



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you this morning to all members I would like to introduce a lady in your gallery this morning who, about 21 years ago, said yes to a date with this young man. And next May, next May I get to celebrate 20 years of marriage to this lovely lady — my wife, Charlene. If you want to stand up, please, Char.

Just for the reference of the Legislative Assembly this morning, she teaches grade 1 in Prince Albert. And she left a very well-behaved classroom to come here to watch us, so we'll see what happens with that. But on a closing note, Mr. Speaker, the looks I get from you when I am out of order don't compare to what I get at home from her, Mr. Speaker. So thank you very much this morning and welcome my wife, Charlene.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly three guests who are seated in your gallery.

They are Rosemary Thompson, Heather Moore, and Carl Martin from the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. They are here in Regina today, Mr. Speaker, to participate in the launch of the Prairie Scene, which takes place this very afternoon at the MacKenzie Art Gallery.

Prairie Scene is a multidisciplinary arts festival celebrating our province, and will showcase not only at the National Arts Centre but many other venues throughout Ottawa April 26th to May 8th of next year.

Saskatchewan is partnering with Manitoba to send 500 of our artists, both emerging and established, to participate in the Prairie Scene exposition. It's going to be a fabulous opportunity for our artists of all genres to show and perform to new audiences as well as to network with talent scouts and promoters from all over North America and the world.

Heather is the producer and executive director of the Prairie Scene. She also produced the shows for Alberta and Quebec and British Columbia. Heather's been working hard consulting with dozens of Saskatchewan and Manitoba arts organizations and has assured us all that Prairie Scene will be the best show ever.

Rosemary Thompson is the director of communications and public affairs for the NAC [National Arts Centre], but she might also be familiar to some of us in the House today from

her earlier work as a journalist and political correspondent for CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] and CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation].

She covered national politics for more than 20 years as a journalist in Winnipeg, Montreal, Washington, and Ottawa. And, Mr. Speaker, she covered the hotly contested election between George Bush and Al Gore. In fact, Mr. Speaker, her biography claims she is actually one of the privileged few who knows the difference between a pregnant chad and a hanging chad.

Please join me in welcoming these fine individuals and welcome them on behalf of the NAC. Thanks for coming.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition it gives me great pleasure to join with the minister in welcoming the three guests to Saskatchewan and to Regina on this truly Saskatchewan scene morning out there. So welcome, and enjoy your stay; and thank you for sharing Saskatchewan stories.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs, the Minister Responsible for First Nations and Métis Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to the rest of the Assembly I would like to introduce to you 68 very good-looking students from Dr. John G. Egnatoff School in the heart of the Saskatoon Silver Springs constituency. They're a hardy bunch. They were up early. They braved the roads to be here at their Saskatchewan legislature.

They are accompanied by their teachers, Ms. Nicola Bishop-Yong, Mr. Jeremy Van Olst, Ms. Lisa Hynes, and Mr. Cory Farthing. Also accompanying the group are some parents, Colette Brakstad, Reina Lambert, Paul Scheibe, and Paul Rogan. Now Mr. Rogan and I played football together, so I know if he's in charge of the group there that nobody will be misbehaving certainly, Mr. Speaker.

The group comes from a school that has a wide mosaic, many new residents to our province and to our country, and it is a culture that we certainly embrace in Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Dr. John G. Egnatoff School is well known for their fantastic fundraising activities. They raised \$5,000 for the Terry Fox Run, \$5,000 for UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund]. Saskatchewan is known for volunteers in the spirit of giving and these students are learning that at a young age.

They had an opportunity to meet with our Premier. I wish them a great day and hopefully a safe ride home. Mr. Speaker, to all my colleagues, please welcome the group from Dr. John G. Egnatoff.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — I just would like to welcome the students from Dr. Egnatoff School as well, but someone I know, Paul Rogan, who may have played football with the minister on the opposite benches but who plays badminton with me. So welcome, Paul. I'd like everyone to welcome Paul especially to the Legislative Assembly today. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly, the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today and introduce two people in your gallery, Mr. Speaker: one who I've introduced before — I'll refer to her maybe as the veteran — and the other one who is here for the very first time in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased, I'm very pleased to introduce my spouse. Gail has been supporting me for 38 years, Mr. Speaker, and also nearly 16 years in this job. So I too want to extend my thank you and appreciation to my wife, Gail.

But also I want to introduce the lady seated next to her, who is Dianne Ford. Dianne joins me as my chief of staff effective November 1st, or she joined me on November 1st. Dianne has a wealth of experience with school divisions, having worked in Canora and Kindersley and now most recently in the Living Sky School Division at The Battlefords. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming my spouse, Gail, and my chief of staff, Dianne.

#### 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 citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned over the deteriorating safety of our highways. And I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

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 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, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today again to present petitions on behalf of the residents of Saskatchewan who support the Saskatchewan Seniors Association and their 180 senior centres, mostly in rural Saskatchewan. These centres provide much-needed recreational and social activities as well as important health clinics and workshops which contribute to an enhanced quality of life for many of the seniors who use them. Many of these centres are facing increased costs of

operation and anticipate as many as a quarter of them may close over the next little while. The closure of these centres will put seniors at risk for being into more access to long-term care and even hospital beds.

We in the prayer that reads as follows respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan: to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to provide the much-needed funding to assist seniors' recreation centres to remain open and active within their communities.

And these petitions are from Wilkie, Drake, Tramping Lake, and I so present. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**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 the expansion of the graduate retention program and a call for fairness for post-secondary students here in Saskatchewan. 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 Regina. 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. The same government ministry has directed that customers may no longer treat non-potable water using methods approved by Sask Health. The Furdale 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, as well as for livestock irrigation lines. The alternative water supply referred to by the government minister is a private operator offering treated, non-pressurized water at great cost, with no guarantee of quality, quantity, or availability of water. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to withdraw its 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 Saskatoon. I so present.

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, the true cost of human suffering or loss of human life cannot be measured in dollars and cents. And that the government allows fines levied against companies for violations of *The Occupational Health and Safety Act* to be treated as tax-deductible expenses, and they also continue to allow companies to treat such violations and fines levied for them as the regular cost of doing business.

Mr. Speaker, the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to amend the law so companies will not be allowed to get a tax deduction for fines levied against them under *The Occupational Health and Safety Act* and regulations, and to remove the existing cap on fines levied against such companies.

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

And the petition is signed by people from Delisle, Langham, and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to rise once again today to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to the two consecutive deficit budgets, the billions of dollars of debt growth — \$4.2 billion over the next four years alone, Mr. Speaker — and they recognize that Saskatchewan people are being asked to pay for the Sask Party's financial mismanagement, specifically up in Saskatoon where now education is being underfunded, and cuts to educational assistants, Mr. Speaker. 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.

These petitions today are signed by concerned citizens and good folks from Regina and Pilot Butte. I so submit.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Technology Week Keynote Speaker

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to honour Darwyn Peachey, the chief technology officer of Pixar Canada. Mr. Peachey's keynote presentation was the highlight of Technology Week, an annual University of Saskatchewan event. From November 1st to 5th, instructors, researchers, staff, and students learned of major issues and future trends in information and communications technology.

Mr. Peachey graduated from the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] with a bachelor's degree in computer science in 1978 and a master's degree in 1983 and is a member of the Innovators Hall of Fame at the Wilson Centre for Entrepreneurial Excellence.

While working as a researcher at the U of S, he published articles in scholarly computer science journals. These articles garnered the attention of a then small computer-generated imaging studio in Los Angeles, known as Pixar Animation. Mr. Peachey was part of the team that created the blockbuster hit *Toy Story*, and he was also involved in the creation of *A Bug's Life*, *Toy Story 2*, *Ratatouille*, and *Up*, the first-ever feature animated film in 3-D. As he led the team that created *Up*, Peachey's keynote provided insight into the history of 3-D movies and their place in the animation world.

Mr. Speaker, he also discussed how digital evolution has affected the art of movie making. As a result of digital effects and digital characters, filmmakers can tell stories in ways they never could have before. Another important result of the evolving digital world is what Mr. Peachey refers to as the democratization of moviemaking. Digital cameras, state-of-the-art computers, and Internet distribution are now all easily accessible to anyone with the desire to create movies.

[10:15]

Mr. Speaker, I don't think there could be a better role model for Saskatchewan students aspiring to pursue careers in international industries like film or technology. Please join me in thanking Mr. Peachey for the trail he has blazed for Saskatchewan people in respect to arts and technology.

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

#### National Child Day

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, National Child Day is celebrated in Canada on November 20th each year. Here in Saskatchewan our government has always believed in securing the health and well-being of this province's children. Our government has worked hard over the past three years and taken significant action to address long-standing challenges in Saskatchewan's child welfare system.

Since 2007 we have ensured a 106 per cent increase in funding for child and family services; the creation of 193 new out-of-home residential spaces for infants, children, and youth; a reduction in the number of foster children in homes with more than four by one-third; a commitment of \$15 million to implement a new automated case management system for children and youth in care; an investment of \$5 million to hire

60 new child protection workers.

Mr. Speaker, we have also been working closely with First Nations Child and Family Services agencies to improve quality of care for the children who need it most. More senior level staff is dedicated to identifying and rectifying the issues around the overrepresentation of First Nations children coming into care.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members to join me in recognizing National Child Day as part of this Assembly's ongoing commitment to protect the basic human rights of children and youth in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Honouring the Memory of Al Johnson

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the week opened, this Assembly honoured the memories of former MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], people elected to this Chamber to undertake important work on behalf of Saskatchewan's people.

As the week ends, it's my privilege to rise to pay tribute to one of Canada's most distinguished civil servants, Al Johnson, whose vocation it was to see that such important work was seen through to completion.

Born in Insinger in 1923, Al Johnson would go on to serve as our province's deputy treasurer, helping CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] governments achieve ambitious reforms while maintaining fiscal balance.

Having helped to build a professional and progressive civil service here at home, this member of the Saskatchewan mafia left the province after Ross Thatcher's election in 1964, carrying our province's pioneering ways on to Ottawa, helping to create new federal programs such as equalization and medicare and from there to serve as president of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and, after that, on around the world to help build democratic institutions.

One of his last major tasks, Mr. Speaker, was to provide an account of the Douglas government's accomplishments in government, building on his Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] dissertation, entitled *Dream No Little Dreams*. He also very generously lent his name, alongside that of his friend and colleague Tommy Shoyama, to Saskatchewan's Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy.

It is said that of any grand plan, the devil is in the details. Mr. Speaker, public servants like Al Johnson knew that in the details lie the dreams — the dream that it is never too late to build a better world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

### Nation Builders and Community Recognition Awards

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of

attending the Ukrainian Canadian Congress 16th annual Nation Builders and Community Recognition Awards luncheon in Saskatoon this past Sunday. The UCC [Ukrainian Canadian Congress] Nation Builders Award was established in 1995 to recognize individuals who have provided outstanding service or exceptional community involvement.

Mr. Speaker, the Nation Builders Award recognized three individuals who have left a legacy and provided an exemplary role model for the Ukrainian community. Winners were Ernest C. Boychuk, retired Provincial Court chief judge; Mary Woroniuk Budzak; and Gerald M. Luciuk. Mr. Luciuk is the current Chair of the advisory committee on Saskatchewan-Ukraine relations.

Mr. Speaker, the Community Recognition Award recognized seven individuals who made meritorious contributions in youth achievement, leadership, volunteerism, and culture preservation and development. The award winners were Garry Gawryliuk, Eugene Hnatiuk, Alex Patryluk, Terence B. Zwarych, Lucas Makowsky, the late Olga M. Stefaniuk, and Pat Marchinko.

Mr. Speaker, Pat Marchinko is a constituent of mine in Canora-Pelly and I've known Pat as a lifelong educator and volunteer in the community. Her organizational and leadership abilities have served people at events such as Mother's Day concerts, Ukrainian dance events, and reunion committees, to name only a few. She is also the current president of the Canora branch of the Ukrainian Women's League of Canada. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating all of these outstanding recipients. Thank you.

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

### Saskatoon Business Turns 100

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday evening over 800 people gathered in Saskatoon to celebrate 100 years of business for the Saskatoon Funeral Home. For over a century, Saskatoon Funeral Home has responded to the needs of people from all different faiths and backgrounds as they struggle with the incomprehensible loss of a loved one. Although the funeral home itself has roots dating back over 100 years, today the Edwards family remains Saskatoon's only locally owned, full-service provider of funeral and cremation services and is managed by Bill Edwards, the son of Arnold and grandson of William. Mr. Speaker, this is truly a family business success story.

The business has received countless awards, most recently the Family Enterprise of the Year 2010 award from the Canadian Association of Family Enterprise, which recognizes significant achievements made within a Canadian family enterprise.

At this event on Tuesday evening, the Edwards family made a sizeable donation of artifacts to the Western Development Museum. And the Western Development Museum has indicated that within the next several years an old-fashioned funeral home will be installed at the Western Development Museum.

There are not many businesses that hit 100 years of age, especially as a sole family enterprise being passed down

through the generations with the same principles that led to its initial success.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in congratulating the Edwards family for their historic 100th birthday in the Saskatoon community.

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

### Champion of Change

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the CBC is currently engaged in a search for champions of change. This contest celebrates volunteerism and those who work hard to make Canada a better place. One of the top 10 finalists is Welde Yemane from Saskatoon.

His work with Habitat for Humanity was inspired by the very hardships he had to endure as a refugee. Born in Eritrea, this remarkable 29-year-old was deported by Ethiopia to Sudan during a violent conflict. He was then shipped to Egypt where he was arrested as an illegal immigrant and detained in prison. Eventually the brave Welde made his way to Canada.

This cycle of displacement and hardship made the Habitat for Humanity organization a perfect fit for his charitable spirit. Now that Welde calls Saskatoon home, he dedicates himself to building homes for the less fortunate. His gift of giving is selfless. And even though he spends considerable time helping those in need through his volunteerism at Habitat for Humanity, he still manages to work two part-time jobs, learn English language and culture, and volunteer at a nursing home.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, Welde is truly a testament to the very best of the human spirit. I ask all members to join me in cheering Welde along in his efforts. No matter what the outcome of the contest, Welde is certainly Saskatchewan's champion of change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Green Week in Regina

**Ms. Morin:** — Mr. Speaker, this week has been declared Green Week in Regina. Now Green Week can be interpreted to be about preserving the environment and being more conscientious about reducing, reusing, recycling, but this Green Week, Mr. Speaker, is referring to pride in the Saskatchewan Roughrider football club. Rider nation has been encouraged to wear their green with pride this week and support and encourage our Riders as they square off against the Calgary Stampeders this Sunday in Calgary.

Last Sunday certainly was a memorable one for Saskatchewan Roughrider fans. As the group I was with was nervously chomping down on popcorn and losing our voices from cheering, the 13th man was in full force, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Riders did not disappoint Rider nation and won the playoff game over the BC [British Columbia] Lions 41 to 38.

