



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

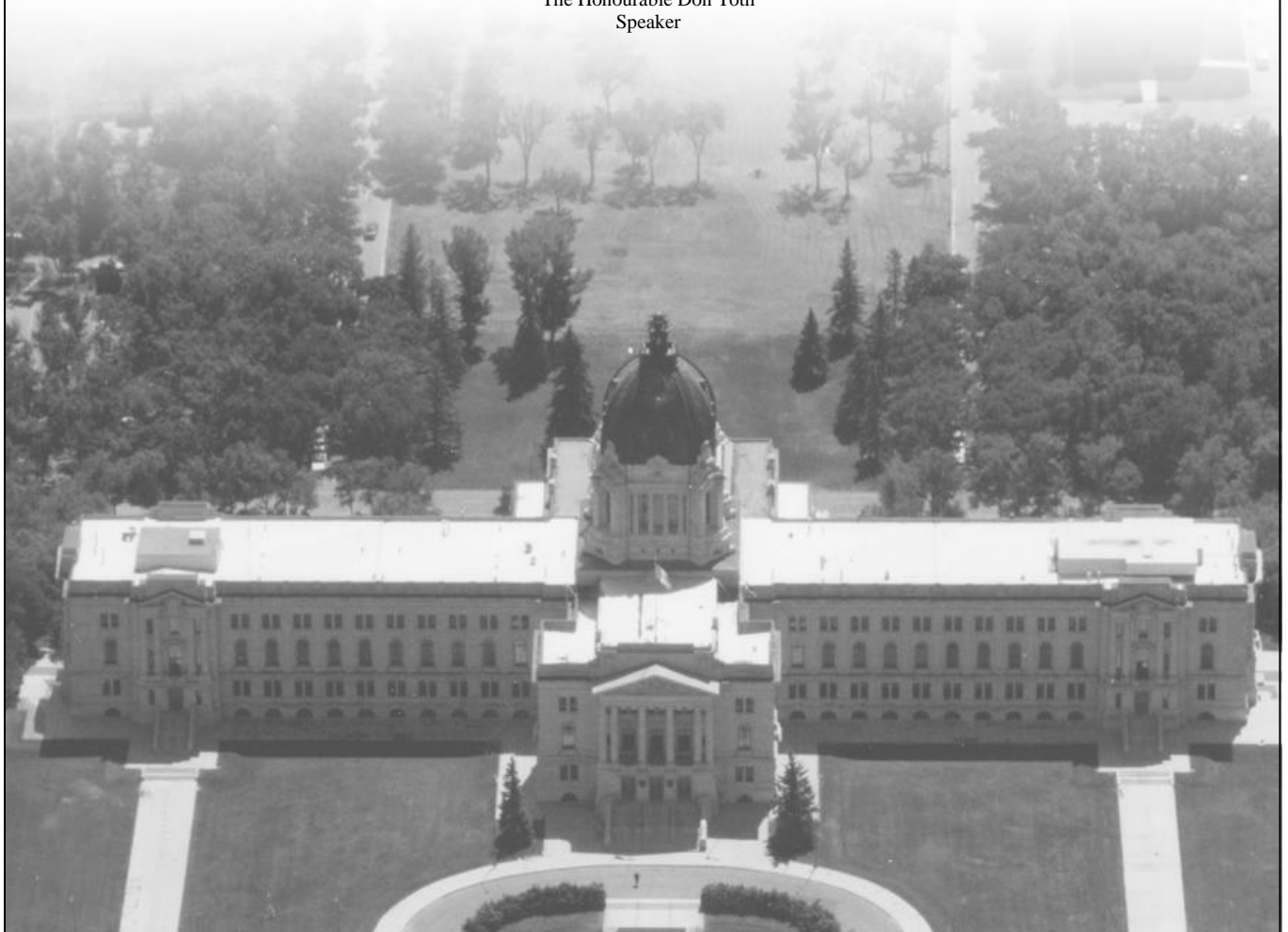
---

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

---

(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Hon. Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you and to you to the rest of the Assembly I'd like to introduce a number of medical students. I think there's 10 to 12 medical students that are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. They're the political advocacy committee from the Saskatchewan medical society of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

I had the opportunity, as a number of my colleagues did, to meet with them through the Human Services Committee. I got to meet with them and hear some of their concerns. I know they met with the opposition, as well as I was able to have a quick chat with them in my office, Mr. Speaker. It's always a privilege to meet with some of the best and brightest in our province.

A lot of them are first-year, some are second-year medical students, Mr. Speaker. And we look forward to the day that they, the next number of years that they complete their medical school and hopefully do their residency here in Saskatchewan since we have a number of positions available for them, Mr. Speaker, and eventually will then be able to service the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the ones that I talked to are certainly leaning towards Saskatchewan as their first choice. We want to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the minister on behalf of the official opposition in welcoming the 16 medical students from the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] to the Assembly today.

And the minister's correct; we had a meeting with these students this morning, and it was great to hear from them. And it was great to hear about their future plans, and to hear about things that can be done here in the province to make their medical training more successful and their retention more successful over the long term, Mr. Speaker.

So again we thank them for being here today, and we wish them well for those that are travelling later on today that they have a safe return to their home communities. And I would ask all members to join me in welcoming them to the legislature. Thank you so much.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to have in your gallery today a family of constituents who braved some sketchy road conditions on the way in. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I'd like to introduce Lorie Schlamp. She is a

mother of three, as you can see, Mr. Speaker. She's with Austin, Nicky, and Jaci, her children. She is providing them home-schooling along with her husband, Bryan. They're from the community of Beverley, just west of the city of Swift Current and located in the constituency of Swift Current.

It's always a pleasure to have bosses in watching all of us work here. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I want to welcome this family, the Schlamps, to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I too want to join with other members in welcoming the students, the med students here today. We had great meetings with them this morning.

I also, while I'm on my feet, wanted to introduce a very special person, my son Travis who is here today. Travis is working on his master's degree in political science at the University of Saskatchewan, so I just wanted to welcome my son Travis here today.

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Legislative Assembly I'd like to introduce Tracy, in your gallery, Tracy Goodheart and her husband, Greg, who have come here from Saskatoon. Tracy is my constituency assistant. And, Mr. Speaker, I can't say enough about her, Mr. Speaker, but there is more.

Tracy has deep roots not only in the Saskatoon community but in the labour community in the province here. Now she does all of this work, an enormous amount of work, but she also combines this with her volunteer work. And this year that's landed her an award recognized by the community in Saskatoon for all the things that she does.

Mr. Speaker, there's not a week actually that goes by in the office where some constituent doesn't come in and say how lucky I am to have Tracy in the office. And I can't say enough particularly so, Mr. Speaker, no better way than to say to all my colleagues here, to thank Tracy in front of all of you for all the things that she does. So I would ask all my colleagues to welcome Tracy and her husband to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery I'd also like to introduce Gunnar Passmore who's joined us here today, no stranger to the legislature here. Gunnar's with the building trades and a sheet metal worker, and we always like to see Gunnar in the gallery. And I also want to get all of my colleagues to welcome Gunnar to his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join with the member opposite and welcome Gunnar Passmore to his

Legislative Assembly. He's a constituent of mine. He lives in Sedley, Mr. Speaker. He's not probably a supporter of mine. I've come to realize that, Mr. Speaker. But he lives in a beautiful two-storey house, right in the corner in Sedley. It's kind of a nice, kind of a lime green. But, Mr. Speaker, every time about this time of year it turns not such a nice colour of orange, Mr. Speaker. There's a federal election on, and I'm sure it's going to be turning orange real soon.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition that speaks to the issue of protecting tenants from unreasonable rent increases through rent controls. And it points out that there's many Saskatchewan tenants have faced surging rent increases that are simply making living in Saskatchewan unaffordable.

And it also recognizes that a majority of Canadians now live in provinces with rent control guidelines, including Manitoba, BC [British Columbia], Ontario, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island. And that rent-controlled Winnipeg generated more new rental units than Regina and Saskatoon from 2007 to 2009, and this is backed up with data from CMHC [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation] that there were fewer than 300 rental unit starts in Saskatchewan's two largest cities combined, and during that same period Winnipeg generated over 1,500 new rental units, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, specifically request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the government to immediately enact rent control legislation that protects Saskatchewan tenants from unreasonable increases in rent.

