowing out. And we can all take responsibility for that. I know my former colleague Eric Cline wrote letters to President Doyle about that hollowing out.

But the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan made some very important commitments to the people of our province during this hostile takeover bid. I want to see, and the citizens of our province deserve to see, Saskatchewan people in some of these positions. The only VP [vice-president] left is Wayne Brownlee, whose brother also happens to work for the Government of Saskatchewan. But it's the only VP position left. And they had Wayne out during this whole debate to talk about PCS, but all of the corporate VP jobs that have to do with our resource, with the exception of Wayne Brownlee, are located in Chicago, Illinois, the United States of America.

And if we want to have our young people have access to some of these better paid jobs in the province of Saskatchewan, we need to see those jobs repatriated, not only to Canada, not only to Saskatchewan, but to Saskatoon. And so the questions that the Leader of the Opposition asked the Premier, the questions that my colleagues asked the Minister of Energy, are very important questions. And we do have the tools. We do have the tools.

Now I understand this morning there were some pretty happy people in Chicago in their office because they don't think they have to come back here. And in fact there are people in the city of Saskatoon that overheard some of the people who have been in this province in the last six weeks to two months talking about, they didn't want to have to come to this hell hole called Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, that's unacceptable. Saskatchewan is not a hell hole. Saskatoon is not. And we need to make sure that the people who ran those full-page advertisements in the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix*, the Regina *Leader Post*, they live up to the commitments that they have made to our citizens. Because our citizens made a commitment to them

by going to bat for them so that this deal was turned down by the Government of Canada.

And those citizens are workers. They're members of the legislature. They are people who go about their daily activity. They're our opposition Member of Parliament, I understand, our government Members of Parliament. All of these people went to bat. And the government of Canada made a decision yesterday that PCS should pay attention to. But we're going to pay attention to them to see whether or not they live up to their obligations that they put in the newspaper.

So not only do they need to repatriate head office jobs to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, but they also need to be much more involved in donating to the community. Because that was another issue that certainly has been a problem for some time. While there were corporate donations, they weren't as significant as the 36 per cent of the potash that they presently hold in the world, Mr. Speaker, and have access to.

So we will be looking with some interest to see whether PCS lives up to its commitments, and whether or not the Government of Saskatchewan which does have the tools, they do have the public policy tools, to make PCS live up to those commitments, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it'll be interesting to see how this Throne Speech meets its test when we see the next provincial budget. This is a government that has promised us, in this Throne Speech, that it's going to take a road less travelled. There are some very compelling issues in the province of Saskatchewan that need to be addressed, and they need to be addressed sooner rather than later.

There are people who do not have a place to live. There are people who do not have a place to live because they are HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] positive, or because they are in the depths of despair — alcoholism, drug addiction, and poverty, Mr. Speaker. There are people who are having a hard time making ends meet. And they could be our grandmothers. They could be our sisters. They could be our kids. They are having a hard time because they work in an area . . . or they're on fixed incomes. They work in an area where there are lower waged jobs, service sector jobs, or they're on fixed incomes.

[11:30]

Mr. Speaker, I would urge the government of this province to do something about housing. You know, all the churches in my area have now gotten together to have an ecumenical group whose job it is to work around the housing issue, because they know that housing is so important to people's health and well-being.

In fact, when the Red Tent group came through Saskatchewan talking about homelessness, the churches in my constituency were there. The Catholic church, the Anglican church, the United church, the Lutheran church, and others — they were there. They were there at city hall to talk about housing.

And let me repeat again, I don't come from the poorest part of Saskatoon. Many of the people in my constituency are doing okay. But there are some people who are not, and their kids

aren't and their sisters aren't and their brothers aren't and their nieces and nephews aren't or maybe their parents aren't.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that we have a duty as legislators. We have a duty as legislators to think about people other than ourselves, to think about people other than who we may hang out with. Because we're a pretty lucky group of people. We come here with good incomes. We have a good income relative to how others are in the province in Saskatchewan. Most of us own our homes, if not all of us. We're not struggling, but there are people struggling in the reality that they face in the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely awful to be in your constituency office when a 78-year-old woman, a senior woman comes into your office — having taken the bus because she can't drive any more — she lives in a small apartment, and she brings in her 52-year-old son who is HIV positive, a recovering addict, obviously with mental health issues, mental health issues, and he has no place to go because no one wants him.

And we need to do something about that, Mr. Speaker. We need to do something about that, and we need to do it sooner rather than later. Because all of the information is coming out that the numbers of people in our province who are HIV positive is increasing. It's increasing every year, so we need to address that. But for those people who are HIV positive, they have to have some place to live. In fact it's immoral if they don't, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely unacceptable.

So I will be watching very carefully in the next budget. Does this government have money for homelessness? Does this government have funding for people who require that kind of support? And I would urge the government, very clearly urge the government, with all of its attendant issues . . . and there are many. There are many issues that you have to deal with. I understand it. But there are people who are mentally ill, HIV positive, and homeless that absolutely need to have somewhere to go, Mr. Speaker.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for listening to what I had to say. I'm looking forward to next spring's budget. I'm looking forward to the mid-year report. And I'm looking forward to seeing some work done, some progress made on housing and child daycare and early learning in the province of Saskatchewan. And we will see whether or not the Government of Saskatchewan that says they want to take a road less travelled truly will take a road less travelled that is for the people of the province and for those people who don't have a voice in this Assembly.

There are lots of people that have a voice in this Assembly through their members of the legislature. We represent various interests in this Legislative Assembly. But my test will be, my test will be whether or not this government does something significant and serious about housing in the province of Saskatchewan because they absolutely need to, because no one in the province of Saskatchewan should be without a home. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your attentiveness and I'll take my seat.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a privilege and a pleasure to speak on the Speech from the Throne. But first I've got some special thank yous I would like to make. First off to my wife Valerie, because on November 1st — just a couple of days ago — was our 35th wedding anniversary, and I spent it here at the shop. So thank you very much to her for her support.

I'd also like to thank my CA [constituency assistant], Mary Anne. She's invaluable and also a great friend. I'd also like to thank the guys and gals here in our office. Their support, their assistance, and their friendship is greatly appreciated.

And I'd also like to congratulate the new MLA for Saskatoon Northwest. Good to have you on board, my friend. I'd also like to thank the people of Batoche, my home constituency, for their support and their friendship through the years.

There's a new sense of pride in Saskatchewan. People are now proud to be from Saskatchewan. We are seeing growth at an unprecedented rate — the highest year-over-year population growth since 1953, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the highest growth since 1953. That's just phenomenal. It's unreal. We've at last reached our time. Now our children are coming home. They're building futures, building homes. They are now building Saskatchewan. We see business people starting new businesses at a rate we have never seen before.