Mr. Speaker, we have full confidence in the Riders and in the 13th man with yet another win in the Western final on Sunday in Calgary. Saskatchewan fans and the Rider organization are admired by CFL [Canadian Football League] fans all across Canada, and we have something to be incredibly proud of here in Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to wear their green, show their green pride, and I would encourage all members of the Assembly to cheer "Go Riders!" this Sunday in Calgary. Thank you.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Support for Agricultural Producers

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, question to the Minister of Agriculture. As the minister knows, we have had a very, very difficult summer in the province as it relates to grain production as well as red meat production in the province. There were 12 million acres unseeded or flooded. The crop that did come off, much of it is in not the greatest condition, poor grades, and people are having difficulty in marketing their grain.

My question that many farmers are calling and asking about is whether or not the government and the minister have had time to formulate a plan to pay out \$100 an acre for the acres that weren't seeded and \$150 a head for breeding stock in the province so that farmers will be able to keep their herd in place and seed the crop next year. Can the minister inform the House whether there is in fact a plan in place?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've been following the Leader of the Opposition's comments in the last six, eight months with great interest.

I find it amazing that now — on top of the \$50 an acre for unseeded acres in the province through crop insurance and, of course on top of that, a \$360 million program between the federal and provincial government for another \$30 an acre across the province — the Leader of the Opposition wants an additional \$100 per acre out there. On top of that, last Friday he also asked for \$150 per head for cattle across the province. When you tally all these asks up, last Friday alone was about \$1.2 billion on top of everything we've done already this year, Mr. Speaker. I wonder where all those dollars were when he was Ag minister and deputy premier, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, farmers in the province who have faced a devastating summer are really asking this minister and, more importantly, the federal government to come forward with a plan to help protect farmers and farm families. And it doesn't help much for the minister to make fun or mock the fact that there's hurt and families are suffering as they go into this winter.

Now my words may not mean much, but the APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan] wrote the minister on October 7th. And in the letter they said to him,

and I want to quote, they said they need more support, and I quote, “to ensure the survival of those who were most affected and who would normally be viable if it were not for a disaster of this magnitude and scope.” The debate between the minister and I is important, but what’s more important is that farm families are hurting, and many of them won’t make it through the winter without a payment and support from the federal government and the provincial government.

Can the minister indicate whether he has lobbied the 13 Conservative MPs [Member of Parliament] to help in this project of getting money for farmers or whether he intends to continue to play politics and not move quickly to help farm families as we approach winter?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, for the Leader of the Opposition’s information, we’ve probably talked to the federal minister on a weekly basis, this summer being that it was so wet and everything else. As the Leader of the Opposition would know, and the members opposite, this week we announced a feed and forage program. Right now in this province, we have about 180 per cent of normal feed, the problem being, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, it’s not all in the right areas. We came out with the feed assistance program.

Mr. Speaker, cattle producers in this province were also asking for the \$30 an acre to restore pastures and forage and hay land right across the province in the wet areas especially, but right across the province. We did that, Mr. Speaker. We announced that last week at SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities]. And, Mr. Speaker, I have a quote from Dave Marit at SARM when we made the announcement last week. And he, a quote, says:

“We appreciate the provincial government recognizing the difficulty some livestock producers are facing and stepping up to provide this new support,” SARM President Dave Marit said. “This program will help producers facing feed shortages and also help them re-establish their hay and pasture land for future years.”

Mr. Speaker, we are coming to the table for producers across this province as we have for the last three years.

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

[10:30]

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the minister put forward a program for support for moving feed at 22 cents per tonne per mile. I think it amounts to a few dollars per tonne. But as he knows, that money will be split between the producer of the hay, the truckers, as well as the farmers and families who get the hay, so it’s not very much help. And what APAS and other farm organizations across Western Canada are calling for is in fact a \$150 per head for breeding stock and \$75 per yearling to keep the cattle over this winter because, as we know, red meat industry in this province is being devastated. Hog production is 50 per cent of what it was when that minister became Minister of Agriculture, and beef production is down.

APAS also identifies, in the letter they wrote to you under the heading “Upcoming Credit Crunch” . . . and in this paragraph of the letter, they talk about the credit crunch that will come next spring. And I quote and they say, “. . . we have begun discussing how this year’s disaster may have serious credit implications for many producers and the sector as a whole in the planting of the 2011 crop and beyond.”

What plan has the minister in place and the federal government in place to ensure the crop gets seeded on those 12 million acres that were flooded last spring?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don’t know if the Leader of the Opposition follows cattle prices very closely, but if he did when he was Ag minister and then he does this year, he’d notice a bit of a difference. Cattle prices have improved dramatically right across this province, and it was a long time coming. Now are they as high as we would like to see them? Certainly not, and every producer would like to see them higher. But, Mr. Speaker, from last year to this year, we see an increase of about \$133 per head, what you can receive for a calf from what you could last fall. For a 4 to 500 hundredweight, about \$157 a head more. Mr. Speaker, these prices have improved. We’ve done a number of things right across this sector.

And I want to give the member another quote. Kevin Hursch says, on our payment announcement last week, “. . . in the case of the ongoing excessive moisture problems faced by livestock producers, this week’s provincial announcement of transportation subsidy is a logical approach.” He also goes on to say, “. . . this ad hoc program is taking a targeted, reasonable approach to address [producers’] problems [across the province].”

Mr. Speaker, we are there for producers right across this province. And I might remind the Leader of the Opposition, the Ag budget in this province, when he was Ag minister, ran around \$200 million a year. This year, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party Ag budget will be . . .

**The Speaker:** — The minister’s time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

#### Arrangements Regarding Long-Term Care Facilities

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Yesterday the Minister of Health was asked whether the Minister of Justice’s brother has the electrical contract to build the Amicus facility in Saskatoon. The minister refused to answer the question. We know that Miners Construction received a \$27 million, untendered contract. We know that the company that got this long-term nursing home has connections to the Premier’s chief of staff. We know that an electrical company with this kind of contract will represent millions of dollars.

So to the minister: did the Minister of Justice’s brother get the electrical contract for the Amicus deal?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.



**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I've answered this question a number of times in the House, Mr. Speaker. The Catholic Health Ministry does an absolutely great job of delivering health care around the province. The Catholic Health Ministry, through Amicus, has decided to put up a long-term care facility, a long-term care facility, Mr. Speaker, in . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So Amicus has decided to build a long-term care facility that we are going to be contracting those beds for, Mr. Speaker. We'll be paying for the provision of care as well as some of capital expenses as we move forward, Mr. Speaker. But it is Amicus and the Catholic Health Ministry that are moving forward and are building this building, Mr. Speaker. If they chose to tender the building, that was up to them. If they picked the contract, Mr. Speaker, that they wanted, that's up to them, Mr. Speaker. That isn't our call.

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, we know that the Minister of Justice was forced to step down as Liquor and Gaming minister after it was revealed that he owned shares in Deer Ridge motels and one of the directors of Deer Ridge is Michael Stensrud. We know that Michael Stensrud has donated \$16,000 to the Sask Party in recent years and \$1,000 to the Minister of Justice in his last campaign. And we know that he's been rewarded for his generosity with an untendered building contract worth \$27 million. Now we hear that the Minister of Justice's brother has the electrical contract worth several millions of dollars.

A simple question: what do people across the province that are doing bake sales, doing runathons, doing whatever they can to raise their 35 per cent, what do they have to do? Do they have to give the Sask Party money? Do they have to be connected to the Sask Party? What do they have to do to get a nursing home?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, communities around the province, in fact 13 of them, found out what they had to do to get a nursing home in this province: un-elect the NDP [New Democratic Party].

Thirteen long-term care facilities will be built in this province, Mr. Speaker, starting with Watrous which is already . . . construction will be starting soon. There will be a number of tenders on the other 13 long-term care facilities.

As we move forward in this province, Mr. Speaker, Amicus is a deal that has been struck between the Ministry of Health, the Saskatoon Health Region, and the Catholic Health Ministry that has provided care in communities around this province. I don't know if they . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. I'd ask . . . There's a handful of opposition members that are making it difficult to hear the response to the member's question from the minister. The minister may complete his answer.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said, Amicus has entered into an agreement. They are building the facility. It is their facility that we'll be leasing beds from, with some money going towards the capital costs over the next number of years, Mr. Speaker. It's their building. They own the building. If they choose to tender or not tender, that's their decision.

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, the opposition doesn't buy the minister's argument one iota.

Let's review this. Last October the Minister of Health was in discussions about the Amicus deal. The Saskatoon Health Region knew nothing about this until January. This deal was foisted on the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that this is an inside deal, \$27 million worth of loan guarantee by the taxpayers of this province for an insider Sask Party deal, Mr. Speaker. So I have a question. How much money does this insider deal, how much money is it going to cost the people of our province when this is all said and done, Mr. Speaker?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, for 16 years in this province not a new long-term care bed was built on top of the complement that we had. That is the record of the NDP, Mr. Speaker. They would far rather have people sitting in acute care centres, Mr. Speaker, far rather have people in acute care facilities instead of proper long-term care facilities.

That's not the way of the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker. We are building appropriate facilities, and we are partnering with appropriate . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, we are making sure that the seniors in our province do not have to live in acute care centres. We are going to be partnering with the Catholic Health Ministry to build a facility that will allow seniors to age properly in an appropriate facility, Mr. Speaker. It's an added 100 beds on top of the complement that the Saskatoon Health Region already has, Mr. Speaker. I know the NDP may not buy it, but I can guarantee you when the 100 seniors are in that facility, they're certainly going to buy it.

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, governments have been building nursing homes for decades — decades, Mr. Speaker. But it doesn't have to be an insider deal, Mr. Speaker. And it's

time the government stopped covering this up. This has been a cover-up from the start. They've covered up the fact that the Saskatoon Health Region had this deal foisted upon it. They appoint the people to the board, and they provide the funding. Now recently they've covered up by redacting 1,800 pages of an FOI [freedom of information] request.

My question is simply this: when is the Sask Party government going to stop this cover-up for their Sask Party friends?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I mean, sensationalism I guess is her mantra, Mr. Speaker. This is no cover-up. This is a good deal for Saskatchewan people. It's a good deal for citizens, Mr. Speaker.

But I would ask the member, when she was in government, sitting in cabinet, how long did they cover up the fact that SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] had absolutely no private partnership whatsoever? I believe it was six years, Mr. Speaker, where they absolutely deceived the public, Mr. Speaker, on that deal.

This is a good deal for Saskatchewan people. It's even a better deal for seniors. They'll be able to live the end of their life in an appropriate facility, Mr. Speaker, and we're proud of it.

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

#### Out-of-Province Medical Care

**Ms. Junor:** — We'll see how the minister can put potatoes into this one, Mr. Speaker.

Today's *Leader-Post* profiled the case of 30-year-old Jeff Lukye, an Estevan man who was first diagnosed with colorectal cancer two years ago. Jeff had surgery to remove the tumour. Now the cancer has returned. The only option available to Jeff in Saskatchewan now is chemotherapy, but he's been told that this likely won't save his life. Jeff has been told by the Mayo Clinic that the only option left to him is extremely radical surgery. This surgery is not available in Saskatchewan and will cost the Lukyes \$300,000.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will his government approve Jeff Lukye's request for coverage for this life-saving procedure?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, any time that there is out-of-country coverage there is a process it has to go through. A specialist has to recommend or request this type of procedure, referral outside of the country, Mr. Speaker.

As of yesterday, we had not received any referral. The ministry has been working on it, working with the physicians involved, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to say that that reference letter came today. The coverage will be approved.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister has promised this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan that cases like this will be fast-tracked. There'll be a faster, quicker response from his department and his office. And he has told us that there is a review going on for out-of-province coverage. That has been going on since 2008.

So cases like this continue to have to hit the newspaper and the opposition's desk before the minister will stand up and say yes we will be covering it. So I would like to know, where is the review that started in 2008?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I did mention that we would be going through a review of the out-of-country processes and approvals. That has pretty much been complete. I expect something will be going to cabinet in the very near future. And after that has gone through the proper processes in cabinet, it will be made public. So that review will be made public very soon once it goes through the proper procedures.

I don't know what that member was just implying, though. That the fact there had not been a letter from a specialist until this morning and it was because it hit the front page of the *Leader-Post* . . . is that why it was approved? Is that what she's implying, Mr. Speaker? Because nothing could be further from the truth. We have been working on this for the last number of days, Mr. Speaker. We have contacted the specialist directly from the Ministry of Health to make sure that this would be approved. That's unbelievable what that member opposite is implying.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, what is unbelievable is that this Sask Party used a family in their Sask Party ads in the 2007 election, used that situation to further their own interests, then paid the Bonderuds' out-of-province costs.

Now without any other of these specialists' letters or without a review, now the minister stands and says this is something that he's been reviewing for two or three days. He is inconsistent. And it is hypocritical because people are still waiting for questions asked a week ago that were taken notice of. I don't have the answers to that. There's still people waiting. There's still people who are not sure of how they can get out-of-province coverage.

The minister only reacts when it comes to the House or hits the newspaper. And is that what people have to do? They can't all wait till the next election to get their cases into Sask Party ads. Is that what they have to do?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

[10:45]

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, there's a process for people that require service out of province. It was a process that was in place under the former government. We will be looking at . . . have looked at that, and there will be some changes

made, Mr. Speaker. In the meantime, there is the process involved. I can't believe, Mr. Speaker, the basis of that question. In fact it, quite frankly, does not deserve a response.

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

### Training for Occupational Therapists

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Institute of Health Information released a report last week stating that Saskatchewan has the lowest number of occupational therapists in the country. For every 100,000 people, we have just 25 occupational therapists. Alberta and Manitoba have 41.

My question is this. We know that an occupational therapy program at the U of S is ready to go, but they need funding. Why is the Sask Party government refusing to fund the program?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education and Immigration.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, thanks very much for an opportunity to provide an update. And of course the premise in the claim from the member opposite is unfortunate because of course we all know . . . And this has gone on for years, Mr. Speaker, both under the former government and this government. In fact Saskatchewan purchases seats for occupational therapists through the University of Alberta and has for years.

The discussion, Mr. Speaker, about ways to move occupational therapists here, Mr. Speaker, was premised on a couple of things, Mr. Speaker. It was premised on making sure that the Academic Health Science buildings actually went from rhetoric under the NDP to reality under this government, Mr. Speaker. That's premise number one, Mr. Speaker.

It was also premised on making sure that we didn't allow the College of Medicine to go back on probation, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite oversaw. It's a sorry record for the NDP on this file, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government has a track record of paying lip service to health professionals. We know that negotiations with the Health Sciences Association are now stalled. Now they're dragging their feet on implementing the program and addressing the scarcity of OTs [occupational therapist].