Mr. Speaker, I present these petitions from residents in Regina; Yorkton; Churchbridge; Moose Jaw; Saskatoon; Melfort; Star City; Nipawin; and Watson, Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of maintaining quality health care services:

And the petition of the undersigned citizens of the province humbly showeth:

That the Government of Saskatchewan ought to recognize the need for timely access to comprehensive and quality health care for all communities within the province including Wakaw and surrounding areas;

And that the disruption of emergency services and in-patient services at Wakaw Hospital will not serve the needs of the residents in this community and surrounding areas;

And that the cuts and access to timely and accurate

diagnostic and laboratory tests within the community of Wakaw and surrounding areas will not serve the needs of the residents;

And that the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority budgetary reductions ought not to impede the provision of valuable, compassionate, and appropriate health care services to all citizens within a geographic boundary requiring acute care, community and home care, long-term care, and public health care;

And that the Government of Saskatchewan realize that the utilization and value of the full range of professional skills offered by health care providers is promoted through the address of critical retention and recruitment issues and the ensuring safe staffing levels, and that such promotion can only be achieved through the commitment of adequate public funding to publicly administer publicly accessible health care.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to maintain quality health care services through the commitment of necessary funding to address critical retention and recruitment issues.

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

These signatures are from people in communities of Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Melville, and Regina. I so present.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of eliminating poverty in Saskatchewan. And we know that freedom from poverty is an enshrined human right by the United Nations and that all citizens are entitled to social and economic security, and we know the gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow and one in five children in Saskatchewan live in deepening poverty. And we also know that citizens living in poverty have long identified affordable solutions, including the Saskatoon health disparities report and the Canada Without Poverty, Dignity for All campaign. They all call for a comprehensive elimination strategy for poverty. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan act as quickly as possible to develop an effective and sustainable poverty elimination strategy for the benefit of all Saskatchewan citizens.

I do so present. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition on behalf of my constituents who live in Hampton Village about the need for a new school for children in the area:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that Hampton Village is a rapidly growing community in Saskatoon with many young families; that Hampton Village residents pay a significant amount of taxes including education property taxes; that children in Hampton Village deserve to be able to attend school in their own community instead of travelling to neighbouring communities to attend schools that are typically already reaching capacity.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan cause the provincial government to devote the necessary resources for the construction of an elementary school in Hampton Village so that children in this rapidly growing neighbourhood in Saskatoon can attend school in their own community.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition live in the neighbourhood of Hampton Village. I so present.

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition to restore funding equity to Regina Catholic schools. Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government has changed the funding formula for education, and unfortunately it has left the Catholic school systems in Saskatchewan behind. Regina Catholic schools receive \$275 less per pupil than Regina public schools, amounting to a funding inequity of \$2.7 million in total. That funding inequity places program delivery and staffing levels at risk, and the Government of Saskatchewan has even denied Catholic school boards in the province representation on the government appointed committee mandated to develop a long-term funding formula for Saskatchewan's school boards. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to address the funding inequity between Regina Catholic schools and Regina public schools that provides \$275 less per pupil funding for Regina Catholic school students, totalling \$2.7 million, and make known that the continuation for another school year of funding inequity places program delivery and staffing levels at risk in Regina Catholic schools; and in so doing, immediately restore funding equity to ensure that every student in Saskatchewan, whether enrolled in a Catholic or public school, receives equitable resources to ensure every student in Saskatchewan has access to a quality education, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by residents all across Saskatchewan and specifically Birch Hills and Saskatoon. I so present. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on the community-based organizations worker wage

equity. Mr. Speaker, the workers in community-based organizations in Saskatchewan have traditionally been underpaid and many continue to earn poverty-level wages. Mr. Speaker, the CBO [community-based organization] workers care for and provide valuable services to the most vulnerable members in our communities. These low wages that are paid to these workers result in a high staff turnover, and the subsequent lack of caregiver continuity is the result of that, Mr. Speaker. This negatively impacts on the quality of care the residents would receive.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan to implement, act as quickly as possible, a multi-year funding plan to ensure that CBO workers achieve wage equity with employees who perform work of equal value in government ministries, agencies, and offices.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the people, residents of Prince Albert and Regina. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present petitions signed by citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about the detrimental effects that Bill 160 will have on human rights law in our province. And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan withdraw Bill 160 from consideration by the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and hold extensive public consultations informed by a public policy paper before any amendments to the Human Rights Code, the law that supersedes all others in our province, are even considered.

Today the petition is signed by residents of Shaunavon; Gull Lake; and Eastend, Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to a record of a government that has tabled deficits and actually increased debt at a time of record highs in revenues in this province. Three years of adding debt, Mr. Speaker, under the Sask Party despite unprecedented highs in revenues — a total of \$1.3 billion over three years, and this year alone adding \$548 million of debt to the province's public books, 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 residents of Balcarres, Saskatoon, Wapella, Whitewood, Moosomin, Wolseley, and Regina. I so submit.

[13:45]

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Remembering the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to commemorate one of the worst industrial disasters in North American history, a tragedy that prompted many of the labour and safety laws we take for granted.

On the afternoon of March 25th, 1911, fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York city. The employees were mostly young immigrant women, some just teenagers who worked 13-hour shifts sewing ladies blouses for 13 cents an hour. When the fire started, they were trapped because the factory owners had locked them in. Mr. Speaker, 146 people were killed as a result.

This horror galvanized the labour movement, social reformers, and politicians. Within a year, New York state passed new laws addressing sanitation, hours of work, child labour, and workplace injuries. New York's example led to change throughout the US [United States] and entire Canada.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to safety. In 2010 Saskatchewan achieved its total workplace injury rate, in 20 years the lowest rate. We stepped up occupational health and safety inspections and last year initiated a record number of prosecutions. We acknowledge solid progress but still have more to do. Anniversaries of tragedies like the Triangle Factory fire remind us why we put so much effort into safety legislation, standards, and enforcement. On days like this, we renew our commitment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### New Democratic Party Convention

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to give an account to this House of the incredibly successful NDP [New Democratic Party] convention held this past weekend in Regina. Policy Eleven Saskatchewan Solutions generated so many positive ideas, the Sask Party had to send not one, not two, not three, not four, but five government staffers just to count all the ideas. We could tell they were a bit overwhelmed by all the policy talk, Mr. Speaker, being used to attending conventions where the number of policies debated is usually, to use a round figure, zero.

Mr. Speaker, the newspapers report that about 680 people attended the convention as registered delegates. They have to estimate, Mr. Speaker, because they know at least one of the

convention attendees doesn't appear on the delegate list. That's the member from Thunder Creek, Mr. Speaker, who drove all the way to Regina to comment on a convention but didn't pay the fee to officially register.

We're not sure why, when he's so willing to open his mouth to the cameras about our convention, he was so unwilling to open his wallet to pay the ten fifty it cost for visiting delegates to attend our convention. Was it too costly for him, Mr. Speaker? We're not sure. But we do hear rumours that he's saving up every penny to buy a membership in the Saskatchewan Party Enterprise Club. It's a great club, Mr. Speaker, whose members get exclusive meetings with cabinet ministers. Maybe that's why the member is saving up to join the Enterprise Club, Mr. Speaker. After all he doesn't get to see his cabinet colleagues quite as often as he used to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

#### Team Canada Wins Silver in World Women's Curling

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all eyes in our province and indeed our entire country were glued to the TVs early yesterday morning as Saskatchewan's own, actually Kronau Curling Club's own Amber Holland rink, played in the final game of the World Women's Curling Championship in Denmark. All week we watched with tremendous pride as Holland led her team consisting of third Kim Schneider, second Tammy Schneider, lead Heather Kalenchuk, and fifth member Jolene Campbell, as well as coach Merv Fonger, do an amazing job.

Throughout the week the team gained momentum, overcame obstacles, and played with solid determination. They won six out of seven must-win games to finish with a seven and four record and made it to a tiebreaker. In the tiebreaker game, they beat Switzerland 8-6. Then onto the 3-4 Page playoff game where they beat Denmark 10-7 and advanced to the semifinal where they beat China 8 to 5. And in the final game against Sweden, they showed remarkable composure and dignity in the face of some very tough challenges. The outcome was that the team will be bringing home the silver medal back to Canada — a wonderful achievement.

If there was something that could go wrong in the 10th end, it did go wrong. It's a game of inches, and unfortunately Canada was on the wrong side of those inches. That still means, Mr. Speaker, we're extremely proud of the work that this team has done from the small town of Kronau to represent Saskatchewan and Canada so very well.

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

#### Saskatchewan Housing Strategy

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to condemn this government's lack of a housing strategy for Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, it must have been because so many of the Sask Party government staffers were busy getting ready for the NDP convention that no one on that side of the House could figure out their government's policy on housing. A month

before the housing summit in Saskatoon, in the middle of a so-called consultation process, this minister blurts out that she now has a major plan for housing.

Mr. Speaker, it's re-announced money in the paltry annual sums that won't come close to matching the government's beer bonus for off-sale owners, let alone matching the need for affordable housing in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the only reason she has 200 million of those imaginary dollars to announce is that they're for the Head Start program that she announced over a year ago and which has yet to put a single family into an affordable home.

Mr. Speaker, there wasn't a word about a comprehensive affordable housing plan in last week's budget, and now this minister has been embarrassed into action by an NDP convention where affordable housing was top of the agenda. Mr. Speaker, people see, people see through this phony strategy from a government that gives more thought to putting out press releases than it does to putting Saskatchewan families into affordable homes. Thank you very much.