If you ask the average person about the new Saskatchewan, he will tell you he likes what he sees. He will tell you a new day has dawned for Saskatchewan. He will say it is finally, finally our turn. He will also say tomorrow has finally come for Saskatchewan.

I'd like to quote from former President Ronald Reagan, and I quote. He said, "We didn't come here to mess with the controls. We came here to change the direction of the ship." This is what is happening in the new Saskatchewan. We are finally reaching out for the dreams that our forefathers had when they settled this province.

In 1905 when Saskatchewan was born, we were the fastest growing province in all of Canada, in all of Canada. We had a larger population than our sister province, Alberta. Now we hit 1 million, and they are at over 3. We were the third largest populated province in Canada next only to Quebec and Ontario. We built the largest legislative building in all of Canada. We were proud, and we were reaching for our destiny.

So what happened? The dirty '30s hit like a hammer, and we were beaten into submission. Our economy was totally based on agriculture. Our crops failed; our businesses failed; and our hearts failed. We were beaten into submission, and we settled for mediocrity.

No more hopes. No more dreams of grandeur. We became the wee province, the province of decline, the second-rate province, the province depending on the rest of Canada, the province whose biggest export was our sons and daughters — our precious sons and daughters leaving for the promised lands: Alberta, BC [British Columbia], Ontario, anywhere but here, the land of no hope.

A sad story, but not the end. Some sons and daughters stayed — the strong of heart, the fearless. They worked and they built on the base of our forefathers. They would not accept that fate.

So we stand here today, the proud sons and daughters of the people who stayed, who led us to today, who taught us, who pushed us, who helped us to be more than what they could be. Many of them had little to no education. They gave us the chance, they gave us the education, and they gave us the encouragement. All they asked in return was for us to reach for our destiny, to build, to grow, to dream, to make this province into what it rightly should be — a have province, a leader, a jewel in the crown of Canada. A place to be, not a place to be from. A world leader in resources, in agriculture, in science and technology.

Mr. Speaker, I will now mention some of the projects that I am most proud of. They are projects that were very important to the communities of Batoche.

The water project at Duck Lake. The sewage project at St. Louis, key to their future. The bridge at St. Louis, key to the future of people on No. 2 Highway. The RO [reverse osmosis] water project in Middle Lake will allow the town to grow and develop. Highway 368, very big to the future of Saskatchewan; part of the iron triangle and needed muchly for our future. A new high school for Duck Lake. Three Lakes School roofing project. The paving of the main street of Cudworth. High-speed upgrade to Lake Lenore, Kinistino, St. Louis, St. Brieux, Duck Lake, Birch Hills, Cudworth. These are some of the items I am most proud of because they are for the people of Batoche.

This year was the Year of the Métis, and it has been a very exciting year. I've been very fortunate to be part of the new initiative, Trails of 1885. This program is uniting all the locations of the 1885 resistance from Fort Walsh to Steele Narrows. It includes sites as Fort Pitt and the Humboldt telegraph. These are sites that are first now beginning the task of restoration.

Trails of 1885 will enable tourists to see the whole story right from Fort Walsh to Steele Narrows. It will be the map that lays out the full picture — enables people to see what happened, when it happened, and where it happened. The tourists will then be able to pick and choose the route across Saskatchewan. In fact, it will also link up with the relevant sites in Manitoba and Alberta.

The highway signs are up. Maybe you've seen them — 1885 on a blue background with a white border. The grand opening of the Trails of 1885 was held this spring at Prairieland Park in Saskatoon. The grand entry was done in a fine style. Leading the entry was the North West Mounted Police and their scouts. Our Premier and a federal representative entered in a beautiful horse-drawn landau. There were representatives of First Nations from Saskatchewan and Alberta riding in on horseback. I was privileged to ride in a Red River cart with my friend, the president of the Saskatchewan Métis Nation, Mr. Robert Doucette.

Another event this summer that was a first in many respects was the live re-enactment of the battle of Cut Knife Hill. It was a huge success, with cannon fire, black powder, smoke,

warriors in full battle dress. It was an amazing sight. A lot of the work was done by Poundmaker Reserve in partnership with Fort Battleford. I salute your efforts and look forward to next year's production.

[11:45]

One of the biggest events of the year was Back to Batoche Days, held late in July. It was held in conjunction with the 125th anniversary of the battle of Batoche. An emotional reconciliation service was held at the Batoche graveyard site. It was very rewarding to be there with our Premier and witness this event. Back to Batoche Days was a huge success. Mr. Speaker, total number of wristbands sold was an astounding 22,000. Twenty-two thousand people came to a field alongside the Saskatchewan River to celebrate Back to Batoche Days, the heritage of our province.

The feature entertainers were Michelle Wright, Donny Parenteau, and Andrea Menard. A huge success. Congratulations to our friend Robert Doucette and the gal who put it all together, Claire Belanger-Parker.

Another of this summer's events that has been ongoing for years, but was more prominent this year, was the Trial of Louis Riel. It was held at numerous locations this summer and even at the Batoche site. It was very moving and emotional for the Métis people who saw it for the first time. Thank you to the crew and staff that did the performance. It was truly, truly first-class.

The world is hungry for new history. Through Trails of 1885 opening the pages of the history of our province, we are showing the world what an exciting history we have. There are a lot of sites and places to touch history on the Trails of 1885. I would encourage each and every one of you to go see, taste, and smell the history and the wonders of our province.

There are a lot of points made in our government's Throne Speech that have been well addressed by my colleagues on this side of the House. They have been very well documented in great detail by our members. But there are a few issues that I feel I must personally address.

The first one I want to address is our population. It is finally over the million mark. This is a number that mediocrity said we would never reach. The growth factor, when first proposed by our then leader, Elwin Hermanson, was laughed at. The left side said, impossible. Well who's laughing now? The highest growth rate in all of Canada.

The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, in her reply to the Speech from the Throne, said the Sask Party has created more Crown corporations than the NDP government of previous. Mr. Speaker, I say to that member, if that's the case, why are all the members on that side of the House so worried and yelling all over the country that the Sask Party will sell the Crowns and that we will destroy them? Which is it? Are we building or are we destroying? You can't have it both ways. You can't suck and blow at the same time.

I'm very proud of the government and Premier for stepping up to the plate on this controversial MS [multiple sclerosis] issue.

We are not only supporting the research, but we are funding it to the tune of 5 million. Now that's talking the talk and walking the walk. We have taken action, not just because we have the highest incidence of MS in Canada but because it is the right thing to do.

I'm also very proud of the future children's hospital. The time has come. It fits well with the needs of new Saskatchewan. And I look forward with great anticipation to the grand opening.