Margaret Tompson wrote this in a letter to *The StarPhoenix*: "Saskatchewan's approach of continued inaction has led it to being in a worse situation than the Northwest Territories." She goes on to say, "Each year of delay will make it harder, if not impossible, to close the gap with other provinces."

To the minister: what is the reason for the Sask Party government's continued inaction and delay and when will it finally stop?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to actually taking action, rather than the rich rhetoric that we hear from the members opposite of the NDP, let's just review some recent dates.

On March 17th a new provincial agency was opened for the recruitment and retention of physicians in this province. On July 7th, four medical residents were announced in Swift Current. On October 12th, we announced that more than 800 nurses were already here, Mr. Speaker, a year ahead of schedule. Mr. Speaker, on October 15th of this year, we announced an extra 170 new nurse training seats for this province, Mr. Speaker. On October 21st, an additional \$2 million, Mr. Speaker — we announced it right over here at the General Hospital — as third-year medical students are now able to practise in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, we know there's more to do, but we're making up for the infrastructure deficit and the health benefit deficit that the members opposite oversaw for 16 long years.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, when the minister was shuffled out of the Labour portfolio, I thought we might see the end of the over-the-top replies, but it never fails that the minister doesn't disappoint.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the lowest number of occupational therapists in the country, and the need for them will only grow in the years ahead as our elderly population increases. Everyone, except apparently the Sask Party government, recognizes that the best way to increase the number of occupational therapists is to have a local education program. Mr. Speaker, what is missing is the political will to get it done and the funding to make it happen.

To the minister: can we expect the funding soon, or has the Sask Party government spent all their money on untendered contracts?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, we've just highlighted a number of recent announcements that reflect and reinforce our commitment, Mr. Speaker — our commitment to ensuring that we're helping to ensure there are more medical doctors not just being trained but practising in this province, that there are more nurses not just operating, Mr. Speaker, and serving the interests of our communities across the province but that we can actually see that there will be increased training seats. And, Mr. Speaker, these investments are real. They are ongoing, and they're appreciated, Mr. Speaker.

Regarding occupational therapists, Mr. Speaker, it's a little rich from the members opposite, after 16 years, Mr. Speaker, with no action or activity, Mr. Speaker. First we need to make sure the building's in place, that's the Academic Health Sciences

building. The members opposite never did that. And, Mr. Speaker, then we'll be able to look at the focus on how to move forward with occupational therapists. As of right now, Mr. Speaker, the provincial government funds these; they're through the University of Alberta.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the answers to questions 103 through to 239. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Answers tabled for questions 103 to 239.

## PRIVATE BILLS

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 905 — *The Sisters of the Presentation Act, 2010*

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 905, *An Act to incorporate the Sisters of the Presentation, 2010* be now read a second time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member from Melfort that Bill 905 . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. It has been moved by the member from Melfort that Bill 905, *An Act to incorporate the Sisters of the Presentation, 2010* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Second reading of this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — Pursuant to rule 100, this Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

## SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

### Provincial Finances

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's the unfortunate circumstance that arises in the Assembly here today to debate something that's hugely important to Saskatchewan people, but something that simply shouldn't be occurring, Mr. Speaker.

The motion that I'll be moving at the end of this 75-minute

debate is:

That this Assembly condemn the Sask Party government for its unprecedented mismanagement of our finances.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important debate for the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. What is a shame, Mr. Speaker, is that we see such a continuation, Mr. Speaker, of the mismanagement. We've just gone through question period here today, Mr. Speaker. And we had no answers, Mr. Speaker, on a project that's gone untendered, that's fully backstopped by public funds, Mr. Speaker, by taxpayers of Saskatchewan — \$27 million. And we don't have a single answer on this project and it's gone untendered to Sask Party insiders, Mr. Speaker.

This is but one example, but one example of a government that has lost its way, a government that is mismanaging the opportunity that it was provided, a government that is mismanaging the prosperity of Saskatchewan, a government that is failing to deliver on the vision, the plan that Saskatchewan people are trying to achieve, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to stand up, Mr. Speaker, and make our points.

If we dial back this just a few years here, Mr. Speaker, we look across the way at a Sask Party government that came out of the gates offering many things, Mr. Speaker. Of that, Mr. Speaker, they offered to balance budgets, Mr. Speaker. They haven't balanced the last two budgets. Two out of three have been deficits, Mr. Speaker, and this is of grave consequence to Saskatchewan people.

If we look at the dollars that this government has had at its disposal — unprecedented resources, unprecedented revenues, Mr. Speaker — what we see in fact is an unprecedented opportunity that's been squandered by the Sask Party. They have proven themselves utterly untrustworthy to the Saskatchewan public as it relates to the management of our finances, Mr. Speaker.

And we have a shameful spotlight that has now shone upon Saskatchewan for the harmless fiscal management that this government has provided. We see that spotlight, Mr. Speaker, shone upon us by the Fraser Institute. We see it shone upon us by *The Financial Post*, the *National Post*, Mr. Speaker. And it's a place that Saskatchewan shouldn't be occupying because, Mr. Speaker, if we go back just a few years ago, what we had was a province where an economy was in full swing, where there's development going on, and all sorts of economic numbers were at record highs, Mr. Speaker.

What we see now, Mr. Speaker, is a government that inherited those revenues from that economy, Mr. Speaker, unprecedented highs in revenues. And we see a government that has somehow, somehow found its way back into debt and deficit, Mr. Speaker. Even a modicum, even a modicum of financial responsibility or good financial stewardship would have provided and yielded huge surpluses to Saskatchewan people, but instead this government has squandered that opportunity.

Now the shameful part of this, Mr. Speaker, is that it's not this government's money, Mr. Speaker, that they're squandering. It's the people's money. It's the taxpayers across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, who are looking for a more

prosperous time, looking for a time where they see the benefits of the hard work that they provide, looking for the benefits of living in what we frame so regularly as a resource-rich province, Mr. Speaker. But we see all of that being undone, Mr. Speaker, by a government that can't manage its finances, a government that has inherited record highs in revenues, Mr. Speaker.

If we go back just three years, this government actually has 28 per cent more revenues than the previous administration did just three years ago, Mr. Speaker — 28 per cent more, Mr. Speaker. When you think about it, it's unfathomable that they've found their way back into deficit, Mr. Speaker. They've outstripped somehow, Mr. Speaker, irresponsibly somehow outstripped that 28 per cent increase in revenues by spending.

They've been off in all directions, Mr. Speaker. We've heard it from economists. We've heard it from third party validators across our nation, Mr. Speaker. And we have a government that is now putting at risk the shared prosperity of Saskatchewan's future and Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

So when we're looking at this, Mr. Speaker, we've said from day one, root of this problem was the lack of ability of this government to constrain and to contain spending. It took off like a lightning bolt when these guys were elected. Runaway spending was instituted, and we have an unsustainable plan here within our budget, Mr. Speaker.

Two consecutive years of deficit. What this government's going to be likely going into an election with, Mr. Speaker, is three deficits out of four budgets. Can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker? Three deficits out of four budgets at a time of record highs in revenues. It perplexes Saskatchewan people how that can occur.

And I know we spend regular time travelling this province and meeting with Saskatchewan people and business leaders and financial officers and sitting down, who are interested in the books of our province. And we sit and we look at the revenues that are being provided to this government. Nobody can figure out how irresponsible this government, how irresponsible this government has been. It disgusts individuals when they look at the circumstance that this government was provided and the fiscal trend line that they've put us on, Mr. Speaker — back into debt and deficit, debt to GDP [gross domestic product] going in the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker. And this is hugely unfortunate.

Not only have they spent the revenues that are at unprecedented highs, Mr. Speaker; they've spent what's there in government reserves, Mr. Speaker. They spent what's there in the rainy day fund, Mr. Speaker. This rainy day fund that's had billions of dollars has been a revolving door from day one, Mr. Speaker. At a time of record highs in revenues, they've burnt all those dollars out of the rainy day fund, Mr. Speaker.

And secondly they've stripped all of the equity — in fact, all; that's a fair statement, Mr. Speaker — out of our Crown Investments Corporation, our Crown corporations of Saskatchewan, at a time where those corporations are requiring the equity that they earn, Mr. Speaker, to reinvest in their networks and reinvest in the people of Saskatchewan. They've

been starved of that capital, Mr. Speaker, taken by a reckless government, stripped all of that equity out, over \$1.4 billion over the past couple of years, Mr. Speaker. And now they only have one place to go, Mr. Speaker. And that's the consumer. That's the businesses across this province. That's the families across this province. That's the farms across this province, Mr. Speaker.

This burn rate on capital and equity, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely unsustainable. The fact that this government instituted a spending plan 32 per cent higher than it was just two years ago, outstripping the massive increases and blessed circumstance that we should have had on the revenue side of the equation, Mr. Speaker, is hugely damaging to Saskatchewan people.

Not only have they outspent those resources, Mr. Speaker. As I've said, they've had a burn rate on all other capital of government, a very short-sighted approach to government, Mr. Speaker, and certainly not one that's building for a prosperous tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people, legislators, businesses, farms, across communities, across Saskatchewan, have worked incredibly hard to right the fiscal mess that was the 1980s in this province, Mr. Speaker. The work to get this fiscal trend line going in the right direction and start to get towards the rightful prosperity that Saskatchewan people should be benefiting from, Mr. Speaker, is something Saskatchewan people have worked incredibly hard for, something Saskatchewan communities have worked incredibly hard for, and something they've sacrificed for, Mr. Speaker, something they've sacrificed for.

[11:00]

To see this foolish, reckless government come into office, Mr. Speaker, and squander this historic opportunity is absolutely upsetting to individuals across this province who thought it was Saskatchewan's time to continue to move forward as they had been under the good stewardship and management of the New Democrats, Mr. Speaker.

So we look at a government that's outstripping its revenues in a completely unsustainable fashion. We look at a government that has a burn rate on equity, Mr. Speaker, that has a consequence for Saskatchewan people directly when they're asked to pay higher rates in their utilities or you name it, Mr. Speaker, for depriving that capital that's required in those Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. And that's a concern to all Saskatchewan people.

What's a further concern, Mr. Speaker — not only to Saskatchewan people, but specifically to Saskatchewan people, but from a national and international perspective, Mr. Speaker — is that this government continues to be out of line with public sector accounting standards, Mr. Speaker. This is the only province, Mr. Speaker, in all of Canada, in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't report from a summary basis. And you might think, well why is that, Mr. Speaker? You might question, why wouldn't they simply report from a summary perspective? These are the questions that individuals are asking all across our province and that financial leaders are asking across our country, Mr. Speaker.

What it allows is a deceptive picture of our finances, Mr. Speaker. It's rightful time that we move from two sets of books to one set of books. But the problem, Mr. Speaker, for this government is it doesn't match their political ambitions. It doesn't allow them to hide the debt that they're creating all over the place, Mr. Speaker, both outside of government that government's on the hook for — like Amicus, like Northland Power, like health care deals, Mr. Speaker — but it doesn't allow this government to hide the debt that they are in the Crown corporations when they've had this constant drain on those resources, Mr. Speaker.

It's time for us to be moving to summary finances, Mr. Speaker, for Saskatchewan people to be able to see the full, entire picture, to be able to compare themselves interprovincially, Mr. Speaker. And what they're going to see from that perspective will be something that's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker.

We hear this Premier, who of course is the biggest cheerleader we've ever seen, Mr. Speaker, the worst manager we've also ever seen, Mr. Speaker, who will regularly get up and try to somehow compare our budget with other provinces. Well this is the most irresponsible and deceptive thing a person could do. It's completely misleading, Mr. Speaker, to take our finances, Mr. Speaker, that are accounted for in an inappropriate way that are not consistent with public sector best practice, Mr. Speaker, and to try to compare that to provinces that comply with those accounting standards, Mr. Speaker.

We have a Premier who will do everything he can to try to trick the public into not believing that there is a deficit there, Mr. Speaker. But all Saskatchewan people have to do is look to the minister's own budget documents, look to his summary. The deficit's pointed out right there, Mr. Speaker.

The minister from Weyburn, Mr. Speaker, is shaking his head on this one, Mr. Speaker. He needs to look at his own summary financial book, Mr. Speaker, recognize that we have our second consecutive deficit, and recognize the huge deficit that we have going on.

I'm just looking up at the time, Mr. Speaker. I'm very disappointed actually in only having 15 minutes here today.

What we need to recognize is that third party validators across this province are weighing in on a government that's lost its way, that's proven itself reckless with our finances. Saskatchewan people won't tolerate this kind of management.

We were focused in here today and we're going to be focused in many more days, Mr. Speaker, on this unprecedented activity of untendered contracts going to Sask Party insiders, Mr. Speaker. This is a bizarre activity and something that's completely unacceptable — \$27 million of taxpayers' money put at risk, Mr. Speaker. And when you don't tender projects, Mr. Speaker — which is absolutely unheard of across Canada, across the international community, Mr. Speaker — what you do is you make them suspect to corruption, you make them suspect to abuse, and you make them suspect to waste, Mr. Speaker.

This is something we need to fight against. We need to make

sure that procedures are in place such as tendering our public dollars, Mr. Speaker, our public projects, that provides transparency and accountability, and protects and safeguards the taxpaying public, Mr. Speaker.

We laughed last year. The Minister of Finance created what he called an efficiency secretariat, Mr. Speaker — he funded it for \$1 million last year — to deal with a problem of his own making. This government instituted a 32 per cent increase on spending, then they go to spend \$1 million to tell them on how to cut spending.

Well first of all, that should be a regular process within the Ministry of Finance and Treasury Board, Mr. Speaker — how to constrain, how to manage, how to find efficiencies. The minister said last year on November 25th that the secretariat hadn't yet found any efficiencies, Mr. Speaker. They had no recommendations. He said that in a couple of years, if they hadn't proven themselves effective, they would wind down the project.

Well you know what, Mr. Speaker? They wound it down four months later. Four months later. By the minister's own words, this was a \$1 million flop, Mr. Speaker. A \$1 million waste of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money. A \$1 million boondoggle, Mr. Speaker. And this is just one example, but one example of a government that's lost its way on the side of finances and is squandering Saskatchewan's rightful and shared prosperity, Mr. Speaker.

We have a circumstance before us, Mr. Speaker, and a distinct decision to make in the next election, Mr. Speaker. Are we going to choose a government that's proven itself responsible with our finances? A government — that being the New Democrats, Mr. Speaker — who have a record of sound fiscal management, a record of improving our debt to GDP ratios, a record of providing for Saskatchewan people, a record and a plan and a vision and certainly an ability to manage, Mr. Speaker, the prosperity that Saskatchewan people and communities and businesses so rightfully deserve, Mr. Speaker.

It's absolutely unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, to see a government that's increased spending to the tune that it has, outstripping unprecedented revenues, burn rate on capital and government resources, Mr. Speaker. And all of which this government is asking Saskatchewan communities to pay a price for, whether it's in long-term care, Mr. Speaker, in rural communities across Saskatchewan, whether it's in education in rural Saskatchewan or in urban Saskatchewan, yesterday in Saskatoon highlighted specifically. The shameful aspect of this is that Saskatchewan people are being asked to pay the price for this government's mismanagement.