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

#### Reaction to Saskatchewan Budget

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week our government outlined its vision for the future of Saskatchewan. We defined the Saskatchewan advantage of lower taxes, a better quality of life, a balanced budget, and reduced debt.

Now since last Thursday, others have had the opportunity to weigh in on the Saskatchewan advantage. Robert Kavcic, the economist with the Bank of Montreal, said, and I quote:

The province of Saskatchewan is projecting a \$383 million surplus in the General Revenue Fund in fiscal year 2011-2012, a rare achievement in a year that will see most provinces digging their way out of deficit. The surplus sits at \$115 million or about 0.2 per cent of GDP. That's still a tall accomplishment in this challenging fiscal environment.

FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] Chief Guy Lonechild said:

This government has put its money where its mouth is. This is an opportunity for us to start doing much needed work to roll up our sleeves and start improving educational outcomes for First Nations people (including) early childhood development, K-12, and post-secondary education.

Brett Fairbairn, University of Saskatchewan provost, summed up the Saskatchewan advantage perfectly when he told *The StarPhoenix* this budget is, I quote, "... a reminder of how lucky we are to live in Saskatchewan."

Mr. Speaker, different people of different stripes have voiced their opinion on the Saskatchewan advantage, yet the chorus of enthusiasm for the Saskatchewan advantage appears to unite the entire province.

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

#### Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendments

**Ms. Morin:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the assault on Saskatchewan's proud tradition of protecting human rights represented by the Sask Party's Bill 160. The Sask Party's proposed Bill would dramatically change the Human Rights Code, and it is an attack on universal human rights within this province.

Amnesty International, a Nobel Peace Prize-winning body, defends the human rights of people around the globe. Just recently the president of Amnesty International Canada, Alex Neve, travelled to Saskatchewan to speak out against this flawed Bill. He wrote in one of his articles for *The StarPhoenix* on March 12, 2011:

Most worrying about Bill 160 is its intention to abolish the Saskatchewan Human Rights Tribunal. The tribunal currently is responsible for hearing human rights complaints that cannot be resolved by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission — a model used by every other Canadian jurisdiction.

We in this Assembly have a duty to the people of the province to watch out for their best interests. There is no way conceivable that this Bill would be in the best interests of the province, and the Sask Party should immediately rescind this Bill. The Sask Party is failing our province, our people, and the oath they took when they accepted their seats in the Assembly. As best said by Alex Neve in closing this article, "The Bill itself is seriously flawed and must be withdrawn."

Mr. Speaker, it is the hope of the NDP opposition that the Sask Party government does the right thing and withdraw this Bill 160 immediately. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Thunder Creek.

#### Fiscal Fitness

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, last week our government presented *The Saskatchewan Advantage* budget. It's a balanced plan that lowers taxes, improves government services, and reduces the debt, all within a balanced budget. In fact BMO Nesbitt Burns has declared that Saskatchewan is now Canada's most fiscally fit province.

Now contrast that to the NDP's half-baked plan that they passed at their convention on the weekend. Mr. Speaker, there are over 300 promises in the NDP's policy document, and not one of them is costed out. In fact the only numbers in their entire document are the page numbers. Billions of dollars of promises, huge tax increases, and huge deficits — that's the NDP plan.

So today in Saskatchewan, we have a government with the most fiscally fit plan in Canada and an opposition that is fiscally way out of shape. Mr. Speaker, it's going to take a lot more push-ups to get that tired, old NDP back in shape, and real push-ups. I think what I saw the Leader of the Opposition doing the other day were NDP push-ups — the stuff that's supposed to be going

down is going up; the stuff that's supposed to be going up is going down. Just like when the NDP were in government, Mr. Speaker, taxes were going up, population was going down.

Today everything's moving in the right direction. Taxes are going down. Debt is going down. Population's going down . . . going up. And Saskatchewan is the most fiscally fit province in Canada. That's the Saskatchewan advantage. Thank you.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Supply of Physicians

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Minister of Health deals with the issues that were raised by the medical students, first- and second-year medical students who were good enough in a large group to come here today to meet with members of the Legislative Assembly.

One of the issues that they raised was the issue and lack of teaching doctors or preceptors in the province of Saskatchewan. And as the number of seats at the University of Saskatchewan has increased, the number of teaching doctors has basically stayed the same and hasn't increased, and particularly in rural Saskatchewan where we certainly have a shortage of doctors. In fact the vacancy rate has increased substantially since the Sask Party was elected.

My question to the minister is: what is his plan and when does he intend to implement it? We're in the third year, in fact, very close to the end of his term of office. Does he have any plan in place to increase the number of teaching doctors or preceptors in the province of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, it certainly is a privilege to answer the question. And I had the opportunity to meet with a number of the medical students here, as I have over the last two or three years as being the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, it's a real privilege to meet with them. There are more of them in the province today than there ever has been in the past, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, and we know that with growth, we know that with growth there becomes . . . there are some issues, Mr. Speaker. It isn't not only when we see growth in the province, that we've seen unprecedented growth in the province; we've also seen growth in the medical school and the residency positions, Mr. Speaker. And with that, Mr. Speaker, we've implemented some plans. More work to do. There is a distributive education model that's being implemented throughout the province. There are residents in Swift Current, Mr. Speaker, for the first time ever, Mr. Speaker, under this government. There's still more work to do. There are still more preceptors to bring on, Mr. Speaker, but they have increased, Mr. Speaker, as well as the students in this province.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister's right about one thing. The growth is, though, in the number of doctor vacancies in this province, which now is increased by 114. The realization that many of the medical students have, in talking to residents and interns, is that the resident and intern group have been without a contract now for two years in the province of Saskatchewan. And while many of the med students, in fact the majority are planning to stay in the province, by the time they get to be interns and medical graduates and residents, over 50 per cent now intend to leave the province. And while the number of seats is increasing, cost to the taxpayers is increasing, the percentage that are leaving the province is also at record numbers. In fact Saskatchewan has the worst record of retention of grad students from medical school of any med school in the country.

Mr. Minister, it's your responsibility to recruit and retain doctors in this province . . .

[14:00]

**The Speaker:** — Order. I'd ask the member to place his question through the Speaker.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, it's the duty of the minister to recruit and retain doctors. And the best place to do that is at the medical school in Saskatoon, and that isn't being done. My question to the minister: when will he get a contract for our medical students and graduates in the province of Saskatchewan so our record isn't bottom of class? And when will it move to top of class in terms of retention in this province?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, there are a number of inaccuracies in that member's question. Number one, medical students don't receive a contract, Mr. Speaker. They're medical students. Residents, Mr. Speaker, are the ones that we're working on on a contract with, Mr. Speaker, as we go forward, and I believe that a contract will be there.

Mr. Speaker, the member is right though, when he says at unprecedented levels has this government increased the number of medical seats and increased the number of residency positions. Mr. Speaker, I don't have to go too many years back. In fact under their watch, Mr. Speaker, I used to say that they had 60 medical seats under their watch. In fact they reduced it through the mid-'90s down to 55 medical seats, Mr. Speaker. He starts talking about vacancies in this province right now, Mr. Speaker. It's because they never trained enough . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. The minister may finalize his comments.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, if they're talking about a shortage of physicians right now or more vacancies, our government has attracted 228 more doctors since we've become government, Mr. Speaker. And that's in spite of the fact that they reduced the College of Medicine down to 55 students on their watch, Mr. Speaker.



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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, the fact is that today there are 114 doctor vacancies in the province of Saskatchewan. That's up massively since this government was elected in 2007, and that's a new record if he wants to talk about records.

The fact of the matter is, the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that retention of doctors and recruitment is a huge issue. We are now graduating a number of doctors, a large number of doctor, 50 per cent who plan to leave the province. That's not a very good record or a record this government should be proud of.

My question to the minister or to the Premier: what are you going to do to retain doctors and to attract young, qualified Saskatchewan resident doctors to stay in this province?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, in the old Saskatchewan we had 60 residency positions. Mr. Speaker, under this government we've increased that. We've doubled it to 120. There are residency positions for every medical student from Saskatchewan that wants to accept those, Mr. Speaker. If they choose to go out, that's, Mr. Speaker, their choice. But for once we have enough residency positions, more residency positions than we have students.

Mr. Speaker, if we go back to the old Saskatchewan under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, the College of Medicine was under probation . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I find it somewhat ironic that the members who are asking the questions are creating a difficulty for the individuals who would like to hear the answer, to hear the answer. I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, the answer isn't what they want to hear, that the College of Medicine was under probation under their government . . . [inaudible] . . . Mr. Speaker, we were in threat of losing the College of Medicine completely here in Saskatchewan under their watch, Mr. Speaker. That will never happen again, Mr. Speaker. Under our watch, we've increased the number of medical seats. We're increasing the number of residency positions, Mr. Speaker. And as a result, we're increasing the number of physicians working in this province, year over year.