I am also thrilled to see surgical wait times finally being reduced. Mr. Speaker, the NDP party — the party that gave Canada medicare — this party, this NDP party gave Saskatchewan the longest surgical waiting list in all of Canada. What a quantum leap backward. The NDP was the party of social justice. They are no longer.

The Sask Party has given Saskatchewan more social justice in three years than the NDP did in their entire 16-year reign. From surgery wait lists to doctor, nurse shortages, the Saskatchewan Party has addressed these issues and found solutions. We are now looking at the STARS [shock trauma air rescue service] program that would give us that much-needed time to get patients to the emergency room by helicopter and save lives, save many lives that are just too distant from the major hospitals to be saved. The Sask Party government is the new champion of social justice, and the people of Saskatchewan are very, very grateful.

One of the final issues I would like to address in my reply to the Speech from the Throne is the education portion of property tax. For as long as I can remember, it has been an unfair burden on property owners. The previous government promised and promised to address this issue but never did. The Sask Party has addressed the issue, and the people of Saskatchewan agree, it is the right answer. The people of Saskatchewan are very happy with the new Saskatchewan, and I am very honoured to be part of this new government.

The last issue that I would like to address is potash. Potash could prove to someday be the most valuable resource in the world. Feeding the world as the population grows will become more and more tied to this special resource called potash, and we, the people of Saskatchewan, have 53 per cent of the entire world's supply.

The case made by our government on the sale to BHP Billiton was flawless. They left no stone unturned. And as the world now knows, we won the day. I would personally like to say thank you, thank you very much, to our Premier and his team that made it all possible.

This is a very exciting time to be from Saskatchewan. To our ancestors I say, rest easy. We have taken the high road. And Saskatchewan once again is looking to a bright future — a place where future generations will be proud to live, work, and play; a place they will call home. God bless Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting enthusiastically the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw): — I recognize the member from Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to get up and enter the debate of the Throne Speech. I've entered many of them; this is going into my 12th year coming up. It hasn't seemed that long at times and sometimes it's seemed longer. But I always enjoy getting up and representing the views of my constituents. I still feel honoured that they see fit to send me down here to express their views. And I'm still humbled by that when I think about it, that when I go around and talk to them that they still see fit to send me down here.

I also want to welcome our newest member, the member from Saskatoon Northwest. I know that he worked very hard to get here through his by-election, and I know that he's going to work equally hard for his constituents, representing them. And I know he's going to be here for many, many years.

I also want to say a thank you to my constituency assistants. They've been here with me from the start. Mr. Clark Puckett and Donna Petit have worked very hard looking after the office when I've been up here in Regina bringing the concerns of the constituents. And we also have another girl working a little bit of part time, Lavonne Lyke, who's doing very well working there. So I want to give a thanks if they're watching — I don't think they are; they're probably on the phones talking to constituents or working — but I want to give a thanks for running the office very well and looking after all of my constituents as they've been for the 12 years that I've been here. They've addressed every concern, returned every phone call that has ever come into that office. And I've returned every call that anybody that's ever requested, that talks to me.

It's very good to be . . . I always look forward to entering into debate on the Throne Speech. I've spoken to many of them, but this one and the last few in particular, this one talks about a new road. And when I've talked to . . . gone around in my constituency, we are on a new road. When I first got elected, a lot of my towns were losing population. They were struggling. When I met with mayors, the Reeves, the biggest concern was loss of population, jobs — you know, how can we get this province growing? And the last few years it has been growing, and there's a pride out there.

There's always been a pride with people from Saskatchewan, but the last years it's really bubbled to the surface. I mean, we're forefront. We're getting to be a leader in Western Canada and a have province, and that's what the people want of Saskatchewan. They want to be a leader. They want to . . . they take pride in what we have.

And we have a lot here. We have many natural resources, one of the biggest agricultural bases in Canada, in Saskatchewan here, most arable acres. You know, very many natural resources: potash, oil, natural gas, heavy oil, diamonds, uranium, coal. There's many, many natural resources here. This is, the potential for Saskatchewan is huge. It's almost like when you talk to the constituents, they know that we're just on the cusp of growing, like our future is just starting again.

I know the members have talked about when they built this legislature. The member for Batoche and also member from Cypress Hills that talked when they first built this legislature, it was built for 4 to 5 million people. It was built because they expected this to be Saskatchewan, to be the leader of Western

Canada, to be the leader of Western Canada. And now we're stepping finally into that after many, many years, that the people now in Saskatchewan realizing we are going to be the leaders here in Western Canada. We are a leading province.

And this Throne Speech speaks to the many things that we've led. We're leading in, we're growing in population, over the 1 million mark. We've never, ever reached that mark, never had that mark for many, many years. If we did, it was I think maybe we may have touched it close to the early '30s, I'm not sure, late '20s.

It shows that the promise of people coming home, the towns growing. The towns I've talked about — Kenaston, Hanley, Davidson, Watrous, Wynyard, Raymore — are all growing. They're all adding houses. When I talk to the mayors there, I mean, the biggest concerns now that they have is working on subdivisions and new permits for housing.

People coming home, commuting to jobs in Saskatoon, commuting to the mines in Allan and Lanigan, commuting. Also even still some going to Fort McMurray to work, but they want to come home. They want to live in Saskatchewan. This is their home, and they have a huge pride in that.

And this Throne Speech talks about it. It talks about growth. And there's been many growths. I mean, we can talk about the long-term care facility in Watrous. You know, the people there put together, started in '91-92 raising funds. They had the funds in the early '90s to build their integrated long-term care facility. The previous government said no to them, year after year after year after year as their facility deteriorated.

We came to government. We went out. I know the Health minister came out. We looked at that facility, knew that it needed . . . talked to the people there that put many years in, and faith. And I'll give congratulations to a man like Murray Westby, who was the Chair of the foundation there; Mayor Ed Collins who just kept pushing and pushing, saying, you know eventually the government of the day is going to listen to us.

And we came into power. We listened to them, saying yes, we're going to work with you. You have the money. We're going to give you our share. Less than a month ago, I was at the sod-turning. Hundreds of people there, people that had worked for that for 20 years to see that coming.

And that is, that's part speaking to this government knowing that we have a vision and a future for Saskatchewan. We believe in this province. Same as the people in Watrous and area, they believed that that community was going to grow, that they were going to need that facility at that.

Another one is the children's hospital. There has been people raising money for many years. I want to congratulate people from Saskatoon, from all over the province have been raising money because they believed that this province needed a children's hospital. Does this province need a children's hospital? You bet it does. You bet it needs a children's hospital. And the people of Saskatchewan knew it needed one.

We as government, we stepped up. We put 200 million into that. And there's still fundraisers going on. There's been

fundraisers for many years through raffles and telephones and charities and raffle tickets, and raised money right across the province. I think many, many organizations from the Elks to the Kinsmen to the Lions have all donated money, always had fundraisers, always going towards a children's hospital. That's a vision and speaks to this province and the future of it.