The motion I'm going to be moving here today, Mr. Speaker, that's going to be spoken to and debated and that's going to be heard by Saskatchewan people is read as follows. I so move:

That this Assembly condemn the Sask Party government for its unprecedented mismanagement of our provincial finances.

Mr. Speaker, this is a debate that is hugely important to the future of Saskatchewan, the prosperity of Saskatchewan, the

communities of Saskatchewan, and the families of Saskatchewan. I hope the members across follow this closely. I know many people across Saskatchewan are doing so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The motion before the Assembly . . . Order. The motion before the Assembly is the motion presented by the member from Regina Rosemont:

That this Assembly condemn the Sask Party government  
...

Order.

... for its unprecedented mismanagement of our provincial finances.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to take part in this 75-minute debate, and obviously I will not be supporting the motion.

You notice the member from Rosemont did not, Regina Rosemont did not have one fact in his speech. I never heard one fact in there at all. All he did was try to smear the Saskatchewan Party government — innuendo, misrepresentation, mis-facts. And I'd like to just straighten some of the reality out and put the facts into the record so that the people of Saskatchewan can compare what the Saskatchewan Party government has been doing for the last three years, and what the NDP opposition has been trying, to smear us and muddy the waters.

Since taking office, Mr. Speaker, our government has undertaken a record amount of investment in key priorities. We reduced the debt and lowered the taxes, Mr. Speaker; \$2.6 billion in a single year was the reduction that we had in the GRF [General Revenue Fund], reducing the debt to \$4.2 billion. That's the largest reduction in Saskatchewan history. I would say that's a very, very important item that we did in Saskatchewan in the budgeting process that was headed by the former Finance minister from Melfort.

What else did the Saskatchewan Party do? Well we implemented the largest education property tax cut in the province's history. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to finish that commitment off that we made in the 2007 campaign and reduce education property tax even more. Mr. Speaker, this is something that wherever I go across the province and in my constituency, people come up to me and thank us for what we did as far as the education property tax and welcome the reductions that are coming in the next budget.

Mr. Speaker, another item that the Saskatchewan Party government has done, we have invested almost \$3 billion into infrastructure in this province since we formed government in 2007. This is a record amount of infrastructure that has taken place, construction and repairs in this province. It was long overdue because of the 16 years of neglect by that opposition over there. The nerve of them to stand here and say that we mismanaged the budget and money when we have had massive

infrastructure investment in this province to make up for their lack of commitment to Saskatchewan, and to rural Saskatchewan in particular, Mr. Speaker.

In 2009-2010 the Saskatchewan Party government increased revenue sharing with the municipalities to \$167.7 million, a 43 per cent increase from when we took office — municipalities receiving more than ever before, Mr. Speaker. And again, we are going to finish that commitment of a 1 per cent on the PST [provincial sales tax] to municipalities in revenue sharing. That's another important commitment that we will fulfill in next year's budget.

The opposition, Mr. Speaker, say that the Saskatchewan Party never have had a balanced budget. Well we have had three balanced budgets, and we will have a fourth balanced budget come this spring, Mr. Speaker.

And all the while that we're reducing taxes and we're putting billions of dollars into infrastructure, we have looked out for the people in this province that have some difficulties. We have, as an example, we've helped families by implementing the child tax credit amount by more than 75 per cent. We have also lowered income to individuals, to 80,000 individuals in the province. That's another item, Mr. Speaker, that people were very welcome and look forward to because that's money put back into low-income families. These people needed that money. And they take that money; they invest in the economy, and it generates more revenue for the government so we can pay for health, education, and helping people that are disadvantaged in our economy.

Other things that we've done, Mr. Speaker: we doubled the Saskatchewan low-income tax credit and make it a higher income threshold — the first increase to seniors' income plan in 16 years. The opposition NDP, they paint themselves as the friend of seniors, the friend of people that are dispossessed in Saskatchewan society, and they only had lip service to the people of this province while they were in power for 16 years. The Saskatchewan party government has consistently looked out for seniors and people of low income.

We have doubled the caregivers' tax credit, as another example, Mr. Speaker. And something fundamental that we've done, and the NDP never give us credit for, is we have funded over 1,600 low-income housing units and as well as 2,700 new daycare spaces in the province, Mr. Speaker.

And I think that just shows the difference between the Saskatchewan Party. We care about the average person in this province, where the NDP only ever paid lip service to people in this province. All the while we're looking after the seniors and people of low income and the shortage of housing, we also have a plan to grow the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to quote from the Scotiabank group regional economic outlook, dated November 7, 2010, and I quote their macro outlook for Saskatchewan:

Saskatchewan is expected to be one of the country's strongest performers in 2011, with real GDP growth of 3.3%. Their recovery is being led by a resurging potash industry (and associated warehousing activity), investment

in the resource sector, and continued expansion of the province's service sector — feeding off strong immigration.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the record of the Saskatchewan party government in the past three years. We not only look after the people in low income and seniors. We have a plan in place to have economic growth and development in this province so that we continue to have the revenue to build long-term care homes, which we are going to build 13 new long-term care homes in this province.

[11:15]

We have the money to invest in a children's hospital, which again the NDP only paid lip service to, Mr. Speaker.

Also from the regional economic outlook, trends to watch, and again I quote:

Reversing declines of the early 2000s, Saskatchewan has seen its population steadily climb to a growth rate of 1.6% in 2009. A booming economy has supported an increase in both international and inter-provincial arrivals, a trend that is expected to continue, supporting above-average population growth and retail sales trends in 2011.

What a wonderful record for any province to have. And it's a thank you to our past, our former Finance minister from Melfort's track record in budgeting, lowering taxes, investing in infrastructure in this province. And this province is growing.

Just look at the immigration piece, the nominee program that we have expanded dramatically since the Saskatchewan Party government came into power in 2007. You only need to look at the town of Biggar itself. There is now approximately 80 people living in Biggar that have come through the nominee program. Most of them are from the Philippines, but we have people from India that have come through the program, east central Europe.

And I know these people first-hand; we go to the same church. They have put their children in the local school at St Gabriel's School. There's 18 more children have enrolled in St. Gabriel's School this year than was expected. And as the families continue to come into Biggar, there's more children enrolling in the school. That's what economic development is all about, is to have the families working and living in a community and having their children go to the schools. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a record that I'm very proud of to be part of.

To see the bustling community in Biggar and Landis and other communities around the constituency, they have immigrants coming and finding jobs. And not only finding jobs, many of these people have been in only, in the community of Biggar, for two years or two and a half years. And now they're going out into the community, and they're buying homes in record numbers. They're buying real estate, homes in the town of Biggar, in Landis, in Delisle, in Vanscoy, and around the constituency. Mr. Speaker, that is a very proud record that we all should recognize, that the NDP seem to always forget, Mr. Speaker.

I only have a few more seconds, but I can make it very clear that the people of Saskatchewan, they look to the Saskatchewan Party for good financial management, a good track record, investment in the communities, investment in infrastructure. And the NDP, all you hear from the NDP are . . . Well let's just say things that aren't quite true and they're not factual and . . .

**The Speaker:** — Member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to enter into the debate. And of course I'll be supporting the motion. Because actually over the summer I've seen the results of the fiscal mismanagement which is what I will probably focus all my remarks around.

The member from . . . My colleague from Regina Rosemont set the stage about how he described the financial situation. And it is nowhere more apparent than in the health system. When this government underfunded the health district, the health regions in this last 2010 budget . . . The health regions need 7 per cent. They need 7 per cent to maintain the level of service that they provided to citizens of Saskatchewan last year. They got 3.5, Mr. Speaker. So when my colleague and I, my colleague from Saskatoon Fairview and I were travelling the province this summer, we were seeing the consequences of that underfunding.

And just for a flavour of who was told what that they have to cut, in Yorkton, the Yorkton region — that's the Sunrise Health Region — they were told they have to find \$2.8 million worth of savings. In Kelsey Trail, which is around Tisdale, they've been told to find almost 1 million. In Saskatoon they've been told to find more than \$25 million worth of savings. And in Regina, \$11 million worth of savings. In Prince Albert, 2.8. And in Heartland, they've been told to find \$1 million.

So all these health regions then consequently started putting their budgets together and started looking at what they could do to find efficiencies or make cuts. And of course service cuts were what resulted.

And we saw, my colleague from Saskatoon Fairview and I saw and heard from many of the staff in 55 communities that we visited, and many more actual facilities than that, the consequences of those budget reductions. We saw anticipated cuts or actual cuts happened already in lab services. Either the lab services . . . for sure were hours cut, reduced hours, reduced staffing. Ambulance cuts, sometimes taking the ambulance totally out of the community. Long-term care beds cut. Acute care beds cut. And laundry, housekeeping, and dietary services cut. Therapists positions hours reduced. And different things to deal with staffing costs where LPNs [licensed practical nurse] and special care aides were not being replaced on sick time or compensation days, and vacancies were not being filled.

So efficiencies were being looked at on the backs of the staff.

And interestingly enough, in some of the districts the direction from the government to find efficiencies in sick time and overtime and workers' compensation were actually targeted amounts. Like a certain percentage was attached. So in one district we heard — and I'm sure it's probably not just



particular to that district — they had actually hired somebody to do that, a job that was referred to basically as a sick cop, to police all the staff uses of sick time and overtime.

And when we saw these communities, when we went to visit these communities, they told us about things that were happening in their communities. We mostly visited bigger centres . . . Not bigger centres. We mostly visited small centres and looked at rural hospitals and rural integrated facilities and rural special care homes. The only two that we actually saw that were in the larger variety was Lloydminster because that's an unusual circumstance, and Swift Current because it's new, the hospital. Otherwise we saw long-term care facilities across the province in various communities and in various states of repair.

We actually visited 10 of the 13 that the government announced in 2009 to be built, and in 2010 budget took the funding away from those communities. We actually saw the plans for many of those facilities either taped on the walls or sitting on tables, and communities just described to us the great deal of enthusiasm they had for those new facilities. And for sure we agree. A lot of the facilities we saw definitely are in need of repair or reconstruction.

And basically the infrastructure deficit . . . And it's been pointed out to me many times that when we hear the phrase infrastructure deficit, we should tie it to the financial deficit that our government was faced with in 1991 when the province was almost bankrupt. So to recover the finances of the province and the financial footing of the province, not much could be built. And even though we were in those dire straits, there were long-term care facilities and hospitals built and refurbished and replaced and roofs done and health issues, safety issues done because some of the things had to be done.

But also we chose to do things carefully, and we spent our money wisely. As my colleague from Rosemont has said, this government came to power with \$2.3 billion in the bank, and nobody knows how wisely that was spent because nobody knows where the money is. And now continuing to run deficit budgets.

If things are this bad in our health facilities because each health region has to find those reductions and they're scrambling . . . And one health district told us, if plan A doesn't look good or doesn't work, plan B's even going to be less, less . . . People aren't going to like plan B very much better.

So if health districts can't find those reductions, of course then they run deficits too and that becomes part of the public debt.

So when we're looking at the long-term care facilities in our tour, we definitely talked to people out there about the Amicus deal. And we said, do you know about this? None of them did. None of them did. They were all starting to do their bake sales, raise their money from the communities, that community or surrounding municipalities all contributing money. Some of them were even putting on health levies, taxing the citizens.

And I said, well this deal in Saskatoon, this is a new way of doing business, a new financial arrangement, and the minister categorizes it as that. So do you know about that? And no, they didn't. So I sent a letter to each paper and said, you should

know about this. Your community should know. You deserve the same kind of consideration for a new deal as Saskatoon did.

And the member from Lloydminster said I was scaring people silly. Well when you talk to people about the truth, I don't think they're scared silly. They just start asking questions. And maybe that scared the member from Lloydminster silly, but people appreciated knowing what was out there and what the truth was about the long-term care facilities.

And do they now still have to raise their 35 per cent? That's still the question out there. Why do they, in Biggar and Tisdale and Melfort and Meadow Lake and Rosetown and Kipling and Redvers and Tisdale, why do they have to raise their 35 per cent? I don't know if the members that represent those areas have told their communities. I don't think so because they didn't know.

And when we were in certain communities we asked, do you know when these plans that are sitting on the desk or hanging up on the walls, do you have any idea, any indication from the government when these facilities will be built? And they said yes, some of them did. Some of them said November of 2011.

Well isn't that interesting, Mr. Speaker? November of 2011 is the next provincial election. That's pretty crass. And light bulbs go on. And other communities said, fall of 2011. So I don't think it took much for me to stand there and go, do you know what's happening in the fall of 2011? And they do. And they can connect the dots. I mean they understand this.

And our summer tour took us to everywhere in the province. So it wasn't that we just got a flavour of one place or talked to certain disgruntled people. We were in almost every health district and we saw, like I said, 55 . . . We were in 55 communities. And we started off the tour, we picked the communities we wanted to go to based on what we'd heard was happening in those communities. By the time we were done, the communities were picking us. And they were phoning us and saying, please come here. Please come here. We want to talk to you about this. We want you to talk to a group of people in the community. We want you to see our facility. We want you to help us with our issue.

I found that extremely interesting. And I think it speaks volumes to what people in rural Saskatchewan are feeling. And they actually told us, and this was a theme, that rural Saskatchewan feels like they've been . . . They're on their own. They're abandoned. They said that: we're on our own. In particular they were talking about the doctor shortage and the recruitment of doctors.

I asked them in all those communities that had issues or concerns about doctors, do you know about the provincial recruitment agency, the physician recruitment agency that the minister has announced? And they said, no we have no idea. Sometimes our health region . . . Some of them have a recruitment facilitator, and they weren't getting much help from there either.

Most of the communities we talked to understood that they were on their own and said so. And they said that being on their own, it depends on how much money you have. If you're in a

rich area where you have oil fields around you, your municipal tax base will be richer, and you'll be able to buy more to . . . spend more to recruit a doctor or doctors to your community.

What does that say for communities who aren't in a richer area? They don't get a doctor? It depends on whether you have a rich municipal tax base whether you can afford a doctor, whether you can afford to build a clinic, staff it, equip it, offer incentives to come — cars, houses — incentives yearly to stay. What does that say to communities who don't have the money?

And we saw one community get two doctors from a community who lost them. And it was clear, you know, that here's the bidding war. If you have the money, you can build your clinic and doctors will come to you. But it also raised the question . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. The member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to be able to participate in this debate and discuss the investments our government has done to grow and ensure quality of life for all Saskatchewan citizens.