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

### College Merger

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Advanced Education has claimed that it is his desire to depoliticize the post-secondary education system in our province. Yet we know this is the same minister who funnelled millions and millions of dollars, of taxpayers' dollars, to St. Peter's College and Carlton Trail Regional College in order to grease the wheels for his pet merger project.

To the minister: how many taxpayers' dollars did he pour into his pet merger project?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for an opportunity to talk about post-secondary education in the province of Saskatchewan. As recently written in the *Canadian University Guide*, 2011 edition, and I quote, "There has never been a better time to consider Saskatchewan as a place to attain a great post-secondary education," Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, regarding the proposed merger, the member opposite knows that those talks began even before the last provincial election. Mr. Speaker, a proposal was submitted last June, Mr. Speaker. We submitted that, we submitted that, Mr. Speaker, to an independent process. That independent process came back with a recommendation. The recommendation: don't go forward with the proposed merger. We came forward and made that the decision.

They also had some questions, Mr. Speaker; Mr. Speaker, at this point a number of questions. But today I'm happy to report that some of those questions are being cleared up. In fact, Mr. Speaker, what we see is that \$273,000 sits today in an account at Carlton Trail, Mr. Speaker. Day by day we'll report on every dollar for taxpayers.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Day by day, Mr. Speaker, coming from the minister, Mr. Speaker, who's had his fingerprints over this mess from the very beginning . . . The problems, Mr. Speaker, originate with this minister, and no one in this province believes that he's up to the job of getting to the bottom of the mess.

The minister funnelled over \$9 million infrastructure funding to St. Peter's. That amounts to over \$60,000 per student. By comparison the minister gave just \$1,300 per student to SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], which is in desperate need of infrastructure funding so bad that the board went rogue in an attempt to secure additional property. Sixty thousand per student for a private institution that was attempting to take over a public institution, but just \$1,300, \$1,300 for SIAST. It's obvious that the minister was greasing the wheels for this merger with taxpayers' dollars.

To the minister: how can people have confidence in his handing of the post-secondary education system when he chose to funnel over \$60,000 per student into his pet merger project while largely ignoring the needs of institutions like SIAST?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite's probably going to have to go back and do a little bit of homework here because, Mr. Speaker, he's making reference to the knowledge infrastructure program. Mr. Speaker, this was about \$117 million, \$117 million spread over 20 projects, Mr. Speaker, and that included contributions from the province and

the federal government. Mr. Speaker, the dollars that he just referred to as being provincial dollars actually are federal and provincial and, Mr. Speaker, 6 million of those were actually federal dollars, Mr. Speaker. Is he suggesting that we wouldn't accept, Mr. Speaker, federal dollars for post-secondary students in this province?

Mr. Speaker, we work co-operatively with the federal government. The knowledge infrastructure project is one key example of where post-secondary students across the province benefited from this partnership. Mr. Speaker, more than \$117 million for post-secondary students spread right across the province, Mr. Speaker, in an attempt to make up for the infrastructure deficit that all of us inherited from the members opposite.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister can talk to me like I'm stupid, but I'm not, and neither are the people of Saskatchewan. This is the exact same tone the minister took in committee a year ago. This is the exact same tone the minister took when concerns were raised in this Assembly on other occasions. It will not serve him well. Mr. Minister, you need to do a better job.

KIP [knowledge infrastructure program] dollars included both federal and provincial funding, but it was allocated based on what the provincial government wanted. Everyone knows the decisions went through the minister's office. And it's clear that this minister wanted his legacy to be this merger project. No other institution in all of Canada received more KIP funding per student than St. Peter's. The minister delivered just \$1,400 per student for the University of Regina, 1,350 for the U of S, and \$1,300 for SIAST, but he funnelled more than \$60,000 per student to St. Peter's.

To the minister: he's been dragging his heels on a full investigation, a forensic audit that needs to occur immediately. To the minister: why is he dragging his feet on a forensic audit? Is he afraid of what will be found out? Does he know of things that occurred that were improper? Why does he not call for a forensic audit today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, there have been ongoing dialogue and discussions with the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker. And I'm happy to report today that the Provincial Auditor has concurred that a financial audit of St. Peter's College should occur immediately. In fact we have written confirmation of co-operation from St. Peter's College. And, Mr. Speaker, what we have from the Provincial Auditor is that he has said the securing of a public accounting firm to do this audit is appropriate and sufficient and may in fact be more timely than having his office actually undertake this audit, Mr. Speaker.

Regarding the notion of federalism, Mr. Speaker, what's vitally important here when we think about the KIP initiative, Mr. Speaker, and that is, the institutions — and this is important for

the public record — the institutions were asked by the federal government to submit their application directly to them, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we worked co-operatively with the federal government to ensure that we could maximize those dollars here in Saskatchewan to the benefit of post-secondary students right here in the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Oh, he maximized dollars for his pet project, \$60,000 per student; when it comes to SIAST, \$1,300. A bit of an imbalance there, Mr. Speaker. The minister didn't just dump millions into the merging colleges in July 2009, he also poured money in five months earlier as part of a \$26 million announcement. This was all part of his grand plan, Mr. Speaker. He appointed a merger-friendly board. He approved a joint CEO [chief executive officer]. He had a representative on the transition board and he ignored concerns and plowed straight ahead.

Now we have a merger that has failed, seven people that have been fired, accusations that abound, and a minister that won't take responsibility for his actions. The people of Saskatchewan do not have confidence in this minister to oversee the post-secondary education system in the province. Curious that in his comments, Mr. Speaker, he does not talk about timelines for this forensic audit that is to occur at St. Peter's. Will the minister clearly state the timelines for this forensic audit and when the results will be revealed?

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — As we've said, Mr. Speaker, we feel that this should be done in a timely fashion. We have agreed that they have our full co-operation, Mr. Speaker, our full co-operation.

But as far as a grand plan, Mr. Speaker, as far as a grand plan, there was a grand plan, and that grand plan was to make sure that medical students in the province of Saskatchewan didn't see their college on probation and that the rest of the people of this province didn't lose the College of Medicine, Mr. Speaker. That's why, in addition to moving forward with new residency seats and with moving forward with new doctor seats and new nursing seats, Mr. Speaker, we're actually seeing real construction, Mr. Speaker, on the College of Medicine to ensure that never again does it fall into the disrepair that the NDP allowed it to.

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

**Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I had delivered to the Minister of Justice a letter giving him notice of questions I was going to ask today concerning administration of justice in the province. I would've just sent an email but we know that that can take months to get to a cabinet minister.

So my first question's to the Minister of Justice: has he received one or two or more referrals from the Minister of Advanced Education regarding the Carlton Trail merger? When did he

receive them? And what matters were referred to him?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to answer the question. And I'd like to thank the member opposite for providing us with a written list of the questions, and I'm hoping that that's something that his colleagues over there will fall in line with. I think it's a nice practice, and we appreciate the accommodation.

Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite is aware, the Ministry of Justice provides legal services to all other aspects of government. Every ministry has got legal counsel assigned to it to assist them in matters that they have.

The Ministry of Advanced Education contracted with Meyers Norris Penny to prepare a report on the feasibility of a merger between Carlton Trail and St. Peter's College. Mr. Speaker, I can advise the members opposite that that report or the information that was requested was directly from Meyers Norris Penny to Ministry of Justice lawyers. It did not flow through my hands, nor did it flow through the hands of the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration. Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many pieces of correspondence went through, but I understand the correspondence is continuing to flow back and forth at the present time.

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

**Mr. Quennell:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, another lesson in what this government considers to be ministerial responsibility for their departments.

Second question to the Minister of Justice: Mr. Kobussen appeared eligible in 2010 to receive a tax credit of \$558 on a \$1,000 donation paid in 2009, with public money, to the Saskatchewan Party. Is this one of the matters that has been referred to the Minister of Justice by the Minister of Advanced Education?

[14:15]

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I can advise the member opposite that nothing was referred to by the minister. The officials within his ministry may have forwarded information; so has Meyers Norris Penny. And as well, information could have been provided or requested from Deloitte who is involved in this matter as well.

Mr. Speaker, what I can advise the members opposite was that in September of 2009, Mr. Kobussen forwarded a cheque for a membership in the Enterprise Club for the year 2010. Because this is a membership in a club, there's a progressive amount that's available because some of it is for meals; some of it is for the membership cost; some of it is a donation. The receipt for that was issued to Mr. Kobussen in early 2011, as it would in the ordinary and usual course of any other member of the membership club.

Mr. Speaker, it has become apparent that the monies came from another party. The monies have in fact been returned by the Saskatchewan Party to St. Peter's College. Mr. Speaker, we have as well advised Mr. Kobussen he cannot use that tax receipt.