And the people believe in this province, Mr. Speaker, and so do we, the Government of Saskatchewan. We believe that this province has a future that is growing.

Another one is a vision talking about in the Throne Speech I'm proud of is our STARS program. The member for Melfort did a lot of work towards that. He worked, brought that idea forward years ago, travelled to Alberta, studied that. Will it fit into Saskatchewan? Yes, it will. I think we need, we need that in Saskatchewan. Will it be replacing things in rural Saskatchewan? No. It will be enhancing our health care to Saskatchewan. We owe that to the residents of any way that we can help the people in Saskatchewan. And that speaks to this, Mr. Speaker, speaks to this Throne Speech, speaks to the vision and the people of this province.

[12:00]

You know, business owners, I have many small businesses in my constituency. And the optimism is there now that this province is on the cusp of growing bigger, and it's a good place to do business. And it is growing and it is growing. I can name . . . You know, every town there's almost been a new business been growing where, under the NDP, it was stagnant. There was no businesses growing in rural Saskatchewan under them because, you know what? They didn't believe in rural Saskatchewan. They wanted to work within . . . How can you work with a declining population? And we're not . . . That's not our program. Ours is we know this province is growing, as is the people growing.

And that's what they want. They want a government, Mr. Speaker, that believes in the growth of its province. And this province has a huge, huge, huge future, Mr. Speaker.

Talking about the potash. I had many calls, you know, that believe they don't want the government owning it, but they like the stance we're taking because we're looking after the resources of this province for the people of Saskatchewan. And that is when I've had many calls. I was out in the coffee shops in the weekend talking to people. And the stance we took, our Premier took, of going to Ottawa and working with them and getting them to realize that they made the right decision, on that end of it, has gone . . . is the right stance.

I haven't had one person say, you know, no, what you're doing is wrong. I've had many people, many constituents, and I don't . . . [inaudible] . . . they voted for me or not. Just about everybody I talked to in Arm River-Watrous says, you know, what you guys are doing is good. You're there protecting our resources for our future. It's going to help grow our health care system, our education system, our highways.

You know, one of the other targets we'd set out when we're talking about health care, we talked about it, is hiring of 800 new nurses in this province. You know, that is a goal that we'd

set out. We'd set out from the onset when we were first elected. We talked about it in our throne speeches. And we've hit that target. We've needed that target for a number of years. We needed to hire new nurses because there's been a shortage of nursing in Saskatchewan. You know, those are targets that we set out as government, that we took to fulfill. And it was a challenge, but we did it. We fulfilled it because we believed that this province is growing. And it is on the grow.

We've also, to grow that, we've added 170 new nursing training seats added on top of the other 30 that were previously added. That's how you grow. We have faith in this province. We need to support our health care system, and that's how we're doing it. We've also created an additional 100 long-term addiction recovery spaces, you know. Those are things that we're doing also to help everybody.

I know that under housing units, we also put in 166 affordable housing units throughout the province. And there is, there is a housing shortage. But that comes when you have an economic boom. That comes when you're growing a province. When you grow a province, there is some challenges. But you know what? We can stand up and face them. Those are the kind of challenges that I like to face because when I first got elected in '99, when the present . . . when the opposition was in power, the challenges they were facing was losing population. How do we deal with declining population, all of our people leaving? Poor highways. And how they faced it was how to try to manage the decline.

Our goal was, how can we turn that around? How can we turn that around? How can we start growing this province? Keeping our people here. Making sure that there is jobs and job growth in this province. And it's a challenge to do that, but we've stepped up to it in many different ways.

We're also bringing new programming in called Head Start on a Home which will see the construction of 1,000 new affordable homes over the next five years. Now those are things we're doing to grow this province, to help the people of this province grow.

You know, another promise we'd made when we were through different Throne Speeches is 120 new police officers. Right now we're at 75 per cent complete of that, and I'm sure that we will have completed that by the time our term is up in November, you know. And the people of Saskatchewan, they remember things like that when they know that you're trying to grow this province. And it is growing. It is moving in the right direction.

Agriculture. We all know that it was a, you know, it was a trying time. It was a challenge for farmers this year, you know. We had excessive moisture. In my area and throughout my constituency farmers struggled to get the crop in, and most of them did. In my northeast part of my constituency, some of them just couldn't. They had more rain. There was places that had as much as 45 to 50 inches of rain throughout the province, and they just couldn't get their acres seeded, not all of them. So what did we do? We tried to help. We put out \$30 an acre, you know.

And then we've also enhanced crop insurance. And you know,

they're appreciative. They know that we're trying to help any way we can to help them struggle through their times. And as the summer continued on, harvest was also a challenge.

But the farmers, if you're involved in agriculture, used to battling mother nature. You try to work with her, but it seems like you battle with her as much as you work with her, and this year it was a battle. We were lucky in October — the weather got nice and the crops were pretty well all in. Last reports checked, it was at least 99 per cent of the province was harvested. There was, you know, a small per cent that they just couldn't get out.

But I know the challenges they faced in some of the . . . especially my northeast part of the constituency of combines getting stuck, trucks getting stuck. That was almost not quite a daily occurrence, but at least a weekly occurrence of a farmer having to pull out a combine or a truck or a grain cart. And you know, that's hard on equipment. It slows you down. You have to take your time. It's a challenge. But they stepped up, you know. They met it. I want to congratulate the farmers, the challenges they faced this year. And we're hoping next year will be a good year.

But we've tried to help them anyway we can. We've enhanced crop insurance. We've laid out the \$30 an acre to try to help them through their times.

Another one is, you know, we're looking to restore and repair irrigation infrastructure. Before the boundaries changed, I used to have Outlook, an irrigation district, and I used to meet with the farmers there. And you know what? There wasn't a nickel, they told me, put into irrigation through the '90s. All the work was done through the '80s. It was like the NDP said, well this area is not going to grow. No, we're not going to, like, spend any money there. Well we believe that irrigation can grow in Saskatchewan and grow in that area, so we've put in over \$30 million to restore and repair irrigation infrastructure. You know, that's believing in agriculture.

And one of the other irritants in the agriculture area was education property tax. We know that it had to be addressed. You know, we've had politicians talk about that for 30, 40 years, that it's getting to be more and more a burden on property owners, especially as the school districts got larger and as the farms got larger, as property got larger. We know there was a problem that we had to address, and we were willing to take that on. Was it a challenge? Yes, it was. And the people understand and are grateful, though, that we know that it was a problem and that we were willing to step up and address it instead of just saying, well, no, we're not going to, you know, just talk about it. You know, we're just going to talk about it. We're not going to do anything like the last government did at that.