The Conference Board is forecasting economic growth of 4.5 per cent for Saskatoon this year. That is tied for second among Canada's major cities. Saskatchewan jumped from eight to second place in the ranking of best performing labour markets prepared annually by the Fraser Institute. Again we are second in Canada, third in North America. That is wonderful news for the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Wages paid to Saskatchewan employees are up over 5 per cent compared to last July. Again we are third highest in Canada. That's above the national average of 3.9 per cent. Drilling numbers compiled by the Ministry of Energy and Resources show a 96 per cent increase in wells drilled so far this year as compared to 2009. Mr. Speaker, we are looking forward and moving forward, and I'm proud to work for the people of Saskatchewan who tell me often that we are making a difference.

[11:30]

Mr. Speaker, our financial record indicates our budget is on track. The first quarter financial report shows this when unexpected flood costs are taken into account. We expected an additional 161.7 million in expenses as a result of widespread flooding; yet in spite of all this, our government's revenue increased by 194.9 million. That's good economic development.

On the expense side, there was 144 million increase in the Agriculture budget to cover the province's share of the \$30 per acre payment for unseeded farm land and an additional 18.5 million for higher claims through the provincial disaster assistance program, called PDAP. Many farmers have told me their stories, and they are so proud of this government, that we came to their aid, and very quickly. This increased expense is entirely offset by higher revenue due to higher than expected revenue from the first three land sales in the fiscal year. Now at the same time, the rest of the economy appears to be performing at least as well as anticipated in the 2010-11 budget.

Mr. Speaker, our population is now at an all-time high of 1,045,622. It has grown by 16,498 people in the past year, making Saskatchewan the fastest growing province in Canada. Saskatchewan's population has now grown by more than 50,000 people since the start of 2007, the fastest and most sustained period of population growth in decades. I myself helped contribute with two new grandsons and a future son-in-law from South Africa. So we are growing the province one by one at a time.

New employment numbers from September show 6,300 more people working in Saskatchewan than one year ago, setting an employment record for the month of September. Saskatchewan's unemployment rate now stands at 5.5 per cent, the second lowest in Canada and well below the national rate of 8 per cent.

The value of building permits issued in Saskatchewan totalled 176.4 million in August, up by 16 per cent from the previous August. Over the first eight months of 2010, building permits totalled 1.34 billion, an increase of 10.5 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, here in Regina, Regina's on track to set another record for building permit values. Building permits in the first eight months of 2010 were up 10.6 per cent compared to the same period last year. Year over year the increase in Regina was 35.8 per cent. In the first nine months of 2010, Mr. Speaker, housing starts in Saskatchewan urban centres increased by 68 per cent compared to the same period in 2009 — the third highest per cent increase amongst the provinces.

RBC predicts Saskatchewan will lead the country in economic growth this year with an astonishing real GDP of 6.3 per cent. Growth would even be higher save for the unfortunate weather conditions for the farmers which we had no control over.

The Conference Board is forecasting economic growth of 4.5 per cent for Saskatoon this year, tied for second among Canada's major cities.

Mr. Speaker, my own community and constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers has benefited from our government's responsible spending, and I would like to put on record some of the community's projects and the amounts. Here we have the RM [rural municipality] of Torch River, 169,598; the RM of Shellbrook, \$177,975; the RM of Buckland, \$373,030; the RM of Garden River, 68,862; the RM of Canwood, 166,987; the RM of Paddockwood, 106,175; the RM of Lakeland, 113,464; and the RM of Big River, 92,577.

Also in the constituency of Sask Rivers is the provincial park of Candle Lake. They received 489,237; Christopher Lake preschool, 84,000; Spruce Home Seniors Club, fourteen hundred and sixty-two thousand; Big River & District Recreation Improvement, 17,000; Choiceland Torch River Rail, 30,000.

So as you can see, Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward. And I'm so proud of our government. We are very economically stable.

I would also like to put on record a motion that is here in my hands. I move:

That all the words after the word . . .

Okay, I will be moving an amendment. There's one more thing I would like to add, though. Saskatchewan leads the West in supporting entrepreneurship, 79 per cent of Saskatchewan's small businesses being confident in their provincial government that has a vision that supports small business compared to 56 per cent of small businesses in BC, 44 per cent in Alberta, and only 21 per cent in Manitoba.

Saskatchewan also had the highest per cent of businesses — 89 per cent — who said they would recommend starting a business within their province. We are very proud of this government's record here in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan ranks second in Canada with a 1.1 per cent increase in new motor vehicle sales of the summer of 2010. New car sales were up to 9.3 per cent, the second-highest increase amongst the provinces.

Our government is moving forward on the new road, and the people of Saskatchewan are telling us that we are going in the right direction.

Now I am going to do the motion. I move:

That all the words after the word Assembly be deleted and the following substituted:

praise the Saskatchewan Party government for its unprecedented management of our provincial finances.

I will not be supporting the opposition's motion. I will support the amendment. And I thank you for this time, for all the people in the province that are listening to us in Saskatchewan, and especially the people of my great constituency called Saskatchewan Rivers, where there is so much tourism . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. The member has moved a motion. We will have to address the motion. The member has given up their rights to further speak.

Order. Order. I'd ask members to allow the Clerk and I just to have one quick word on this issue.

Order. Order. Order. The member from Regina Rosemont and the Minister of Energy and Resources will . . . Order.

I have conferred with the Clerks on the motion and the amendment substantially changes the original motion, and I find the amendment out of order. Next speaker. Member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a real privilege to be able to stand in this House and speak to this 75-minute debate where the opposition has condemned the Saskatchewan Party government for its unprecedented mismanagement of our provincial finances.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Sask Party members, private members speak to this motion, and I found their comments startling. And let me say why. When that party came to government in 2007, what were they greeted with? They were

greeted with \$2.3 billion in cash that was left to them by the previous NDP government. No government in the history of our province had been left with that much money basically at their disposal.

And, Mr. Speaker, what was fascinating was that one of the first utterances out of the Premier's mouth was that he had received a briefing that the finances were stark. And, Mr. Speaker, I know having been the last Finance minister of an NDP government that they were far from stark, and no other government has ever left an incoming government with that much money.

Now I listened carefully to the member from Biggar saying that his government has put out over \$3 billion in infrastructure projects in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, there is something that we all as people of this province need to be concerned about, and that is, Mr. Speaker, that billions of dollars are being spent on goods and services in this province and contracts in this province.

And we need to be assured as taxpayers and citizens that there is no hanky business going on over there. And we're not so sure about that, Mr. Speaker. And if the members opposite were paying attention, and they need to pay attention — how are those contracts being let, and who are those contracts being let to? — because, Mr. Speaker, there are many citizens that are coming forward. And they're not too sure about the Sask Party's tendering process, and they're not too sure that that tendering process is fair. And we've had people advise us that we need to follow the money, because money is going out the door and people aren't convinced that it's going out the door fairly.

[11:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have raised in this Assembly, in the spring and in the fall, the whole Amicus deal. Let's review the Amicus deal which represents a significant amount of money that will be paid for by the people of our province.

Now this government had conversations going back to October of 2009 about the long-term care facility in the city of Saskatoon — private conversations, private conversations. Fast-forward to sometime in January when this project was foisted upon the Saskatoon Health Region and, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon Health Region has serious concerns about this project. And a lot of conversation went on between the Saskatoon Health Region and the government of Saskatchewan.

But, but when a member of the opposition asked — under FOI — for the contents of that discussion, it was absolutely blacked out and denied, Mr. Speaker. But here's what we've learned. Here's what we've learned. The proponent, one Rod Donlevy, also happens to be the brother of the Premier's chief of staff, Joe Donlevy. And conversations were going on back and forth.

We've learned that once this deal that was foisted upon the health region was approved — because it's a Sask Party board of governors at the Saskatoon Health Region — was approved by the health region, what happens? Miners Construction was given the contract. A \$27 million contract and it wasn't tendered, Mr. Speaker.

And Mike Stensrud has donated \$16,000 to the Sask Party over the last several years, plus gave a \$1,000 contribution to the Minister of Justice in the last election, Mr. Speaker. And what does one Mike . . . Oh, and I happened to forget. Mike Stensrud is on the board of the Saskatoon Health Region, appointed by the Sask Party.

Now he was supposed to have recused himself from the discussion, all discussion. But what happens on May the 12th I believe, or maybe it's May the 17th, what happens is that Mike Stensrud sends a draft copy of a letter to the editor from Paul Ellis. And Mike Stensrud's not supposed to be involved in this, Mr. Speaker. But Mike Stensrud is sending out draft letters to other members of the board and also staff at the Saskatoon Health Region because they're trying to get a spin out in the public that this was all above board. Now Mr. Speaker, I heard the Premier say, during his Throne Speech and other discussions, that there's going to be more of these kinds of deals done. And I think there might even be one in Swift Current because the Premier is trying to get a nursing home in Swift Current.

I have a suggestion for the members opposite. They can make the public policy decision that third parties are going to operate these facilities; they're not going to be affiliates to the health region. They can make that decision. But ultimately we know that there will be a loan guarantee given by the health region in order for this facility to go and get the money at the bank. And we know that those contracts will be given.

We want to make sure that those contracts are tendered — tendered. Because when we came to government in 1991, there was all kinds of stuff that went on in the Grant Devine government and there were no tenders. There were no tenders. And there was lots of questionable practices and in fact, some would say, corruption. Now I would suggest to the Sask Party, if you are good fiscal managers — which I'm not convinced you are, but if you are — you put an end to all of this suspicion by tendering, tendering those contracts, making sure that whoever is going to develop these facilities tender the contracts. Because, Mr. Speaker, at the moment, this deal smells. It smells.

And people are saying, how could it be? Big Sask Party contributor gets an untendered contract; he gives the electrical contract to the Minister of Justice's brother. The Minister of Justice is a partner with this man from Miners Construction. It is all too much, Mr. Speaker. And they get rid of the smell test; they get rid of the smell test by making sure contracts are tendered.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is billions of dollars going out the door, billions of dollars that the Sask Party is bragging about. We want to be assured as citizens and as members of this opposition that all of that money that is going out the door is done fairly and openly and transparently. That's what we want to be assured because there's too much room for corruption. And if the Sask Party is not prepared to do this, Mr. Speaker, then questions will continue to be asked by the members of this opposition because we know what happened in the '80s. And if this government wants to be beyond the smell test, beyond the smell test, this will be the last insider deal because we're going to be watching.

Follow the money, Mr. Speaker. I learned that from my dad: always follow the money. And we know where the money is going at the moment: \$27 million going in an untendered contract to Miners Construction who then turns around and has an electrical contract with the Minister of Justice's brother. We know that electrical contract is worth about 10 per cent of the overall cost of the project or \$2.7 million. Not bad. Not bad money, Mr. Speaker.

And there's profit in those contracts. There are profits in those contracts, and we want to be assured as citizens, as citizens that there is no skulduggery going on in the province of Saskatchewan because we've been there. We've seen it. We saw the movie. Oh, we saw the movie in the Grant Devine government. That's why we put the tendering process in place — to protect the public.

And I'm looking at the SaskTenders. And I'm not quite sure that everything is above board when it comes to you people. And you don't want to be accused and be . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. The member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand today and speak on this motion, of which I do not support, from the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen and I have listened to the NDP put spin on finances, put spin on just about everything. Fact is, Mr. Speaker, you know what it reminds me of? It reminds me a lot of a washing machine that's on its spin cycle. And you know, the load's out of balance, and it's vibrating and going across the floor. That is like the NDP. They're spun out of control, Mr. Speaker. They know not what they're doing.

Mr. Speaker, when you actually sit back and when you look at it, when you actually look at the finances of the province, you know, the government, the province of Saskatchewan was \$6.8 billion in debt when we took over office in 2007. And now it's 4.1. I don't know how you're going to spin that, how you're going to spin it that we are, we are in a financially unstable shape and our province is going downhill.

Mr. Speaker, things are going, things are going great. Things are going great in this province. Is there work to do? Absolutely there is. Because I can tell you why there is. We have to fix all the infrastructure deficit that that government left behind after their 16 years of mismanagement, Mr. Speaker.

I'll just talk about a few things, such as up in my constituency. The member from Saskatoon Eastview said that she had travelled all around the province. Well that's good. Maybe she noticed the roads were getting fixed for a change.

Mr. Speaker, you know, in just Carrot River Valley alone, major work has been done. And I actually had to have this marked out, Mr. Speaker, because I couldn't remember all the roads that were being done. There were so many of those. Highway 23, Highway 23 is a great improvement. Highway 55 between Carrot River and Nipawin and then on to Prince Albert. Highway 3 between Crooked River and Hudson Bay and also between Tisdale and Melfort. Highway 35 south of

Tisdale. Mr. Speaker, our highways under the NDP administration were in absolutely terrible shape. We have a wonderful minister that did a great job on fixing up the highways.

Mr. Speaker, we do not have enough time to get through everything that is going on, but I want to go back to the Saskatoon Eastview minister who said how our health system was going downhill. Nipawin, Nipawin from 2007, Mr. Speaker, to now, a 54 per cent increase in doctors. Is that going downhill? No sir, Mr. Speaker. Eight hundred and thirty nurses, 830 nurses in the province of Saskatchewan. An increase. Is that going downhill? No, Mr. Speaker. And this all takes money, and, Mr. Speaker, we've done it and still kept a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't go back and ask or talk a little bit about spin. And in the *Report of the Provincial Auditor* in 2007 volume 2, if you take a look at it, on page 32 . . . Is the member from Regina Rosemont listening? On page 32 in this, it has the government liabilities as of March 31st from 1993 to 2007, including liabilities of government business enterprises. Mr. Speaker, in 1993 the government's debt was \$20.4 billion. In 2007 it was \$21.6 billion.

Mr. Speaker, how can you have all these consecutive balanced budgets and yet, and yet the debt went up? This is from the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention to that member from Regina Rosemont, he should be very happy that the province, the province is increasing in population. With the province increasing in population, guess what? Our school enrolment's gone up for the first time in 17 years. Isn't that amazing? It started going up . . . Just think, when it was going down was very shortly after the NDP got into power because all the people were leaving. Now I know that the member from Regina Rosemont is an educator by trade and now an MLA, but it's going to be great after November the 7th of 2011 that that member will have a job to go to.

Mr. Speaker, we have done, we have done all sorts of things for the people in this province. And I would like to talk about agriculture, which is another one that is up in our area. Now we had obviously a lot of flooding, the same as a lot of the other areas. Now contrary, contrary to the NDP who kind of forgot about rural Saskatchewan since they closed down 52 rural hospitals, I might add, Mr. Speaker, we have looked after the farmers under disaster assistance on agriculture better than any previous government ever did. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, not only that. We also lowered the education portion of tax on farm land, which was a discriminatory tax on capital tax that people were paying.

Mr. Speaker, we have done many things for this province. I'll tell you one thing we didn't do, Mr. Speaker. We didn't invest in things like SPUDCO, Navigata, Channel Lake, bingo, Mr. Speaker.