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

**Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Justice: there is a donation to a political party that is made with public dollars; there may be a tax credit paid to an individual on at least one donation to a political party that was made with public dollars; and there are allegations of double charging for mileage, a 52-inch TV purchased by St. Peter's that is unaccounted for, and a \$60,000 increase in Carlton Trail's operating grant going to St. Peter's without proper documentation.

In light of a donation to the governing party with public funds, the eligibility for a tax credit which is not yet accounted for, and the political nature of all these issues, will the matters referred to the Minister of Justice be reviewed by Crown prosecutors from outside the province of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the matter is under investigation by the various parties that are involved in this. If there is any issue that there is any potential misconduct by any member of this government or anybody that's closely tied to this government, this will absolutely be referred out of the province, as it would have been by that member opposite when he was the minister. And I believe that was his practice and it will be the practice of this government, to ensure that things are investigated in a clear, open, and transparent manner, Mr. Speaker. That is absolutely the practice of this government and will continue to be so, Mr. Speaker. And I would expect nothing less from the members opposite.

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

### Housing Announcement

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, I'd like to read from a press release that's dated March 24, 2011, and it reads: "The government announced today a new program called 'Headstart on a Home' to help . . ." Sorry, Mr. Speaker, this is actually from March 24, 2010. Sorry, Mr. Speaker. Well here we are, March 28, 2011 — 2011, a year later — and it quotes the minister as saying, these five new, five new measures will help the housing shortage. The first of the new measures is the Headstart on a Home.

To the minister: why announce these earth-shaking new projects after the budget, when you didn't even put enough money in the budget in the first place? Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise in

the House today to talk about the Headstart program and the other five initiatives that we talked about today. Mr. Speaker, Headstart has been discussed with the federal government for just about a year now to make sure that we meet all the regulations and that we can agree on a program that will work.

Today as the government, we announced \$252 million for home ownership and rental property. This is going to get 4,600 . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. If the members want to lose the time of question period, continue to interfere with the minister's response. I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, the money that we announced today, the \$252 million, will allow 4,600 new homeowners . . . [inaudible] . . . Mr. Speaker, the \$200 million that we're talking about came from the Immigrant Investor Fund. And they talked about it over a year ago. We've been making arrangements with the federal government and today we're announcing it. And I can assure you people in this province are delighted.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, consultation is a quirky thing for this government. We saw last year the wildlife habitat fiasco, and the minister lost her job over that. And here we're in the middle of stakeholder consultations, and now we have a document in hand which promises a snake oil cure to everything that ails the housing crisis here in Saskatchewan.

To the minister: why waste the time of stakeholders and the people that have been invited to the summit when it's obvious she thinks she has all the answers?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the number of people that have been going to the consultation meetings right across the province are very encouraged by the fact that not only do they have a voice there and at the summit, but there is a long-term plan that we'll have in place at the end of June.

But in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, we have five initiatives that we know will be helping the people of the province. We have Headstart on a Home. That will mean 1,000 new units, and it's going to be \$200 million. We have the affordable home ownership, which will be 600 units, which is about \$3 million. We have the rental construction initiative, which is another 2,900 units. We have \$34 million in money that was announced through Sask Housing and more money for Habitat for Humanity. All those initiatives can work in with the plan that we have as government, part of the long-term plan, and we're looking forward to talking to the municipalities about it.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr.

Speaker, the issue we're debating today is all about how people are going to make ends meet. And you know, as we approach the end of this month, people are thinking, how are they going to pay the rent? How are they putting gas in their tanks? And all these issues about food going up on April 1st, they're all coming together. That's what we're really talking about.

So I want to ask this minister: when will she drop the government, the party line, and develop a real housing strategy that includes next generation rent controls? Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, I knew the member opposite would get around to the word of rent control. There is nobody except the 20 members opposite that believe that's going to work. What has to work is making sure that we have new housing units. We now have 112 . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — We know that what we need is to increase the number of units we have in the province. That's why we're working with municipalities and developers and with city councils. I had an opportunity this morning to talk about it, and there was an absolute delight knowing that the government could look at their responsibility on the housing continuum and do some work. At the same time, we must work with our stakeholders to make sure that there are housing developments right across the province.

Mr. Speaker, there's more work to be done. This is part of the plan. There is more of a plan out there when we develop it with the stakeholders, and I'll be delighted to announce that plan at the end of June.

**The Speaker:** — Order.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

### Housing Plan

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to introduce a plan that will take our government another step . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I'd ask the members to come to order. And I believe the minister didn't even have a chance to let us know what her ministerial statement was. And there was an announcement this morning that I'm aware of, so I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to rise in the House today to introduce the plan that will

take our government another step down the road to overcoming the challenges in housing. The Saskatchewan advantage housing plan is a five-point action plan that will help create a housing market that matches the demands of a growing economy and a growing population. It builds on our government's actions since November of 2007, and it will complement our discussions with stakeholders in the industry and how we go forward in the future.

Mr. Speaker, our province is projected by most major economic forecasters to lead the nation in growth over the next two years. This growth gives our province a distinct Saskatchewan advantage. We also know that with growth comes challenges. Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, we can afford to make significant investments where we know the need is the greatest.

Mr. Speaker, the five housing initiatives outlined in the Saskatchewan advantage housing plan will add over 4,600 new housing units over the next five years in entry-level and rental housing. The first program with the details is called Headstart on a Home. Headstart will help eligible first-time home buyers achieve home ownership, thereby making more rental housing stock available across . . .

[Interjections]

**An Hon. Member:** — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I'd ask the member to state his point of order.

#### POINT OF ORDER

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Speaker, I have in my hand today a press release dated March 24th, 2010 in which this program was announced over one year ago. Mr. Speaker, in order to be a ministerial statement, it has to have been relevant and it has to have been this the first opportunity to raise in the House. Mr. Speaker, I can provide you with the government's news release, Mr. Speaker, of over one year ago. This is abuse of ministerial responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister has risen today to outline and put in specifics as to what the new housing strategy is, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, the program name is similar to the one from last year, but the details are completely new. All of the projects, Mr. Speaker, that the minister has announced this morning and is trying to announce to this House at present time, Mr. Speaker, are new projects, new programs for the future, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I've listened to the point of order. I've listened to the response from the Government House Leader. I've also heard about the announcement that was made this morning. I believe the minister has the responsibility or the opportunity to make her ministerial statement. I will review the point of order for the details and specifics.

Minister of Social Services.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

##### Housing Plan (continued)

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, Headstart will help eligible first-time home buyers achieve home ownership, thereby making more rental housing available across the province. At least 1,000 new entry-level homes will be built in Saskatchewan over the next five years. As part of this program, and the details I am announcing right now, loans will be provided to developers for 90 per cent of construction costs for the construction of new or redeveloped housing projects. This is almost 200 million over five years will be made available for these low-interest loans.

Mr. Speaker, the second part of our plan is the affordable home ownership plan. This program will engage municipalities and prospective homeowners to provide another avenue for increasing the supply of entry-level home ownership opportunities. The province will reimburse participating municipalities an amount equivalent to the education portion of property tax for five years to a maximum of \$5,000. Over five years, it is expected that this program will be able to deliver 600 home ownership opportunities in municipalities right across the province.

Mr. Speaker, the third program applies to rental construction. The rental construction incentive is designed to help municipalities and developers create new rental home units and increase the opportunities for low-income people to find safe and affordable housing. This . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

[14:30]

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, the rental construction incentive is designed to help municipalities and developers create new rental home units and increase the opportunities for low-income people to find safe, affordable housing. This program provides participating municipalities a provincial grant of up to \$5,000 to match municipal grants or incentives for developers for each eligible new rental unit constructed.

Mr. Speaker, over the five years of this program, it is expected to yield approximately 2,900 new rental units. Mr. Speaker, to complete the rental construction incentive, our government has invested 34 million to develop more affordable housing units. This money will support new units in communities with long-term housing needs. In addition, some of it is earmarked for rehabilitating homes and rental units that otherwise would have been lost. Mr. Speaker, we are renewing and expanding our partnership with Habitat for Humanity. Over the last two years, the province has provided \$2 million to help . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Someone's speaking about . . . Order. I hear someone speaking about a mockery of this place.

Well I think members themselves are the ones who police it, and the opposition has been continually interfering and not allowing the minister to make her ministerial statement. The opposition will have the opportunity to respond to that statement.

I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, over the last two years the province has provided \$2 million to help Habitat for Humanity assist 40 families to achieve the dream of home ownership. During that time, cities across the province have benefited from the investment. There's new homes either built or being built in places like Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Lloydminster, and Yorkton.

This year our government is expanding its commitment. A total of \$1.5 million will be provided to give another 30 families the opportunity to build a better future by literally helping them build their own home.