So this is what this Throne Speech talks about. It talks about a future. It not only talks about a new road; it talks about a future. But it also talks about a government that is willing to step up to the challenges, the challenges that have faced this great province. And there's many challenges that face this great province. And you need a government that's willing to step up and meet them challenges head on, and I'm pretty sure that we did a very good job of it, the very best that we can. And it

shows probably in the last by-election we had where we increased the vote there, increased the popular vote in a by-election, returning a government member.

And I know when I'm out in my constituency and out in the area . . . I know that there's been a couple of members on the other side said, well they toured rural Saskatchewan and they are hearing all this. Well so have I toured rural Saskatchewan, and I've toured my constituency. And I know what's being said, and I know what's being told to me. And the majority of the people are still believing in this government and the direction we are moving because we believe in this province. We believe that there is a huge potential, that there's growth. We're just on the edge of growing this province. We will be a leader of Western Canada some day, which we should be with all the resources we have.

And just the people of this province when you talk to them, you know, there's a whole new pride here. And it just doesn't include Saskatchewan Roughriders which, you know, they're something to be proud of too. They've been doing very well. But there's a pride now when they talk about this province, when they talk about the Premier, of how he stands up for this province, how he pushes it across the country. How he stands up, works with the business leaders. How he's been to the States. How what he did for . . . standing up for our industry, our potash industry. People understand that and they respect that. And they respect our Premier. And they respect the government for the stance they've been taking on working towards growing this province even to make it even a better place to live.

And it is an excellent place to live. I know that in Arm River-Watrous, I've heard one MLA here say, you know, everybody says that they have the best constituency. And in the statement he said, if you don't believe that, you probably shouldn't be here as an MLA. And I do. I believe that Arm River-Watrous is a great place and it's a great constituency. But I believe this province is a great place — the cities, the small towns, the farms, the rural area.

Some of the other things we've talked about in this Throne Speech is the tourism, a new program for high-performance athletes. Because as this province grows, we're going to have more athletes coming here. We already have many athletes coming out of here. Many top line, some of the best athletes in the world competing, whether it be at the Olympics or on the NHL [National Hockey League], junior hockey, football, baseball, or the many other, many, many other sports that are on the international, national level, also on the provincial level. So we need to work and help them perform better, to work with them. Because when they go on the world stage, they're representing Saskatchewan when they go there.

You know, I know that we've also talked about protecting — which we are — some of our beautiful areas. And we have some of the best areas in this province. You know, you're looking at the Great Sand Hills, doing more protection, because this is a beautiful, beautiful province. You know, it is. There is many, many places — lakes, the rivers, the scenery. We almost have it all. And even in my constituency, we have probably the only mountain, Mount Blackstrap, in all of Saskatchewan. So my constituency I think has it all. We have the rivers and the

lakes, and we have the mountain.

And we also, is another business that's coming in, is tourism. Like we just had a reception there. And tourism generates as much money as any other business in Saskatchewan. And I know a growing business in my constituency is outfitting. We've had a couple of new outfitters come up, and hunters from the States come. And I know that when they come, you know, they spend money.

When people come on a holiday and they combine a holiday with a sport, and whether it's your hunting, fishing, or just basically camping, I mean it's a holiday. When you go on a holiday, you spend money. You spend usually more money than you do at home. You eat out. You buy souvenirs. You go to all the local attractions. You spend money. And the spinoff from that has been huge for my area.

I have, you know, many lakes, many tourist spots. And I know that there is . . . That is a growth industry that our government is looking to explore. And I know that we're working any way we can with Tourism and Culture to keep coming the tourists here, to keep . . . This is a, the province, I would say, is a hidden jewel when it comes to tourism. There's lots of people in this world don't even realize how great of a place this is, and how many sites and things to see from the North down to the most southern part of the province. I mean we have the forests. We have the Plains. We have, like I say, everything when it comes to offering in tourism — great skidooning in the winter, great winter sports, and great summer sports. And you know, there is huge potential there. And that's something that we're looking to expand in any way that we can.

[12:15]

Another thing, another one that we've, a leader we've been in, I would say right across Canada we've been, is the MS liberation clinical trials. You know, that's huge. And that, Mr. Speaker, that goes across political boundaries. I mean that should be . . . to explore that says something of our government willing to put \$5 million in because what that does, it may . . . And there's been many, many reports of people that have gone for the treatment have come back and their life is better.

Any time you can look to improve the quality of a person's life or the length of it, it's a good thing to explore that. And I'm proud of my government, that it's stepped up and put \$5 million into that. And I'm not sure where the opposition . . . I'm hoping that they think that's a good idea because I think it is. To me that's across party lines. It's something that should be explored. And if it's any way that we can help, you know, the people, and we do. And there is many, many people that suffer from MS through the province. And you know, I'm very proud of this government for stepping up for that.

You know, that speaks to the Throne Speech, and it speaks to what this government has . . . when you talk about going down a new road, you know, a new path. And that's what the people of this province are looking for. They're tired. They were tired of the old road. They were tired of the way this province had been run. They want to take a pride in this province. They want to take a pride in the growth and the agenda of this government, which is growing this province, and to be a leader in Western

Canada.

And that's what we're working with. We're working with First Nations. We've stepped up the plate there. I know that there's many meetings going on. I have two reserves and I've been to them. And at Kawacatoose, they've been at a couple of partnerships that they've signed . . . [inaudible] . . . there on different things they're doing. They're looking at a big tourism area, working with the surrounding RMs [rural municipalities] and surrounding towns. They know that they were looking at growing that province or working with the province to grow their reserve and provide people work for their people. And they've been doing an excellent job. And I want to hand it to the chiefs of both Kawacatoose and Day Star for stepping up and the work that . . . They're willing to work with the government. And us as a government, we're willing to work with them. We're willing to work with partners with them.

You know, we're willing to . . . That's one thing about this government. It's willing to work with every level of government — municipal governments across the board, towns. Some of the programs we've installed over the years to help them with their infrastructure was a huge boon. Where we've got . . . A lot of my towns benefited from that. It improved their water infrastructure systems, their sewer systems. Much needed money. You know, as these towns are growing, they're going to need that. They're going to need the help that we've been providing them and especially as they are growing.

Like I talk about Arm River-Watrous. I think at just about every town in my constituency has seen some population growth of it across the board. There's many new houses, like I mentioned, in Davidson and Kenaston and Hanley, Watrous, Wynyard, working . . . growing. I know that I have about four towns have actually had to put in new subdivisions. And that's been spoke very well to the faith that the people have in Saskatchewan.

And the show that we put on at the Winter Olympics, you know, that was mentioned, I think, right around the world, and also another thing that put us on the international stage. You know, people are just starting to recognize Saskatchewan in Canada and outside of Canada. And we need to promote that more. We need to show the world what's here for potential, for economic growth. For economic growth, how they want to come here for businesses or if you just want to come here and live.