We have been moving along. We got our new children's hospital going, contrary to all the ads last summer which came out from the NDP saying we had cancelled it. Two hundred million dollars for our children's hospital, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yes, that spin is on. The spin is coming from the other side, and like I said, it's very similar to that washing machine and its bouncing around. And you know, Mr. Speaker, what I would suggest, what I would suggest to the NDP is, when they put a full load in, although I don't know if they've got a full load, but when they put a full load in, I would suggest that they balance it so it wouldn't vibrate across the laundry room floor.

[12:00]

Mr. Speaker, we do not do spin. We do not do spin. We come across, Mr. Speaker, and we do things that the public in Saskatchewan want, the people in Saskatchewan want. And we were very fortunate, very fortunate and pleased to represent the people of Saskatchewan because they knew, they knew that when they got rid of that old government, that tired, old NDP, they got a new Saskatchewan Party who were going to move forward, do things for the people of this province, things that these people in this province have wanted for years and years.

I have seen the neglect that was done by the previous administration. I will not be supporting the motion from the member from Regina Rosemont, Mr. Speaker. I definitely have got up to show that our Saskatchewan Party is a far better government than that was or ever will be . . .

**The Speaker:** — The member's time has elapsed. The 65-minute debate has elapsed. Why is the minister on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With leave to introduce guests.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has asked for leave. We'll stop the clock on the 10-minute question period. The minister has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce over 50 students that have joined us on this snowy morning. They've worked their way here on treacherous roads. They're from Holliston Elementary School. They're joined by their teachers, Stephen Vincent, Shauna Perreault, and Lisa Danaher, as well as chaperone Dominic Turley.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're delighted to welcome them into their Legislative Assembly and we're delighted to have them here. And I'll be speaking with them in a few more minutes. So, Mr. Speaker, if I could ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming these students from Holliston here to their Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member from Saskatoon Massey Place on his feet?

**Mr. Broten:** — With leave to join in the welcome, please.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Massey Place has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — I thank the members for leave, knowing that the clock is stopped. I simply want to add, Mr. Speaker, a special welcome to Stephen Vincent who is my first cousin. So it's good to see Stephen today here in the Assembly. Welcome.

### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE (continued)

#### Provincial Finances

**The Speaker:** — We will now begin the 10-minute question period in the 75-minute debate. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tendering is not just commonplace as it relates to public finance. It's expected and required to protect public money, to protect the taxpayer. This Amicus project is fully funded and backstopped by the Saskatchewan taxpayer. Does the member from Sask Rivers think it's appropriate to not tender this \$27 million taxpayer-funded project?

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

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the member from Regina Rosemont for the very valuable question. However since taking office, our government has undertaken record investment while reducing debt, lowering taxes, and improving the quality of life. We care about the people of Saskatchewan.

The child tax credit amount has increased by more than 75 per cent during that same period. Additional 80,000 lower income individuals no longer on tax rolls. First increase to the seniors' income plan in 16 years. We care about the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very proud of our government's record. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Rosemont talks about boondoggles and he talks about misuse and he talks about fiscal management. He's got a short memory, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP misused taxpayers' money in their misguided SPUDCO scheme. Taxpayers were on the hook for over \$30 million. Subsequently the former NDP government was successfully sued by SPUDCO for \$5.7 million. To the member for Regina Rosemont: why did the NDP financially mismanage tens of millions of dollars on this project alone, noting the incompetence which led to the additional loss of millions of taxpayers' dollars from the subsequent lawsuit?

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that they'd hang out the new member from Saskatoon to ask questions on a project and a nature of that, Mr. Speaker, when we have in question a project that's untendered with \$27 million worth of taxpayers' dollars, Mr. Speaker. Completely unacceptable.

The question back to the member is: we have a government that inherited the healthiest financial circumstance of any government in the history of transitions. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, had they only kept their own fiscal promises here, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to spending, right now, Mr. Speaker, we'd have an accumulated surplus of \$7 billion — not two years of deficit, not \$4.2 billion of debt growth, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the discussion, we've talked about fiscal mismanagement. And I want to ask the member from Biggar whether he agrees with the opposition that when public money is being put at risk and public money is being used to backstop nursing homes, whether there should be tendered contracts so that there is no hint of impropriety.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very glad to answer these questions concerning long-term care homes. Our government made an announcement some time ago to build 13 new long-term care homes in the province — and one of them is going to be built in Biggar by the way — and we're very proud of that commitment. Our commitment is to fund 65 per cent of the construction costs of long-term care homes in this province. The community needs to raise 35 per cent.

In the town of Biggar, in the community of Biggar and the catchment area, they are well on their way to getting commitments from the municipalities involved to raise the 35 per cent. And if the member would like to come out to a fundraiser on November 27th that's being put on by the Knights of Columbus to raise funds for the long-term care home, I certainly will bring a ticket. And I'll even pay for the ticket to the member. Thank you.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Mr. Speaker, the NDP have a long history of ignoring the people of Saskatchewan. The NDP turned their backs on rural Saskatchewan. They pillaged the coffers of municipal governments by cutting their grants. They raided the Crown corporation dividends and equity strip, Mr. Speaker. In 2003 right after the election, those members across the floor raised the PST without warning. And the Finance minister of the day said well you can't talk about tax increases during an election.

To the member from Regina Rosemont: with such a long record of leaving the people of Saskatchewan with nothing but an empty barrel, with the NDP's provincial numbers at less than

29 per cent and dropping, why would those few people continue to trust the NDP when they complain about infrastructure debt and irresponsibly call for another 1.2 billion in spending?

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised to take that question from that member, Mr. Speaker, from Cannington, who in his own community at a time where there's record revenues flowing into this government . . . is closing long-term care facilities in his community — both in Carlyle, Wawota, White Bear — Mr. Speaker, an individual who's creating bidding wars within those communities, creating RMs and double taxation to fight against other RMs and communities to put doctors in these communities when it should be his responsibility to take care of that, Mr. Speaker.

I'll just quote one of the columnists, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the financial mismanagement of this government that has squandered a \$7 billion financial opportunity, enough to in fact pay off the entire GRF debt, Mr. Speaker. And I quote from *The StarPhoenix*: "Unquestionably it smacks of incompetence well beyond anything voters should ever have to tolerate," Mr. Speaker. That's what the third party validators or the columnists are saying about this government.

Saskatchewan New Democrats have a proud record of balancing budgets while balancing the priorities of Saskatchewan people, and we're excited to put forward that plan for prosperity for Saskatchewan people.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about untendered contracts, and we're talking about public money. And the public were promised accountability and transparency in the budget speeches and the Throne Speeches of the Sask Party. They've seen none of that.

My question is to the member from Carrot River. Does he believe that the public's money should be put at risk with untendered contracts?

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

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy to answer, to talk about . . . [inaudible] . . . contract. Like, let's go back to the NDP's record. Of course SPUDCO's been mentioned many a time. But what about the stuff? What about Channel Lake? What about Guyana? How about SGI's [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] Coachman Insurance? Mega bingo, Mr. Speaker? How many of these — Belle Plaine ethanol deal — how many of these were tendered, Mr. Speaker?

It came right down, Mr. Speaker, that when you go through all of these. Like I mean there's more of them. There's Retx. There's Craig Wireless, NST [NST Network Services of Chicago], Click-a-Bid. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, how many of these were ever tendered? Because this was public money spent

by the NDP. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Mr. Speaker, this question is to the member from Regina Rosemont, and actually I had already talked about it before, Mr. Speaker. How come that member keeps on claiming that the NDP had a balanced budget all the way through for — I think it was — something like 13 years? When on page 32 of the report from the Provincial Auditor, it says that in 1993 the government's debt was \$20.4 billion and in 2007 it went to 21.6. How do you call that balanced, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd be very happy to sit down with that member and explain summary finances and the finances of our province, Mr. Speaker, and the record of New Democrats. And in fact that Finance minister could probably help that member back there before he stands up and looks so silly in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

What we know by their own budget document, Mr. Speaker, is that the Sask Party is increasing debt by \$4.2 billion over the next four years, Mr. Speaker, a 55 per cent increase. What we know and what I would say to that member over there is . . . I will highlight what the *Leader-Post* has said, Mr. Speaker, a columnist who says, "The debt graph presented by Wall's strategists in their propaganda was at best misleading and at worst downright deceitful." Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people deserve something better. They deserve their share of prosperity that these guys are squandering.

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's some very fine people who represent constituents, Sask Party constituents, in this Assembly, and I know those fine people don't like insider jobs. And, Mr. Speaker, the Amicus deal at the moment smells to high heaven. I want to ask the member from Sask Rivers, who is this fine person, can she support the notion that any third party deals that happen in the province, particularly in the Premier's riding where he wants a nursing home, that those deals will be tendered?

**The Speaker:** — The 75-minute debate has elapsed.

Order, order. Members, earlier this afternoon in the 65-minute debate, normally when motions are moved and when amendments are made, amendments that would substantially change a motion have been ruled out of order. I have noted, however, and through some research through the Clerk's office, we have found that it has been ruled in the past by Speakers — and I'm looking back to April 30th, 2004 — that in 75-minute or private members' debates there has actually been latitude allowed. And therefore it would have been appropriate to accept the amendment that was presented by the member from

Carrot River Valley.

We will remember this for further private members and 75-minute debate. Thank you.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

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

#### Motion No. 1 — Responses to Provincial Emergencies

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In reflection upon the events of this past summer with the exceptionally wet year we've had affecting our agricultural partners, our farmers, and affecting our residents in our cities, Mr. Speaker, I have some comments today. And at the end of my comments, I will be making a motion that this Assembly recognize the dutiful efforts of the many volunteers, organizations, and different levels of government's swift response to the emergency situations of this past summer, and also reflecting on the disaster assistance program.

I hear the member calling across the floor about their visit to Yorkton. And as time allows, I really want to comment on some of the things I heard from that visit to Yorkton, Mr. Speaker.

[12:15]

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I ask the member from Regina Rosemont to allow the minister to respond and not impute ill to other members. The member for Yorkton.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the member's questioned my integrity and I will bring . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I'd just ask the member to go directly to the speech. The member from Yorkton.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

June 18th, Maple Creek; 29th and 30th, Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon; July 1st, my home of Yorkton; July 2nd, Kawacatoose Cree nation; 22nd, The Battlefords; in that time period, the town of Carlyle, Mr. Speaker; on or about August 10th, Hudson Bay; August 10th to 12th, Regina — Mr. Speaker, many, many areas were affected by the events of this past summer. And it's my pleasure to be here representing my constituency for the Sask Party government and speaking to some of these issues.

Mr. Speaker, to start, I want to just do a brief overview. Many people, especially the people affected by the flood, are very aware of the provincial disaster assistance program and are aware of the efforts by community organizations, groups, and governments in order to alleviate some of the stresses and aid those in distress from those storms. But for those that maybe aren't aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to do a bit of an overview on the PDAP program.

As many do know, the program provides financial assistance to communities, businesses, non-profit organizations, individuals,

and other people and groups that incur substantial loss or damage to — we have to make this clear — essential, non-insurable property caused by specific natural disasters. And all the case work that we've had to do and help our local constituents in dealing with some of the issues through the storms, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was one point we had to make very clear — essential items not, you know, bicycles and the thing but essential items for life quality, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and uninsurable property. We ran into that situation quite a number of times where people would come because they didn't have insurance. They didn't have a tenant pack, that they weren't covered.

And unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the case. If insurance is available on the open market, truly it isn't right that the general public would pick up that risk by somebody taking risk by not carrying insurance. And admittedly a lot of those cases are through the fact that some of these residents weren't aware of buying insurance. And that is a sad fact, Mr. Speaker, although many organizations and groups did step up — Salvation Army, Red Cross, community people donating items to cover the losses and get those people back on their feet. So where some of the, you know, some of the shortcomings might be in insurance or possibly disaster assistance, Mr. Speaker, the communities, the towns, the villages, the volunteers were there to pick up and fill the gaps where needed.

Most common disasters which we are aware of as well . . . Specifically we saw this summer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, floods. We saw tornadoes in Kawacatoose, plow winds, severe storms, effects of nature that are — or acts of God — that are uninsurable. And once an area is deemed a disaster area, Mr. Speaker, the program cuts in. They can apply. Residents can apply for disaster assistance. And again it provides assistance to Saskatchewan claimants in an area that has been designated eligible for assistance due to losses, damages of essential uninsurable, tangible property caused by specific natural disasters. Again once the area is deemed a disaster area by the local authority, then the government steps in. The Corrections and Public Safety minister steps in with the PDAP program.

And before I go on in mentioning the minister, his role, his title, I want to again, as I talked about in my Throne reply, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . that it's so proud of this government, the communities, the volunteers. But the lengths that this government went to, to address some of these situations . . . The Premier, as I've stated, was out I think weekly right after the storm. The minister, the member from down south . . . I forgot his constituency.

**An Hon. Member:** — Wood River.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Wood River, that's it. It's a great constituency, down by my uncle's home of Assiniboia. So many good things to say about him. The mayor of Yorkton, a lot of community members that had the opportunity to meet with the Premier, the minister, very happy with the response time and the attention and care given to the area.

Also the PDAP program covers assistance for immediate actions undertaken to reduce the effects of an imminent disaster such as sand banging, so preventative measures which . . . Proactivity we know quite often is a very good investment. So



that's another thing covered by the PDAP program. Eligible items under PDAP include cleanup, essential household items, structural repair, restoration, and again preventative measures taken during the disaster, so again proactivity.

The assistance helps claimants restore eligible property to pre-disaster conditions which is important, Mr. Speaker. To be fair, we don't really need to be funding improvements. If there's betterment involved, that's sort of up to the individual homeowner, the individual property owner. But to at least bring it to pre-disaster conditions is the intent of PDAP, and it has been filling that void very well with the changes that have been implemented.

Again the assistance does not include payment for economic losses, reimbursement for either loss of income or production. So again only tangible capital losses are covered. PDAP is intended to restore the essentials of life, not lifestyle, which is a good point. So unfortunately items like recreational property are not covered. Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's limits to how far you can go without making the cost of programs so exorbitant that it isn't deliverable, and it does strike a very good balance.

People have asked what kind of coverage is available for individual property owners, so I'll run through some of those. The maximum assistance per principal residence is now at 240,000. I'll get in, drill down into this a little bit better later, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What we saw when we formed government, the maximum allowable per residence was \$100,000 which we knew was totally inadequate. Everything had been, you know, there's . . . Costs have increased for construction and the like. So shortly afterwards, an increase was put into place to \$160,000 per residence. But very quickly after the disaster in specifically Maple Creek, shortly after Yorkton, it was realized that it just wasn't enough as well. So there was increases quickly put into place to 240,000 per residence and numerous other increases as well. So we'll again drill down to that a bit later.