Mr. Speaker, this five-point plan is only part of our efforts. We are currently conducting extensive consultations with stakeholders right across the province. These consultations will be used to create a comprehensive, longer term strategy for housing. Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what the Saskatchewan advantage is made of — having a government that works hard to overcome the obstacles to growth and having citizens who aren't afraid of a challenge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the embarrassment continues for this government, for something that was thrown together obviously over the weekend. And we take a look at this propaganda that was coming out last week, not a mention of this, not a mention at all in this brochure that was coming out from the government. Not a word, not a word and all of a sudden they realize, they realize that they missed it. They missed it.

This is like déjà vu all over again from 2008 when we had the Merriman-Pringle report the day before, the day before the budget that year when they realized they hadn't done a thing about housing in the budget and they needed to do something. So the day before the budget they called together this consultation process with Mr. Merriman and Mr. Pringle to put something together to get them out of a jam because once again they are in a jam.

And ironically, like déjà vu all over again, they're going to release at the end of June, they are going to release at the end of June that year. They're going to do the same thing this year. This is when we were expecting . . . And look at the minister's outrage. And we see this game over and over and over and over again.

We saw it last December with the child welfare review. It should have been released during the session but it was released the week before Christmas, the week before Christmas. I cannot believe this. This is an embarrassment, an embarrassment for this minister and for this government.

You know, I asked the questions about consultations, about how this government performs their consultations. They go out and they get their stakeholders together and they say we really want to hear what you say. We really want to hear what you say but not really, not really, not really, you know, because we hear the consultation . . . the pre-consultation meetings are tomorrow in Swift Current, the city with the longest waiting lists for Sask Housing, the city with the longest waiting list. They're not waiting, they're not waiting to hear what the folks in Swift Current have to say.

And, you know, while I have the floor, Mr. Speaker, you know, I have to remark about how this minister has politicized things. You know, I was disinvited. I got a phone call from Sask Housing a couple of Fridays ago to say — now they used my name, but I'll say the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Saskatoon Centre — we don't really want to see you come to the meeting in Saskatoon. We really don't want to see you come to the meeting.

You know, this government used to be open and transparent, used to be open and transparent, but I've never had a phone call from the government saying please don't come, we don't think we'd like to see you there. And I think it's that minister there, that minister who's pulling the strings.

You know when they did the big thing about the CBO summit, when they did the big thing about the CBO summits, I was welcome. I was welcome and I was introduced at every one. And the minister . . . or the member from Yorkton will know that, he was a legislative secretary for the CBO summit. He knew why I came and it worked out really well.

But this minister decided to politicize this and say don't come, no MLAs coming. And particularly the member from Saskatoon Centre, we don't want to see you there. We don't want to see you there. In fact, we really don't care if anybody comes because we got our mind made up. We got our mind made up or where our mind's made up is that we're not going to be embarrassed. But I got to tell you, people can see through this really quickly, really quickly.

The math is something else — \$250 million? How does that add up? How does that really add up? You know? That's incredible because we know that 200 million is . . . Apparently this program, Headstart, and today she's saying it's brand new, brand new, but it's not. The former minister announced a year ago and said that we'd hear in a few . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I've been listening very closely and the member has been fairly wide- and broad-ranging in his comments. But also, also, also . . . Order. Order. The members are also aware, and a number of the members on the opposition side were in government when the rules were changed. And the rules were, it was brought to member's attention that the response was to be no longer than the ministerial statement. The ministerial statement was three minutes and fifty-five seconds. We're now at four, thirteen. Three minutes, fifty-five; we're now at four, thirteen.

We'll move on to the next order of business. Order. Why is the

member from Saskatoon Massey Place on his feet?

**Mr. Broten:** — To ask leave to move a motion under Rule 59.

**The Speaker:** — The member may state his arguments to ask leave for under rule 59.

### MOTION UNDER RULE 59

#### Audit of Colleges

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the comments made by the minister that a forensic audit of St. Peter's College and Carlton Trail Regional College is completely appropriate, but given the fact that the minister provided no details with respect to mandate and no details with respect to timeline to ensure that the findings are reported in a timely manner, I move the following motion:

That this Assembly mandate the Provincial Auditor to immediately conduct a special investigation and forensic audit of the governance, financial management, and leadership of Carlton Trail Regional College and St. Peter's College for the period covering January 1, 2009 to present; direct the government to provide the auditor sufficient resources and authority to complete the investigation and audit and table a report with this Assembly no later than May 12, 2011; and further to accomplish these goals, empower the Provincial Auditor to extend his investigation to the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration, the office of the minister and to the minister himself, the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Saskatoon Greystone.

With that motion, Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave.

**The Speaker:** — The member has asked for leave to move a motion under rule 59. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has not been granted.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 898 through 950.

**The Speaker:** — Questions 898 through 950 are tabled.

### SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

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

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Wotherspoon.]

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

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well yet again it's a pleasure to stand up in this Assembly to take part in the budget debate, another historic budget by the Saskatchewan Party government.

But as always, before I begin, I want to take some time to extend my gratitude and my thanks to my lovely wife, Charlene, and our daughters Alyssa and Mackenzie who are without a father most of the time because of my responsibility as an MLA and as a minister. And you know, she keeps my family in check and makes sure the girls get to volleyball practice and to basketball and to other things. She's a very strong lady who is always there to ensure that the girls have a strong parent at home and a presence. And when I come home, I'm always told I shouldn't mess up with the rules, everything's functioning well. Just come in, do my thing, and go back to Regina and work. And that's how we seem to get along. So I want to thank her and my girls for supporting me all throughout this adventure.

This is an adventure, Mr. Speaker, because every year as we see what happens in our province — the changing population numbers, the amount of foreign investment, the economic indicators always showing that we are either leading or in second place, or will lead in the future — it's great to be in this province at this time.

I look to my daughters for their future. I think that everyone of us on either side of the House will acknowledge the fact that we did this, we get involved, we do this job to leave this province hopefully better than when we found it, especially when we have the privilege to form on the government side and to bring policies in place and to put together historic budgets year after year that are showing a debt reduction, lowering taxes, and improving the quality of life for all the people in this province. So that's an important factor when we this year name this the Saskatchewan advantage.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's one of these kind of budgets where if you look at the minutiae of the budget, the details, the fine details across this great province of ours, everybody will benefit from this budget, Mr. Speaker. We talk first of all about the lowering of taxes, where we see a family of four now has to make \$45,550 before they're having tax implications on their dollars earned, which means more taxes saved, which means more dollars in their pocket, which means more dollars for them to spend on their families, their children, their personal recreation, or to purchase goods and services in the province. And the cycle continues again, Mr. Speaker, where the Saskatchewan advantage is at play where people are earning more income as well now. And that's a strong signal going forward where we've seen our population increase over the last four years where now we're at the record high of just over 1.05 million. So that's the highest it's been ever in this province.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that what I would like to do is talk about some of the other advantages of *The Saskatchewan Advantage* budget, the fact that it's balanced yet again on the summary and the General Revenue Fund, Mr. Speaker. So that's another important . . . moving forward.

I look again at my daughters and how this government and how our Premier and how our Finance minister has taken us now — and the previous Finance minister, the member from Melfort who did a great job in letting this province reach its potential where we are today — but I look at my daughters' future and think that our best days are still ahead, Mr. Speaker. It's because of their commitment that they want to stay in the province. They want to take post-secondary education in our province. They may travel a bit. They want to come home and they want to start their families here and that's always a positive. And it's one of those things we're seeing more people do that, Mr. Speaker, where more people want to stay in this province or want to return. And that's important.

We're bringing immigrants in like no other time before to fill jobs that have been posted for a number of months, but the expertise is around the world. And I want to give credit to the minister involved with immigration because of his work and the work of his ministry, that we're seeing barriers reducing the time lag to get into the province to work.

Great relationships with the industrial sector, with the business sector in our province who are finding that internally there are people, to be sure, for these jobs, but they're also finding expertise and skill sets outside of the province. It's great to have those new citizens not just in our country but our province, Mr. Speaker.

The next factor I want to talk about is, because of the fact we've been able to keep our promises as a government, we have now fulfilled the one point of PST [provincial sales tax] and revenue sharing to all of the municipalities through the rural, urban, and the village sector, resort villages, and the North as well, Mr. Speaker. And that's an important staple now because these leaders can now see this guaranteed funding coming to them. And as I stated to the sector on the day of the budget, if projections remain the same, because of the growth in the province and the PST numbers increasing, there is a very, very strong likelihood that we will see those numbers again increase for the municipalities and across this province so they can guarantee on more revenue sharing next year, Mr. Speaker, to be shared amongst the pools. So that's one of those factors where, as we see our municipal sectors, our partners establishing budgets now, we're seeing that that one point of PST is allowing them across the province to keep their taxes low.