In my constituency I've had quite a few people from eastern Canada move here. You know, just loving, loving it, and just saying, I wish I'd have known more about Saskatchewan earlier. You know, read about some of the ads in the paper we had, some of the forums we had, maybe seen a pavilion in Vancouver at the Olympics. And that's how they got to find out Saskatchewan. Didn't realize was a potential here, and the beauty and the opportunities here. They didn't realize it.

You know, they were just going from the old Saskatchewan when it was the old NDP, when the population was dying, your businesses were leaving. The only thing they ever talked about Saskatchewan was if there was a disaster here or just talking about our population loss under the last government here.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we've turned that around. We've turned that

around. We've hit over 1 million people in this province. And we're only going one way, and that is up. Our business opportunities, our jobs — I think the last sector, we've created 6,300 new jobs in this province last time. You know, those speak to the policies and the programs of this present government.

It also speaks, it speaks to the failure of the last government that was in power. And that is why, that is where they're at. That's what happened in the last by-election. It showed there that the people still do not have faith or do not even believe the previous administration.

Because when they talk about . . . They still are negative about Saskatchewan. And I don't know why they're so negative about Saskatchewan. I've never heard any of them, I've never heard any of them ever really, you know, talk about some of these programs that we've initiated.

I mean you can argue about some of them and whatever, but I mean you take like the MS trials, the STARS program. To me that's across political lines. I mean you should just say, you know what? That's a good idea. Maybe we couldn't implement them at the time because maybe we didn't have the money or whatever. But you know, they should be able to at least say on some of the stuff that we did that these are, that's across political lines. This is going to help some, going to help people.

When you're looking at growing this province, one of the main things you should be looking at is the quality of life for your people, and how can you make that better. And as an elected official, I've tried to do that for the many years I've been here as I've been representing Arm River-Watrous constituents.

You know, anything that comes across our caucus and our committee meetings with our ministers, you know, you always want to ask the main question: will this make the quality of life better in Saskatchewan? And I believe that we've improved that. We've tried our best.

And I know next election we'll see what happens. But I'm willing to bet that after the next election we will still be here, and we will still be growing this province and still working for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I support the Throne Speech but I cannot support the amendment. Thank you.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to the Throne Speech and to provide some comments about Saskatchewan. And I think following my friend across the way from Arm River-Watrous, who actually is the MLA for many of my relatives, I would strongly disagree with his comments about the fact that on this side of the House we don't say positive things about Saskatchewan.

I think that we are all in this legislature elected to be leaders, to be providing the ideas, the programs, all the work for the people of Saskatchewan. And so we all come here with a sense that we are going to do good things for the people of Saskatchewan.

And so I take that as my task when I come here. I think all of my colleagues on this side of the House do that, and that is our goal.

Now before I start, I want to thank the people of Regina Lakeview, and I probably would include Regina South and all of the neighbourhoods that I'm part of in the southern part of Regina. Because the people of this part of the city — and I guess maybe the whole city of Regina — continually provide me with support, ideas, information that allow me to do my job. And it's important that we recognize that that's where we get our strength.

One of the factors about representing a part of Regina is that we have many seniors living there. We have many young people. We have many civil servants who provide good service to the people of the whole province, and we have many retired civil servants. And I want to say a special thank you to all of those people who have been doing a good job, not just for one year or five years, many of them for decades. And we don't always acknowledge how important they are to making sure that the people of Saskatchewan are properly being served.

Now I also want to thank my wife, Linda, for continuing to provide support. My daughters, Ingrid and Solveig, continue to be amazed about how this whole place works. Especially proud of Ingrid who is a student at UBC [University of British Columbia], but she's also in Regina this month to perform at the Golden Apple Theatre in the Jacques Brel show. So I encourage anybody who has a chance to come and see her show, the kinds of things that our young people have brought forward. Our other daughter, Solveig, is a student at University of Regina and she's studying hard, doing many things. But her high-profile task is playing on the University of Regina volleyball team, and they are presently on their way to the University of Manitoba to play this weekend.

I also want to thank a special person who died in September. My constituency assistant, Bernie Yakimchuk, died in September, and he had worked with me for about four years in that kind of a role. But over many years he had served the people of Saskatchewan at SaskTel and in various aspects of the political process as well. And I think it's important that we honour people like Bernie, who had a strong love for Saskatchewan and who were very interested in making sure that problems got solved on a daily basis. I'm pleased that his wife, Conni Yakimchuk, is now working with me and continues that role for me in my constituency office.

I'd also want to congratulate especially the member from Saskatoon Northwest. As I told him the other day, it's very nice to have another lawyer to provide a bit of stability to this place. And I'm looking forward to the kinds of contributions that he can provide where our legal training, combined with our political savvy, allows us to solve some problems no matter which side of the House that you're on. And it's quite interesting that his long service in the city of Saskatoon I think will serve him well as he comes to represent his constituents here. So congratulations and I look forward to working with him.

And as the member from Saskatoon Nutana said the other day, we know his brothers and have worked with them in various

ways, and my wife says that she worked with his father. And his father was a special person as well that served the people of Saskatchewan. So congratulations, and we look forward to working with you.

Now I'm tempted — and I think maybe I will — adopt my friend's comment, the member from Athabasca, the other night where he said, the best thing about this Throne Speech is that it's the last one of this government. And the reason that I say that is that I was singularly unimpressed with the fact that there didn't appear to be a long-term vision in this particular Throne Speech.

[12:30]

And I know that our friends at Tourism Saskatchewan, earlier this week or in the last little while, were presenting us with information about how we need to portray the province of Saskatchewan. And one of the quotes that caught my eye was something that was on their pamphlet which said, "Inspired leaders keep their eyes on the horizon." And I think that speaks to all of us, but especially to the government. You need to keep your eye way out there. And unfortunately too much of what this speech is about is looking back at a lot of things that aren't that helpful.

Now it's interesting to be part of a legislature that has a role of providing the governance in a province under a constitution which recognizes different aspects of how our constitution works.

And we all know that on Throne Speech day, one of the things that we like about just the place that we're in and almost the liturgy that we go through in all the procedure, is the fact that we have executive government here, we have the legislative branch here, and we have the judiciary here. And it's part of our education of the public that we have all of these pieces that are meant to help our democracy work.

And I know that one of the roles, clearly, of the judiciary is to make sure that the democracy does work. And we see that in various ways where issues are dealt with by our courts, whether it's many of the First Nations and Métis issues that the courts have been able to work through and provide information back to our provinces and to the federal government to try to solve some of these relationship issues. And so we appreciate the role that the court has.