What we found was a very detrimental part of the program was the deductible, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 20 per cent deductible on claims. It's very hard for some of these areas. I know specifically in Yorkton, a lot of these areas are lower-income rental property. They just didn't have the 20 per cent. They couldn't absorb that 20 per cent loss, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again, very quick action by our government and directed through the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety, that deductible reduced down to 5 per cent from 20 per cent. So we see a 15 per cent lift in the claims coming into the ministry, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So who else is eligible for PDAP? Well that was expanded as well. We saw that there was limitations for out-of-province property owners. And this really became prevalent in Yorkton where, as we see an out-of-province owner of a rental property, it is a residence for a person in the city. Unfortunately they weren't covered. So what happens in a case like that? There's no insurance. There's no disaster assistance, out-of-province business owner or a property owner. We see a loss of a door that may not be replaced. We see the loss of income for a business where they may be an out-of-province employer, owned out of province, but it's an employer within our

economy in Yorkton or in some of our other surrounding areas where we have two, four, or possibly 10 or more employees. That business is no longer viable without support. We see a loss of jobs in the community.

Where we saw the changes made to the disaster assistance program, where that was addressed, where some of these issues were covered, and we see viability put back into these businesses by coverage through PDAP and some definite positive improvements.

Agriculture enterprises, there was a lift in coverage for those as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

To charitable and non-profit organizations, boards, park authorities, and local government authorities, local municipal governments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where the deductible was capped at, I believe, is a point one five per cent cap on their deductible. So they were, once they hit that limit, they no longer need to top up their deductible. And again for these claimants as well as with private residences, deductible's reduced from 20 per cent down to 5 per cent.

So why did we make these improvements? Why did the Premier come out to Yorkton and Maple Creek and some of the other areas around the province? Why did the minister make so many visits? Why was there so many phone calls figuring why do we need to make these improvements? Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the first reason is we listen.

Right after the storm in Yorkton was over specifically — I know the member from Cypress was in a similar situation — we got out. The flood waters hadn't receded yet. I got out in my big old diesel Suburban and we got out looking around to see what was the damage. And quite honestly it was a lot wider spread than I would have imagined. I've been asked by people — they saw the devastation from not only our province or country but around the world — I was getting emails and phone calls, what the heck is going on?

Specifically for me was Yorkton. There's no real specific river. There's no lake. The truth of the matter is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the rain fell . . . I think the official counts were four to five inches, but I've talked to specific people in areas of the city where they received in their rain gauges seven inches. The official timeline was one hour, whereas I witnessed myself in my area of the city in the east, where it drizzled a bit for 15 minutes, it came down for about 25 minutes to half an hour, and then it tapered off again. So really we got in areas seven inches in half an hour.

So what that did is overflow the storm sewer system, overflowed on the streets, effectively creating every street into a river, overflowing into the sewer systems, sewer systems backing up, and we see the widespread devastation. My community again specifically, 70 per cent of homes affected in one way or another, and hundreds affected very significantly with not a matter of inches but a matter of feet of either seepage or sewage backup in the homes.

So again we listened to property owners. They told us what they felt was inadequate. We listened to the claimants and they informed us about exorbitantly high deductible levels,

eligibility levels, and some of the depreciation that was just unfair. Those were addressed in short order.

Another thing that I was very pleased to see happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was those initial payments of \$3,000 within a matter of days or weeks to PDAP claimants. Now I know the members opposite have criticized, and I've had a few phone calls from local people, you know, what's \$3,000 going to do? Well you know, it is a specific amount, a significant amount that upfront gets you on your feet and start addressing some of the immediate concerns.

One thing I would point out, Mr. Speaker . . . And I've been asked, why that amount? Well the task force the Premier put together, the Premier himself, the minister put their heads together and found that the average claim for PDAP in the years previous, any previous claims, was around \$3,000. The decision was made to get those \$3,000 cheques out to the people right away to make sure they had some short-term income to start addressing some of their concerns.

You know, criticism that I've heard about, you know, what's that going to do, and it took too long. Well unfortunately when you look in the past . . . I mean, Vanscoy was a case we looked at — one person on staff to address some of these concerns with PDAP, payments taking anywhere from 12 to 18 months, and specifically the same amounts, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So you know, although \$3,000 up front for a significant claim isn't enough, those claims are being processed. There's money up front and people had money in their pockets very quickly.

And again these improvements are retroactive. We see some of the issues that went back a little ways, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Improvements to PDAP remained retroactive to April 1st. So again, good advice for people to put their claims in and make sure their claims are in as soon as possible, but that is a retroactive payment.

What is the total cost of these storms? Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to date we can say that the uninsurable losses through PDAP are roughly about 40 million and a further \$40 million for the government's responses including social services, highway repair, and the like.

Just taking a break, a sip of water. My own members are heckling me, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So let's move on to some of the issues with the claims, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the timing. And admittedly some of these claims do take a little bit of time. Some of these claims are very complicated. There's an issue, you know, if there's seepage; it's clear cut. If there's sewer backup, it's clear cut — sewer backup insurable, seepage not.

When we get cases like we saw, I describe as ground zero in Yorkton, where significant flooding — four or five, six feet of water in certain areas, people being evacuated from their homes with canoes, with wheel loaders by the city of Yorkton, Mr. Speaker, police and fire getting on the scene and getting people evacuated. You have a mixed condition, a mixed situation where there takes a little bit of time to figure out exactly where the damage is, what was it caused by, and who it's covering. So there has been those issues as well. But we are working through

those and the ministry and the insurance companies working together to address those concerns.

Additionally some of these timelines have been long, but the minister has put independent adjusters, a lot more independent adjusters on the ground. I know specifically in Yorkton we have a lot. There was initially a lot in Maple Creek, and more staff to process these claims.

And another . . . It's not specifically PDAP, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very proud of SGI, Sask Government Insurance, the Minister of SGI. Instantly I'd call him. If he wasn't able to answer my call, he'd call back right away. And to a certain extent, a large extent, SGI was setting the bar for a lot of these other insurance companies that were maybe waffling a bit on their responsibilities. Through the minister's direction, SGI is setting the bar fairly high and people having to follow suit and step up to that level. So again insurance is never a fun thing to deal with. People aren't always happy, but significant improvements there as well.

[12:30]

I'll go through some of the timelines now, Mr. Speaker, of specific damage to these communities. Maple Creek, June 18th, the RM and the town of Maple Creek experienced flooding to both public and private partnership and was designated an eligible disaster area.

Now I know we've seen some criticism around the province as well, but I do know for a fact that shortly after this event in Maple Creek, the Premier was on the ground, speaking specifically to community leaders and town people, and the mayor was given direct access to the Premier's office. Just a phone call away and any issues could be brought right to the Premier through the Premier's office. Again being open, I think, and cutting out all that red tape and getting to the bare bones of the issues very quickly.

On the 24th of June, in response to the devastating damages in Maple Creek, an unprecedented and early advance payment in the amount of \$3,000 authorized, which I just spoke about. Officials from CPSP [Corrections, Public Safety and Policing] attend the Maple Creek town office regularly to meet with residents to help them with any questions they may have related to their claims. An intensive review of residents' files was undertaken, and it still is ongoing to determine the immediate need for furnaces, hot water heaters, payments for those who were expedited for those identified.

And that's one thing. I'll probably jump ahead a little bit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, here that it is an issue with the oncoming cold weather that we were brought to our attention through residents that, you know, they are waiting for their claims to be processed. They need a furnace. They need a hot water heater. The minister recognized that quite quickly. The Minister of SGI realized that quite quickly, so these claims were put to the top of the priority list to ensure that at least people had hot water and heat in their homes very close to when the cold weather is hitting, if not before. So a very positive direction from . . . I'm proud of our ministers that got that initiative going.

The flooding was due to a severe storm system, which we all

know we heard about. It can't be predicted and prepared for in the same manner as spring flooding can. So I mean it is an extreme event that happens quickly. You have to respond fairly quickly to that. The event caused damages resulting from a combination of sewer backup, overland flooding, and seepage.

And the program continues to provide relocation assistance to a number of people that are displaced, which includes assistance with room and board and meal allowances. That's a specific change that was made as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where prior to this program, prior to the changes again put in by the Minister of Corrections, we saw that the relocation allowance was part of the overall payout. A hundred thousand we knocked off the living allowance; 160 we knocked off the living allowance. When it was brought up to 240,000 maximum claim, the living allowance was brought out of that. So effectively you have a \$240,000 maximum coverage through PDAP for the non-insurable loss as well as \$30,000 for relocation — so effectively close to tripling from what the previous administration had in place.

The staff continue to work with the town and other government and non-government agencies to identify any immediate concerns that require attention. Over the last three weeks of October, ministry officials have been working with local officials and others including SaskPower, SaskEnergy, and others to respond to the urgent needs for furnaces and water heaters again. The building standards unit of CPSP is coordinating on-the-ground inspections of homes and is forwarding information on furnaces back to PDAP officials to be prioritized for payments. Information on SaskEnergy's high-efficiency furnace programs has been relayed to these people. So we are seeing improvements in some of the heating systems in these homes, so there is a silver lining around some of these dark clouds.

They're also working with the town to help facilitate meetings with Saskatchewan Watershed to better understand the risks of potential flooding for the next spring — which we see significant amounts of snowfall and moisture again — so preparing, trying to be as proactive as we possibly can for events that may happen this spring. CPSP are also aware of the need for additional structural engineers on-site and the need to inspect 67 properties required for structural inspections. We have engaged additional structural engineers to complete assessments of building structural concerns and has prioritized the properties that need urgent inspection — again prioritizing on a need basis.

The ministry has been looking into particular concerns in regard to the needs for furnaces and hot water heaters again. These possible needs are being identified and linked to the claims so they can purchase these essentials. So a lot of good work being done there. And again, the mayor of Maple Creek specifically having access to the Premier through his office if the need be. I don't know how much that has been exercised, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the response I know on behalf of ministry officials and the minister has been very speedy.

Saskatoon, June 29th and 30th. Heavy rainfall causing overland flooding, damage to homes in the area. July 2nd, the city was designated for eligible assistance under PDAP. Early advance payments in the amount of 3,000 again were issued, and PDAP

continued to work with the city and answer inquiries. Again not as significant as Maple Creek and possibly Yorkton, but that quick response and efforts there are continuing as the claims get put through.

My home of Yorkton, I'll drill down into this maybe if the time allows it at the end, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a little bit more. I'll go through some of the notes I have and then I'll just talk about some of my specific issues later, and experiences.

July 1st, my family actually was at July 1st celebrations and looking forward to going to the lake for maybe a couple of weeks, commuting if the need be, and spending some time at the lake. Shortly after the Canada Day celebrations at the Western Development Museum, we went to the Dairy Queen for a quick ice cream. Only a matter of hours later, our city was flooded, the Dairy Queen was a writeoff, and as well some of the significant flooding and damage that we saw at Good Spirit Lake where my cottage is. So save it to say that there wasn't a whole lot of holiday time at the lake.

There was a lot of time working out of our office in Yorkton, again flooded with sewage probably a foot deep there, but still operating as best we could. Having my staff displaced but still operating remotely by phone and by computer, and myself in the office as much as I possibly could. So not the way you want to spend a holiday, Mr. Speaker, but it's pretty hard to take a holiday when people are in need.

We were designated as eligible for disaster assistance under PDAP. Again early advance payments were out. The severity of Yorkton was something that was not usually experienced within Saskatchewan. Again pretty much every road became a river, and the lower areas of town became catch basins and lakes. Significant area again around Dairy Queen was effectively a lake, probably a half a mile by a half mile or a mile long. The whole centre downtown core of Yorkton was flooded in areas over the door handles of cabs and above.

One instance there I know of a church, they had their main floor flooded, basement flooded. The rectory that they use was flooded and another property they had was flooded. So the church was pretty much put out of commission and is only now getting back on their feet. The event again caused damage resulting from sewer backup, overland flooding, and seepage.

And by July 3rd to 9th, the ministry officials were present in the city to assist private property claimants in completing applications and addressing questions and concerns. We continued to provide relocation assistance to a number of people that are displaced — I'll speak about that a bit later as well — which includes assistance with room and board and meal allowances. And I guess jumping ahead, hats off to the Travelodge, the old Travelodge in Yorkton, which is now Society for Involvement of Good Neighbours, who had the capacity for housing and a kitchen in place to help with these efforts. So I very appreciated the input that they had and the help that they had.

The officials continued to work with the city and other government and non-government agencies to identify any immediate concerns that required attention and some future programs that may help us in the future to alleviate heavy rain

amounts. The ministry, through the building standards unit, is working with the city on a proposal for the city to purchase certain properties that were severely damaged and redevelop them into stormwater holding pond to mitigate damage from future flood threats, which is a positive move.

Again listening. The mayor talked to me. I made a phone call to the minister, and we've got some of this work under way. And it's looking quite promising that we can be proactive and alleviate some of these flooding concerns in the future.

The BSU [building standards unit] officials are continuing to coordinate with the ministry's PDAP process with the city, the proposal to facilitate the implementation of this within the city's plan.

Kawacatoose Cree Nation, a devastating event, Mr. Deputy Speaker, July 2nd. Tornado touched down to Kawacatoose, causing damage to homes, leaving 82 people homeless. CPSP staff attended a council meeting on July 6th to inform them of the process and requirements under PDAP. On July 21st, the Cree Nation was designated eligible under the assistance program. A payment of thirty-two thousand six hundred thirteen was issued to the Kawacatoose, care of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, on September 10th. The payment was for cleanup costs and was based on uninsurable debris cleanup as per the adjuster report. Any other information from the band and the insurance company were reviewed and dealt with separately from this payment.

The Battlefords. July 22nd, the city of North Battleford received heavy rainfall in the amount of 23.5 millimetres, causing overland flooding damage to homes in the area. By the 23rd, the city of North Battleford was designated eligible and efforts there continue.

Now again, what are we doing about the delays in some of these properties? Well again additional adjusters have been contracted, additional structural engineers are moving forward to assess more and more properties. I think there's about 46 in Yorkton at last count, my last count. I know those have depleted quite a bit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the engineers and inspectors have been doing great work there.

The ministry is also hiring additional staff to review files to assist in residents' concerns. And PDAP, we know, was inefficient due to extremely long wait times and again, as I said previously, unfair depreciation being applied specifically to furnaces and the like, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where we saw 60 per cent depreciation on those items which makes a lot of them virtually unaffordable for some people. They couldn't come up with the difference. That depreciation was cut just about in half by the minister responsible, and again very appreciated. And now through some of the programs, through SaskEnergy and through the ministry, we're seeing a lot of new furnaces and safer furnaces put in some of these homes.

Under PDAP as of November 15th, we saw 4,016 private claims received, 62 municipal claims, 2,820 payments made, \$9.7 million paid out, 443 files closed. And we took a number of steps to quickly help flood victims this summer starting with the delivery of the cheques — the \$3,000 advance cheques — as quickly as possible.

Payments in Maple Creek area were made within 24 hours of the mayor requesting it. Again, direct line to the Premier's office which I guess never hurts.