[14:45]

They do see a need for some other tax increases. And in my city of Prince Albert, it's deemed to be, what would be a reasonable tax increase to address concerns they have because their population's growing? Their infrastructure demands are higher than they ever were before in this province, and they're using some of those infrastructure . . . the revenue-sharing dollars to offset those costs to the tax base. I know my city manager and my mayor have talked about that, and they're very happy with

the increase to \$6.4 million this year, Mr. Speaker. So that's great that I'm able to provide that to my city but also to have the honour and privilege to be minister and serve the Crown and serve the people and to provide those revenue-sharing dollars across the province.

The education portion of property tax was a promise that we made, and we've kept it now, Mr. Speaker, in this budget. We're seeing the agriculture sector seeing an 80 per cent reduction. We're seeing residential reductions by 29 per cent. And the commercial base has also seen reductions as well in this, what I believe is a historic way to look at how we're going to fund education moving forward, Mr. Speaker. And on those notes, we've heard from the representation from the SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] sector that they're very happy with the revenue-sharing piece but the education portion of property tax piece as well. It's one of those promises we made, and now we've kept it in this budget, Mr. Speaker, fully.

I think it's the time that I start talking a little more about the budget implications for my city. I think it's been great that, as a previous minister in charge of Policing and now with the new minister in charge of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, we see the fulfillment of our 120 police officers as made as a promise in our election campaign platform.

What's important that I recognize that, you know, over the years the previous government tried. They kept making the promise year after year and through two election cycles. But I had the honour of being on the provincial board of Federation of Police Officers, and I was able to find out that, through research, that sadly they were unable to keep their commitment to the people of this province.

So as a government forming a campaign platform, the promise of 120 new police officers was one of those kind of commitments that was critical, as we saw and we believed the province would grow in population. We also recognized that there was a demand placed on the police agencies, local and RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], to ensure that we have a quality of life that also ensures prevention of crime, apprehension of criminals, and safety in general for our people. And in this budget we are making that commitment of 120 police officers.

So I'm sure that my city will see more additional police officers. To date we've funded 11 police officers under the Saskatchewan Party government, which is a lot larger number than were ever funded by the NDP government, Mr. Speaker. And those are targeted at specific units that are in fact making a difference not just in Prince Albert but the North as well.

As some members will recall, I had the honour of introducing my chief, Chief McFee from Prince Albert Police Service. And he's got a vision. He's been a leader since his days on patrol, Mr. Speaker. And he's been able to develop a good relationship with the RCMP officers in and around Prince Albert, and they're doing a lot of joint task force missions and operations together. So I want to thank the Minister of Policing for his promise this year to maintain that commitment of 120 full officers in this year's budget.



The next critical piece I want to talk about is education. As a government we were able to fund numerous small infrastructure pieces, capital improvement projects in Prince Albert and area, roof replacements and other such things. We were also able to fund St. Anne School. So that completion of that project, I understand, will be coming forth here in the next couple of months, with students arriving within or I think before the school year is finished. So I know that's a critical piece for the West Hill area of town to have a brand new school. And a school, Mr. Speaker, that although promised and talked about by the previous government for many years, they never cut the cheque. For whatever reason, never cut the cheque. And we're able to do that as a new government, and we're seeing that school come to fruition.

And I'm also able in this budget to talk about the Carlton High School that my daughters attend. They've been asking for another gymnasium because they have the largest student population enrolment in the province for a high school. And in this year's budget we're able to provide money for that project to go forward, so that's excellent.

I've been blessed because my daughters have played high school sports at a very high level, and I know there's lots of students in Carlton High School that . . . The teachers need to be acknowledged and the extra-curricular coaches, because no student is turned away from a sporting opportunity at Carlton High School. But this new gym will give more opportunity for more students to play more often, which is important, as opposed to maybe doing some of the activities over lunch hour and maybe in the evenings for practices. It'll be one of those facilities that's long overdue, and I'm very proud that our government's been able to bring that to Prince Albert.

You know, the next thing I want to talk about in the province, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the last three and a half years moving into this budget cycle, was level of foreign investment. Our Premier said many times after the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan-BHP takeover scenario, story, that the province is still open for foreign investment.

And what we saw in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, is a dormant pulp mill that was closed for a number of years, but more recently three foreign companies were bidding on that site, Mr. Speaker. And we have a successful bidder of Paper Excellence with foreign ownership, subsequent to the fact that they have a Canadian office. But we're seeing that that's critical because we have no taxpayers' dollars at risk on that venture, Mr. Speaker. So that's also going to be one of those cases moving forward where we get to actually see an operation that should have been looked at many years ago with power generation on-site sold back to the grid, Mr. Speaker, which is in great demand.

Our province has a booming population. The industrial sector requires more power on grid as well, and I say we're able to, again through the Minister Responsible for SaskPower, to take a leadership role with the Minister of Energy and Resources to ensure that we had the right people at the table at the right time to ensure that when a deal was made that it wouldn't be mothballed. It didn't involve taxpayers' dollars to be wasted on a potential investment. And we're providing a service now to the province that's long overdue, Mr. Speaker.

I know the people of Prince Albert are very happy that the mill will be opened. And I met with the CEO, Mr. Roste, last week in Prince Albert and he was very happy to report that they're looking at hiring people immediately to fulfill some management positions because they want to get the operation up and running sooner than later. And that's positive.

I also had the opportunity to talk to a high school friend of mine, the president of the local union in Prince Albert, the day we made the announcement and he was very happy that we were able to make this announcement. I invited him to come to the announcement and he had said to me over the phone that, we'll let you have this moment but we will definitely be commenting, as they did, as the national union did as well, that they are very happy that there is a return to the site.

By their own acknowledgement they recognize that these are new jobs, new technology, and that although there are a little less than what was there before, the union does recognize the paper operation was shutting down under Domtar. And what we see now is that we're going to have about the same number of folks coming into work at the site as would have been without the paper mill.

And let's talk about the new, the investment from the foreign company which means that . . . Over \$200 million means there were be a lot of women and men coming to Prince Albert to get the mill fired up again, to renew the infrastructure on-site, which means that the people of the province and the people of Prince Albert, the local businesses will benefit as well. That's a great news story.

So I also want to talk about what we've seen around Prince Albert just in the last two weeks, three weeks. The twinning of Highway No. 11 under the Minister of Highway's leadership and direction is taking great strides. If you were around PA [Prince Albert] over the last couple weeks, you notice that they have equipment working in the treelines, mulching up the trees and the ground, getting it prepped for the actual level of aggregate that will be used for the roadbed.

We saw around the Maccowall area, mountains of aggregate again being delivered over the winter which will be utilized this spring as they develop the twinning of No. 11 Highway which will be done . . . I'm understanding if the weather stays within reason, September 2012 will see the completion of that highway, twinned all the way to Saskatoon which is yet again the Saskatchewan advantage.

We'll see goods and services transported back and forth. We'll see families going back in a safe manner on a Sunday night or a Monday night after a long weekend to Saskatoon and points south, or coming north as the weekend starts to go camping and enjoying our great lakes and our great tourism infrastructure we have up around Prince Albert and area and points north of that, Mr. Speaker.

One factor that was talked about in the budget — the Minister of Health is to be commended for this — was the funding, the implementation of the STARS [shock trauma air rescue service] air ambulance program. I think that . . . I had the privilege as the minister involved with public safety to attend a fundraising event in Calgary three years ago at the invitation of the STARS

[Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] people foundation. And you know, the service is one of those kind of services, as you see a population increasing with the level of traffic and issues across our province in the industrial sector, in the farming communities, where this is a system that's going to augment the current land-based road ambulance service.

And we're going to be able to see that when there's serious trauma involved here, that we're going to see these people receive that immediate care, trauma centre type care in a platform of rotary-winged, rotary air ambulance system. And that's going to bring a stability to this province where we're going to see people very happy I believe, very thankful when the . . . And hopefully they never have to use the service, Mr. Speaker. We all hope that no one has to use that service. But because it's in the province, will be in the province, it'll be there and hopefully that people will see it as saving lives and being an advantage — again a Saskatchewan, another part of the Saskatchewan advantage.

I mentioned earlier in my comments, Mr. Speaker, that we have the foundation of lowering debt, lowering taxes, and improving quality of life. That lowering debt is something that I know every one of us, I think on both sides of this House, would believe is an important factor. That, as we look at our own personal debt, we want to lower it as fast as we can for other means, to maybe fund our kids' education or to get ourselves ready for retirement. And we've been able to, over the cycle of this government, over three and a half years — a short time I'd have to add, Mr. Speaker — we've been able to reduce the debt down to \$3.8 billion. This year alone, another \$325 million put on the debt.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker, that . . . And we're projecting in the out years, the budget to be balanced as well. And I'm sure as we see this province repeating the Saskatchewan advantage over and over again by the great leadership of the government MLAs and our Premier, that we will see more surplus budgets. And we're hopeful that of course that does happen, which indicates we'll see more reduction in debt, which means that . . . Again I turn to my daughters' future, and that is the Saskatchewan advantage for them. Alyssa, my oldest, will be going to university in another year from now, and Mackenzie soon to follow. So we'll have a lot of opportunity for their future where their tax dollars will be spent and any surplus budgets coming forward will allow for them to still benefit from the Saskatchewan advantage because of the hard work the Minister of Finance has been doing to pay off the debt in this province, and the previous minister was as well, the member from Melfort. So that's a very critical part as well, Mr. Speaker.