We also know that, as a legislature, we have certain powers. But when we go from our legislature to visit with our friends in the United States, we're often surprised by how much power that the Speaker has in their legislative structure or how much power the House leader, the majority leader, or in the Senate, the Senate majority leader have. And in fact, as we observe the US [United States] election this week, one of the discussions about how power has shifted is the fact that John Boehner becomes the House majority leader replacing . . . a Republican who replaces a Democrat, Nancy Pelosi. So we end up having these kinds of shifts in power because within their structure there actually are different bases of power.

And the reason I raise that is that, as I've talked about in previous Throne Speeches that I've given here, we have a

problem in Canada around our executive government control of the legislature and of, in fact, of basically power being moved right into the executive — in our case the Premier; in the case of Canada, the Prime Minister — and as we know, there have been some people who have started to write about this. And I know one of the people that I continually go and look at the things that he writes and says is Donald Savoie. And in a recent book called *Canadian Politics*, which is an edited book but published by University of Toronto Press in 2009, Donald Savoie from New Brunswick writes a chapter in the book called “Power at the Apex: Executive Dominance.”

And what he recognizes in his article is that, under our Westminster system of government, the executive does have a fair amount of control over how the legislature works. But his point is that somehow — here in Canada — our legislative situation has changed to give the executive even more power than maybe is safe for democracy, than maybe is good for our country.

And we can see it in little ways — or big ways, depending on what the issue is in Saskatchewan. And they don’t end up being written about or talked about as broadly as some of the things that might happen nationally. But when you end up with a legislative proposal for a Chief Electoral office being effectively vetoed by the Premier, then you know that you’ve got a problem in how the structure works.

At the national level we know that more and more of the power has shifted into the Prime Minister’s office and so you’ll continually hear comments from reporters, from lobbyists, from ordinary citizens: well if we can get the Prime Minister onside of this, maybe we can get something done.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it’s important that we in this legislature talk about this particular issue as it relates to the province of Saskatchewan. Because when you end up with so much of the power in the one person, who is obviously a member of this legislature, it distorts how you can solve problems. It distorts even what the problems are. But more importantly it loses the rich knowledge, wisdom, and strength of having 58 people in this legislature as opposed to one and some advisors. And, Mr. Speaker, you see it in different ways.

Now I don’t know the process of how this Throne Speech was drafted and written, but I suspect that much of it was done within the Premier’s office and very little discussion in the government caucus. And so therefore you end up with something that, I guess, doesn’t really speak to me. I don’t think it necessarily speaks to the people of this province.

We can talk about this executive dominance, or this role of the Premier, as it relates to even issues like this potash case that we’ve been dealing with. And there are a whole number of things that go on here.

But very clearly, the Prime Minister’s office is been identified by the media, by people, by the men and women on the street as, well we’ve got to find out what the Prime Minister thinks about this. In the same way, our Premier leads the charge, and I think we’ve ended up with a much broader consensus around what he’s done.

But once again, many of the discussions around what should happen in this particular situation, starting in August, have been very closed within. I think practically, the Premier, maybe a couple of ministers — but probably not too much — but much of it’s been right in the Premier’s office.

And I guess what I’m saying is that for a healthy democracy, we need to have all of the people who are part of this legislature and part of the executive. Because the executive’s job is to make sure we get the proper information into the various constitutional entities, but practically we have run into a situation in Canada where we’ve had some difficulties.

Now there are . . . I’ve talked about it other years, but I will remind people that things like the Premiers’ Conference has taken the place of many of the former intergovernmental meetings that we used to have. And so rather than have people that have great skills, working together and coming up with the combinations in all of the governments of Canada, we end up having a smaller group of people with advisors coming out of their premiers’ office, as opposed to the whole of the civil service, making many of the decisions about how the country works.

Now clearly we’re getting some decisions made, but it’s not quite as straightforward as before. What we see and we know on the national level is that many of the ministers are not able to provide leadership. And this hasn’t been just true with the present Prime Minister, but I think the previous three, four, five prime ministers have been developing this method of controlling the ministers.

And I want to read into the record one of the quotes — and it’s sort of the ending quote of Donald Savoie’s article — because I think it’s important that we in this legislature, but also the public, keep our eye on some of these things that are happening. Because if you have your eye attuned to this change in how our country works, you will see it every day in the newspaper. You’ll see it on the business page. You see it all over the place.

But the little part that I want to read in is about court government, and his comment is about ministers. And so I’m reading from page 130 and I’ll read a paragraph:

Advisors, much like courtiers of old, have influence, not power. Jean Chrétien made his view clear that ministers have influence, not power in Cabinet when he wrote: “ministers may have great authority within his department, but within Cabinet he is merely part of a collectivity, just another advisor to the prime minister. He can be told what to do and on important matters his only choice is to do or resign.” One of Chrétien’s former senior policy advisors unwittingly described court government well when he wrote that “Everything a prime minister says is unfortunately taken by some as coming from the fount of all wisdom. Often the prime minister is just throwing out an idea or suggestion for debate and discussion — it is solemnly transcribed as if it were one of the Ten Commandments.” [That’s Mr. Goldenberg saying that.] He was referring to both elected politicians and senior civil servants. Kings Henry II and [King] Henry VIII would have expected nothing less from their courtiers.

And that's the end of this quote.

I raise this issue again this year, as I have in previous years, because I think we need to look again at how we've organized our governments in Canada. And it goes right from proportional representation issue, which is another whole speech topic, right to this . . . how cabinets are organized. But practically where these issues become important is we end up losing, as I said before, sometimes this rich ability of everybody to contribute to what happens.

Now in our province, in Saskatchewan, I obviously read the speech and listen to the Speech from the Throne. I look at other things. But ever since I've been in politics, I've always had one book pretty close to my desk, and it's one that — I don't know if anybody else has it close to their desk; I think maybe my colleague from Regina Rosemont does — but this is called the *Report of the Saskatchewan Financial Management Review Commission*, dated February 1992, commonly called the Gass report. And whenever I'm wondering about how things are happening or what things are happening, I'll go back and look at this group of suggestions about how to correct a number of problems that arose with the government in Saskatchewan during the 1980s.

[12:45]

And when I was looking at this particular Throne Speech and specifically even one clause which was around this — I think they call it an innovative approach for financing in health care — I thought . . . [inaudible] . . . I think there's something in this report that we should be reminded of. So in February 1992, Mr. Gass and his team which included Donald Gass as Chair, Nancy Hopkins, Beth Bilson, and Garf Stevenson, one of the points that they made as a summary point was that:

The government has a responsibility to manage its investments and loans in order to ensure that the stated business and public policy objectives are being pursued and that the province's financial exposure is being monitored.