Officials have also been on the ground from the beginning in hard hit communities to help residents. And I've seen that in my own hometown where officials were just about up to the elbows helping where they can. And in fact one call we had, short of manpower, going door to door in Yorkton to see seniors that maybe hadn't called or unaware of how bad things were, the minister allocated I believe it was 25 firefighters from the North. These predominantly First Nations men came down and they were amazing, helping people empty out homes if need, relocating them, getting them out of their homes, getting them to safety. Again very appreciated. The minister doing an amazing job. And the public servants from the North — those firefighters were very appreciative and I'd just officially like to extend my thanks and appreciation for their help.

Again our government has been listening to the needs of these flood victims, and there have been numerous changes made. As of August 10th . . . In August, pardon me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are some of the following changes. I've touched on some of them, but I'll again go through them in detail.

Deductible for private claims reduced from 20 to 5 per cent. Deductibles for businesses, farmers and groups and municipalities, 20 to 5 per cent. Maximum amount for financial assistance available for residents increased from 100 to 160, again to 240, again breaking out that living allowance to be additional to that. Maximum amount of assistance eligible for small businesses increased from 160 to \$500,000, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Again as I touched on, Saskatchewan residency requirements for small business and agricultural enterprises eliminated. Maximum of \$30,000 relocation payment, again separated. And regional park authorities' eligibility was deemed the same as municipalities. Deductibles for municipalities and regional parks, as I touched on earlier, point one five per cent of their current taxable assessment is a cap.

We didn't stop there. September and October of '10, our government announced further changes to help flood victims, including again the depreciation of furnaces was capped at 35, not 60 per cent. Depreciation rate on tangible property such as drywall, hot water heaters, and concrete reduced. Additional structural engineer firms put in place. Additional independent claims adjusters were hired.

A 20 per cent increase in the advance payment from 40 per cent to 60 per cent of the total claim upon PDAP receiving the adjuster's report. All claims involved in replacement furnaces and hot water heaters put as a priority, first come.

[Inaudible] . . . on a new road. We're going where it wasn't travelled before. PDAP staff are working diligently to reduce the waiting times for claimants, eliminate the backlog, those arising during the NDP terms in government from '05 to '07.

During the 2009-10 fiscal year and prior to this summer's flooding, the average wait time for an advance payment, as I said, 12 to 18 months. Wait times under this government, under

12 to 18 days for initial payments.

To respond to the unprecedented severe weather this summer, the government has increased PDAP staffing levels to ensure that progress is not lost due to the record number of claims, so flood victims can continue to be paid as quickly as possible. There is more to do, but we're getting there. We're doing more to reduce the wait times, improve the program. And again progress is being made.

[12:45]

Where do we come from, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Under the NDP, the program completely failed to help people where they needed it most — 20 per cent were deductible, not 5; \$100,000 cap, not 240 to 500. Just draconian depreciation rates; 60 per cent on furnaces, now down to 35. There was no coverage for small-business owners or rental property owners from outside the province who provide employment and housing in our towns.

Most shockingly again, that 12- to 18-month waiting list before any money arrived, which is just shocking. The shocking wait time was entirely due to the complete lack of compassion. How could you let these people languish in this hardship? I feel bad enough we're weeks and months . . . And you're trying to get these people help. I can't imagine at this point, months past the event, six months past the event, we'd still be waiting six months to a year for the initial cheques. That's just unreasonable.

A good example is the Vanguard flood which I referred to earlier, where two years later there were still people waiting for assistance under the NDP's administration. The response in an inquiry to the delay, the minister at the time, the former member for Regina South provided the following explanation on July 2nd of '02:

There are a number of reasons here that affect the ability to pay out individual claims. I want to assure the House though, that we have had a person working on this full-time since the flood, and indeed we . . . [need] another person in September.

A flood event of that magnitude, and you have one person working on it. The NDP cared so little about the flood victims in Vanguard. Again they had one person.

Fourteen months for some of the initial claims: contaminated drinking water, damaged roads, buildings, crops, flooded homes, several million dollars of damage that occurred. And they had one person. In Saskatchewan today, there are more than 20 people working extremely hard to process these PDAP claims as possible.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've got a few minutes left here so I want to really drill down into some of the events that I personally saw in Yorkton, which I feel are probably fairly indicative. Now just to give you a bit of a background on these notes I drafted, the reason I drafted these notes . . . I was out of town at a meeting, and I got a phone call from my constituency office. And as it happens, we had a couple of constituents, they were affected by the flood. They were low-income, not quite

seniors. I think one was a senior. They come into my office, and they are totally upset with my constituency assistants, with myself, and they're saying — I'm quoting, Mr. Deputy Speaker: "Brad Wall doesn't care; Greg Ottenbreit doesn't care. They've done nothing. They haven't returned phone calls." And it went on and on and on.

I took offence to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and here's why. Because in my office, phone calls are returned either by myself initially or my constituency assistants. If they need my direction after that, I return the calls. Whether it's email, I try and make contact with my constituents as much as I can.

So I was kind of floored when there was this allegation that I don't return phone calls; I don't care. Initially right after the flood, again, I jumped in my truck with some of my family members, checking out my daughter's house, my daughter's boyfriend's house, areas around the city to see where the damage was. Shortly after that, I was in conversation with the Premier.

And the next day, the Premier called. It might have been the night before or the next day, early the next day I believe, he called the mayor. He says, do you need me there? And this is the mayor's story. And the mayor says, no, you know, we'll deal with it. We're okay for now. If we need, we'll call. The Premier's on holidays with his family, camping, a needed holiday. That phone call terminated. Within two hours, the Premier was on the front steps of the city hall looking for the mayor. Now is that somebody that doesn't care? That's where I . . . and I'm wondering where . . .

[Applause]

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Yes. Well-deserved applause.

The thing that I took offence to . . . And I mean I shouldn't get defensive, but the thing I took offence to, I know how hard you're working. You're under stress. People are under stress. And a little bit to my own fault, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When I operated my company, I wouldn't go and say, I'm going to do the job, then I'm going to come and ask for the pat on the back and say, I did the job. Or go and do the job, and then come back later and ask for a pat on the back. I did the job. Do what you need to do. Keep on moving.

If I'm walking around looking for accolades, you're wasting valuable time you can be dealing with cases, phoning the minister, phoning the minister, phoning the Premier, talking to other members, talking to people in the community, helping out where you can. It's all my fault. I should have been down maybe being more self-promoting. I don't know.

When I hear, I wonder, where do these allegations come from? So where would these people get these ideas? Well in the course of the conversation that my constituency assistant was having with these people, their story: the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Rosemont I believe, and a couple other members possibly, were at the SIGN [Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours] on Broadway. And to their credit, that's their job. Opposition, keep the government accountable. Where are we falling short? I want to know about it so we can address it.

They go down, and what do I hear? The people there said, they told us you don't return phone calls. You don't care. Brad Wall doesn't care. It got me a little bit angry. These are quotes, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — [Inaudible] . . . the member to refer to members from their constituency.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm referring to a quote, so I apologize. That was a quote. These are the words of the people that came to my office.

So I said, well you know what? I've got a . . . I drafted some notes. I'm thinking, well I haven't been taking notes. I haven't been keeping a log. What have we done? So I drafted a bunch of notes, specified what we have done, what the Premier had done, went down to talk to these people.

My constituency assistant, in the course of this, in the course of this conversation, starts questioning the lady: well what do you mean your call was refused? It wasn't returned? So what she got out of this lady, she starts typing on the computer. She says, what number did you call from? Well I called from SIGN on Broadway; that's where I've been put up. And to kind of, to jump ahead a little bit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, people were displaced in school gyms and all over the place. SIGN on Broadway, the facility they had there, they opened up their doors. They allowed these people in. There are supportive services in the building. There's rooms in the building. There's kitchens in the building. The Victory Church in Yorkton ran the kitchen. We had these people looked after as well as could be expected outside of their homes.

So I went down. I was going to go down and see these people. So my constituency assistant was a bit upset. And she's tracking this down, and she says, well I called from there. Well she's typing and she says, what number? Well I can't remember. She says well . . . They're continuing this conversation. It went on for about 5 minutes, and the lady says, well I didn't, I didn't send an email; I phoned. And my assistant said, that's fine; we track everything on the computer. Phones come in. They're all logged. The numbers are recorded, and all the messages are there. Well, as the conversation went on, well maybe I called from my friend's room. Maybe I called from my friend's house. Maybe I didn't leave a message. By the time we're all done, they never called. They never left a message. How am I to return a call that doesn't come in?

So my assistant was a bit upset, and I said, no you've got to understand where they're coming from though. They're under duress. They're under stress. They're displaced from their home. Somebody comes in and tells them this kind of stuff that is probably not quite . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm not going to go there. It wasn't right.

So I said, you've got to understand where they're coming from. In their mind, three days previous or whatever it was, they hear this. It bounces around in their head for a few days before they get some initiative to come down to the office and complain. I know I'm not a psychologist, but I do understand how the human mind works. By the time they came to our office, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in their mind, this was truth. I never returned their calls.

So I drafted up these notes, and I talked to them about it. And they apologized and said well, you know, maybe it wasn't the truth and they kind of jumped to conclusions. So these are my notes, my log that I put together here.

Immediately after the flood, I toured Yorkton to see the damage first-hand and began to help where able. Contacted and talked to the Premier and informed him of the level of damage and impact. The next day the Premier arrives to witness first-hand and speak to some of those affected. Began developing a plan with the Premier and minister in how to best help flood victims of the city of Yorkton area. And again, I think this story is pretty indicative of the whole province, but these are, these are my notes.

Personally I started attending the emergency meetings put on by the city of Yorkton, facilitated by the city of Yorkton, and again credit to them, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The city, the mayor, and council — amazing. Mayor James Wilson did an amazing job showing leadership there and facilitating a lot of what had to happen. Chief Dean Clark of the Yorkton fire department — amazing man — could run a meeting like nobody's business. No straying off-topic. Just kept things on task, kept everybody on task. Staff Sergeant Joe Milburn of the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] city detachment, amazing job of keeping the police where they needed to be.

Again, city of Yorkton, Salvation Army, Red Cross, community volunteer groups, church groups, Kinsmen, all these different groups, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We had some of the Mennonite Christian organizations coming out of Manitoba, all over interprovincially coming to help. We had an amazing amount of help helping people out of their homes and very appreciated. So again, I can't put into words how appreciative I am of all the help that we got from around the province.

Again, attended emergency meetings. The initial emergency meeting at the Gallagher Centre attended by 1,000, 2,000 people to get some information. And we had representatives there from victim services, the city, emergency services, Social Services, Ministry of Public Safety. We had representation from across the gamut, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make sure everybody got the information they needed.

Realized people needed financial aid ASAP [as soon as possible], made this known to the Premier — and they had already been working on this for Maple Creek — 12 to 18 months, unacceptable. Within a week or two, people were receiving checks of \$3,000 to tide them over.

Volunteers were desperately needed. Twenty-five provincial firefighters brought in by the minister to help evacuation cleanup. Attended emergency organizational meetings every morning at the fire hall, personally, to help up to date with the needs and shortcomings to address where possible.

One need that surfaced during these meetings was proper long-term shelter. It was felt that being housed in schools was not a good option if other accommodations could be found. So through the work of the Minister of Social Services and emergency social services and CPSP, we got those affected housed in SIGN on Broadway. And again, a lot of thanks to those people down there.

Constituency office was flooded with sewage, and staff was displaced out of the city. So we operated remotely for them, and I operated out of the office as best as I could.

Family holidays were cancelled. Ran the office the majority of the time single-handed through July into August to keep up with disaster-related cases as quickly as possible, usually within an hour or two of when they came in. Met with virtually all victims as requested. If they asked me to come, I'd come. I don't want to stick my nose in if they're under duress. Last thing you need is a politician walking in patting himself on the back. I didn't want to do that. You need me, I'm there.

Our office continues to deal with PDAP issues — although they're getting fewer and further between; we're catching up — shortcomings as they arise, which as of late consumed, this is back again in late July, most days and weekends. Shortly after the flood, when we looked at PDAP, it was realized the program fell short. Again, I've touched on a lot of those improvements.

Now keep in mind everything I've talked about here happened within the first four weeks after the fact of the flood, a lot of it three weeks. It took about a few days to get everybody kind of organized, see what the heck was going on there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The mayor and I spoke daily, if not multiple times a day, and continue to speak daily on issues that . . . these issues and other issues, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but specifically, a lot of the PDAP issues with, again, the plans that they have in place to expand the catch basin area of the city. In the past, there was meetings that were held with all of the PDAP officials and minister and the task force to keep addressing these concerns. As we see, these changes continue to come in.

Now again as I touched on, I wrote in my notes here, it has come to my attention that the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues were recently here to visit. And I understand statements were made about the Premier, myself, the government, and how this issue has been handled, and further questioned if we were doing anything.

Again these insinuations that I don't return phone calls. And I found out afterwards, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there was one call I didn't return. I found out through a minister. The call was made, no message left. When I did finally hear about a call being made, I called this person to get, basically, railed on for 20 minutes. And every time I talk about the improvements being made and how we're helping people, jump to a different subject and again rail on me again. So I allowed her 20 minutes or so till she was done. And that might have been the source of information, the one person that didn't possibly leave a message. So it's hard to address those. So I got a little bit upset when I heard that.

But I mean, people are people and, you know, I find these statements a little bit offensive. And you know, to hear concerns and hold us account where needed, exactly I understand that and I totally want that to happen.

But by him coming to my city, making these statements, I feel was to further his own political interests, do nothing, have

nothing to do with caring about people. And I personally find it disgusting and deplorable that he would use a crisis in our city and use those hardships for that reason. The term I was given by somebody in that situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was they felt emotionally manipulated. So you know, I just find that it's just uncalled for.

But with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm running short on time. I just want to find my motion to read it specifically, through my many, many, many notes of improvements and the notes we have. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I make the motion:

That this Assembly recognize the dutiful efforts of the many volunteers, organizations, and different levels of government's swift response to the emergency situations of this past summer, as well as our continued efforts to enhance and expand the provincial disaster assistance program to the benefit of those who must rebuild their lives after the disastrous flood of 2010.

I so move.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Yorkton has moved a motion:

That this Assembly recognize the dutiful efforts of the many volunteers, organizations, and different levels of government's swift response to the emergency situations of this past summer, as well as our continued efforts to enhance and expand the provincial disaster assistance program to the benefit of those who must rebuild their lives after the disastrous flooding of 2010.

It being 1 o'clock, this House now stands adjourned until 1:30 on Monday afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS**

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# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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**Premier of Saskatchewan**  
**President of the Executive Council**

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**Hon. Bill Boyd**  
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Minister of Social Services  
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Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
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Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

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Minister Responsible for the Provincial  
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Investments Corporation  
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Power Corporation  
Minister Responsible for Uranium  
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Transportation Company  
Minister Responsible for The Global  
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