And the key word here is financial exposure. Because what was happening . . . And they say in other parts of this report that there were 47 transactions that they reviewed, and there was a whole number of them where the public had no idea of the kind of commitment that the government had made in the financing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are hearing that there are some of these kinds of loan guarantees and other newer instruments. And we can thank our legal and accounting friends for creating new instruments that do this. But, Mr. Speaker, we need to be especially vigilant to make sure that the books show the full responsibility that we have as taxpayers and as citizens. And so when the government sort of puts into the Throne Speech half the information about what the debt is, and doesn't deal with other places where the government is making financial commitments, then this is not fair to the citizens of the province. It's not leadership and it's not the kind of thing that we want to have happen in or province.

Now we know that the financial miscalculations of a year and a half ago around revenue were devastating to the people of the

province, but especially so to the civil service and the people who were given the task of doing the work here in the province. And, Mr. Speaker, we know that the financial situation is still difficult for the government. And I mean in some ways, the last two weeks around potash is maybe a reflection of that desperation. You have an attempt by the Premier and others to get some cash into the system to help out the books. Now when that didn't work, oh, you know, everything blew up in Saskatchewan and we ended up with where we are today.

But, Mr. Speaker, the real challenge for us is when we step out the doors of this building and look at Wascana Park, and we say, well this isn't the kind of maintenance and care for a park that we're used to in our province — what's going on? I think every part of the province people are saying, well there are things that should be done that aren't being done. When you, as a person that's in charge of setting out the budget, tell people to operate with zero per cent increase or a negative number, but especially a zero per cent increase, you're actually telling them that it's going to be a minus two or a minus three.

And when you have people working, you end up having to make sure that you can try to keep them going because you're going to need them in the longer term to make sure that the services are provided to people. So then all of a sudden the money that's there for programs or for policy development or other things is gone. Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm hearing that kind of concern around the whole province of Saskatchewan that, because of the mismanagement, we're getting into a real problem in our province.

Now we know from the financial information, whether it's some of the things that we heard today about financial confidence, but we also know actually from looking at where our economy stood, that kind of the peak of the economy was 2007. The 2008 international financial mess has come home to affect where we are in Saskatchewan. We're more insulated than our friends in some of the states or other provinces, but it's still there, and it's still a major concern. And what that does is that it makes it difficult for many of the hopes and the dreams that people had to be fulfilled because there aren't the resources there to deal with them.

Now one of the reasons that the Leader of the Opposition was so clear in his comments about resources in Saskatchewan and the role that we have as a legislature, as an executive government, to make sure that the resources of this province will provide sufficient finances for the people of Saskatchewan, one of the reasons that he's so crystal clear about that is, we know from talking to people all over the province that they want to make sure that they participate in using these resources.

And if in fact we've set up national or provincial processes that don't capture the share that should be the province's share or the people of this province's share, well then we need to fix that. And you need to have a plan about how to do that. And you can't push it aside. You can't laugh about it. You can't do anything else. You need to get your best minds, your best people, and have people from all parts of the province identify how we are going to move forward in this province using both the natural resources and the human resources that we have.

Now in my riding of Regina Lakeview, we're very pleased to

have the whole Harbour Landing development and all of the things that are happening in southwest Regina. The Regina airport has expanded and developed many new business things. These are all very positive, but they've got to be based on a solid economy. They have to be based on a situation where we're not going to get ourselves into the mess that Mr. Gass and friends were referring back in 1992.

And, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are going to be asking a lot of questions over the next couple of months, and we're going to be making the strong point that perhaps we can't . . . It's not perhaps, we know that we can't afford another mistake like the second term of the Conservative government of the 1980s. So we have about a year till the next election. And there are some opportunities for the government to actually work on some of these issues, but if they're not willing to do it, I think they should step aside and allow us to continue the work that we've done.

Because when your finances are not in order, when the economy is not in good shape, it's not just the direct government services that are affected. It affects the arts. It affects all of our restaurants. It affects our hotels. It affects our health care system, which is a huge part of what we do.

It affects things like the preservation of the Great Sand Hills. Now I was kind of interested to see that in this Throne Speech, but everything was ready to go on the greater protection of the Great Sand Hills back in 2007, and we have seen nothing there. And so I say let's not hold up there.

But I guess what the main point that I'm making here today is that we have a legacy as legislators in this place to make sure that it works for the people of Saskatchewan. And whether that means rewriting the rules around how the Premier and the cabinet and the federal government and the provincial governments relate, well then maybe we need to figure out a process to do that.

But we also have the task right now to make sure that the finance information, that the management of our province is being done in an orderly and straightforward way because, Mr. Speaker, all of the decisions that we're making here relate to 40, 50 years out. And we know that some of the very good decisions made in the '40s and the '50s and the early '60s have shaped a very great province that we have here that we're all proud of. And we want to make sure that our children and grandchildren can look back at the years that we're around this place and say, they didn't waste the money that was entrusted to them. They didn't make decisions that were boneheaded. They didn't do things that were on the wrong track.

And, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately this Throne Speech leaves me cold. It doesn't capture the fact that we need to be looking way out there as inspired leaders at the horizon so that we keep our eye on the goal. So, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against the Throne Speech. I will vote for the amendment. And if the government happens to accept the amendment, then we will vote in favour of the Throne Speech. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today and enter into this debate. And before I get into the issues dealing with the Throne Speech, I have a few other things I would like to say. And I'm going to begin by congratulating the member from Saskatoon Northwest. A resounding victory, and I know that he will represent his constituents well and that he will be here for a long, long time and on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to represent the Estevan constituency. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, it's a constituency that is full of diversity — from agriculture to small business, an ever-growing oil industry, and of course we are the proud home to the Boundary dam power station and the Shand power station and Sherritt mines. And I have family directly involved in all of the industries that I've just mentioned.

I am directly involved in agriculture. I still live on my farm. And mind you, I don't get out there and drive the tractor anymore like I used to, but I know how to do it. And I live on my farm. It's a lifestyle I love, and I hope that I enjoy it for many, many years.

Mr. Speaker, Estevan is also home to the Spectra event centre. And it's a beautiful facility and currently under construction there. And once it is finished, it will be another source of pride for that community.

And we are also in the process of building the Energy Training Institute, a place where people can be trained to work in the industries associated with the oil, the mining, and many other areas of the economy. And it's just so nice to have that in the southeast corner of the province where those industries are so prevalent.

The Bakken play is in the area. The member from Weyburn-Big Muddy will, you know, it consumes part of his constituency as well. But we know that this will be utilized. And thanks to this government, Mr. Speaker, that this Energy Training Institute is being built with the Minister from Advanced Education who just realized the importance of education like that coming to that corner of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to at this time acknowledge my family. My immediate family all lives quite close to me and . . .

The Speaker: — Being now 1 p.m., this Assembly will adjourn until Monday the 8th at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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