You know, the infrastructure around Prince Albert has been benefiting from the previous budgets as well as this one. I look to the Green Energy Park just outside the airport where we have a sod turning will be taking place and there'll be . . . Development will start in the spring of this year for a component around that area where the Government of Saskatchewan has been able to contribute money to the city of Prince Albert to develop the Green Energy Park, which is critical.

And I want to also add that that's an interesting hub piece

where the airport in Prince Albert has received substantial increases in funding and infrastructure work on behalf of the federal government, who is responsible for the scheduled air service airports like Prince Albert. But it was the hard lobbying by the Premier and the member from Sask Rivers and myself to our Member of Parliament, who has taken the message back and has delivered on that request to provide infrastructure dollars to improve the airport. And that's going to go on. I mean even the mayor of Prince Albert took a leadership role involving the funding of — future funding, I believe — for terminal improvements and other issues out there by imposing a tax or a charge on each ticket.

The airport has got busy traffic. I have been privileged to, as a minister, an MLA, to fly into the airport with the great service provided by Executive Air. And it's many times where as you fly in, you're waiting for the big planes to come in who are dropping off and picking up mine workers on a regular basis in Prince Albert. So the airport is very well utilized. And I want to thank the Member of Parliament, Randy Hoback, for his work on that. So as a government we committed to improving the airport infrastructure and improvements, and we've done that through lobbying the federal government, which is important.

We've also improved infrastructure by funding partially the green energy park for the city of Prince Albert. And like I said before, Mr. Speaker, we'll see that starting up here in the spring of 2011. And that'll be tied to, I believe, developments with the pulp mill and the forestry sector in general because those particular start-ups will have interest from the green energy park developers as they move forward.

We're going to see a lot of opportunity, new dollars again for new companies coming into Prince Albert. And my city will do very well, I believe, moving on as part of the Saskatchewan advantage, Mr. Speaker.

The other part that is critical I think, as we look at the demands placed on the province in general, I mean we see a huge amount of infrastructure dollars being put into education, health, and highways. Municipal sectors are benefiting from these dollars for health and safety, water, waste water. But in total over the four years of government, we'll see about a \$4 billion increase in infrastructure dollars coming in on projects and such, Mr. Speaker. So I think that overall that's imperative to look at that number.

You know, we see that driven by the growth of this province where we see various companies coming in. We see population growth, like I've stated, and we need these dollars to improve the quality of health and safety for our individuals in the province. And that's very critical moving forward.

I also want to say that the current infrastructure pieces that are in place see funding going up through and finishing on 2014, Mr. Speaker, with a strong component from the federal gas tax as part of that, letting municipalities budget and use those dollars for infrastructure as they see fit. So as a great partnership moving forward, the federal Conservative government and the Saskatchewan Party government, along with our municipal sectors of partners, have also provided dollars as we move forward to — and I hate to say it — but after 16 long years, improve the deficit that this province has

had and the infrastructure of so many different venues, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

So you know what, Mr. Speaker? I see my time has come to the end right about now. I just want to close off by saying that again *The Saskatchewan Advantage* budget is one that I believe will secure the future for my daughters, will see this province move forward, will see additional investment dollars coming forward from foreign investors, and will provide a stable platform for our country to look at to see a province that was a have-not province to be a have province in a very short time frame, Mr. Speaker, because of the positive outlook that we have.

So as I take my seat, Mr. Speaker, I just want to close off by saying that I will not be supporting the amendment, but I will be supporting the budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm delighted to follow my colleague from Prince Albert. He's very articulate and passionate about his family and all families right across our province and for good reason. Today marks another good day for the people of this province, and especially when we start to talk about why this budget serves not just the interests of today but also for many bright tomorrows.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start by paying a special thanks to our Premier. Whether he is working locally, whether he is recognized globally, whether he's on the national stage, you know, Mr. Speaker, he is seen as one of the foremost statesmen in our country, a proud representative of the people of this province. And people respond very, very positively to his message of optimism and growth and moving the province forward. And so it's a special thanks that all of us on this side of the House owe to our Premier for his tireless efforts in making sure that we stay focused on ensuring that we're working on the priorities of the people of this province.

To that end, I'd also like to add, and be remiss obviously if I didn't, thank our Minister of Finance. He worked tirelessly during the Treasury Board deliberations to ensure that top priorities were kept top of mind. And to all Treasury Board members, it was a special pleasure to serve with them during this year and obviously last. And in reference to last year, I'd like to pay special tribute to our former Finance minister. He worked very hard over his years at Finance to ensure that we were in a position to be able to move forward in a way that we are today.

I'd be remiss of course if I didn't extend that thanks to key members of my family, to my wife, Martha, to our daughter Jacqueline who today is writing a test. She was studying all weekend. She was worried about her test, so I hope that's going very well. And then she's off to the orthodontist. She's facing some of the challenges that other 11-year-olds face, and she does that with a spirit of optimism and bounce in her step, and it keeps all of us going.

To all members of my family, I'd be remiss if I didn't say thank you to them on this occasion. Most especially to the citizens of Saskatoon Greystone, a special thanks for the honour and opportunity to represent the interests of this wonderful constituency, a diverse, dynamic, and cosmopolitan constituency. And so a special thanks to everyone in Greystone.

As it relates, Mr. Speaker, to the budget, we're especially, I think, pleased to be able to talk about five or six key general priorities that I think resonate and make sense to the people of this province. First and foremost, I would like to make specific reference to this balanced budget, and that is a GRF [General Revenue Fund] pre-transfer surplus where revenue exceeds expenses as well as summary financial statement that has a surplus of more than \$50 million.

And we can quote one of the journalists, distinguished journalist from CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] who offered a couple of quotes on budget day. And I'll just quote specifically, "Well for one thing, it's a real balanced budget." And the second quote, "This is a real balanced budget. Even the auditor would agree with that." And I think that's important to make reference, especially when we sometimes hear members opposite questioning that. This is a balanced budget. It makes sense for the people of our province both for today and for future generations.

A second point that I'd like to highlight relates to key investments that this budget makes for the people of our province — our province, one of the fastest growing provinces in the country right now. Obviously projected to be a growth leader this year and well into the future. And so we can see that that Health is increasing, the investments in Health, by more than 6.2 per cent. Education — we know how important young people are and always will be to this province — an increase by more than 9 per cent. Social Services, an increase of more than 8 per cent. And of course, Agriculture, something that speaks to the very heart and essence of our province, an increase of more than 8 per cent. For the ministry that I have honour of serving, the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration, we see an increase of more than 3 per cent.

These are important, Mr. Speaker, because they recognize that the government plays a vital role within communities. That being said, we also appreciate and respect that these communities have their own sense of vitality. And we're here to support and sustain the efforts that are being made.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also highlight that debt repayment has been a vital priority, not just this year, but for this government since we've come into office. This year, we've seen the reduction of the debt by \$325 million. And the general public debt as of March 31st, 2012, will be at 3.8 billion, a decrease of \$3 billion since March 31st of 2008.

I think this makes a great deal of sense to the people of this province. And certainly I hear from people in Saskatoon Greystone saying, pay down the debt. It's like a provincial credit card; pay it down. And, Mr. Speaker, they just simply say, that way we can use the interest for investments here within the province. And we're going to continue to focus on that with a great degree of discipline and deliberation, Mr. Speaker.

Finally on a general theme — and, I think, importantly — we see taxes going down for people across this province. We see more than 110,000 people have been removed from the obligation of paying taxes. And, Mr. Speaker, I can recall when I first moved to Saskatchewan, I was a graduate student. And frankly I was surprised and shocked that graduate students were going to be placed in a position of having to pay that kind of tax. We know there's more to do with more than 110,000 people taken off the tax rolls, those people who need the breaks the most. And I think this really speaks to a very progressive social agenda, an agenda that's set on ensuring that people across the province are able to benefit from the growth that's under way.

In addition to seeing these personal and spousal exemptions as well as those made for dependent children, we also see and certainly I've received very positive feedback, again from Saskatoon Greystone as well as other ridings regarding the lowering of small business income tax rates from 4.5 to 2 per cent effective in July. And we know how important these themes are taken together — balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker, sound investments, debt repayment, and lower taxes. This is a powerful combination that will ensure that this provincial budget stands out in contrast to many others from across this country and actually across other jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, if I could, I'd shift gears now to speak a little bit about some of the specific initiatives within the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration. We know how important post-secondary is to today and for tomorrow. In fact, here in the Assembly earlier today, we had medical students from the University of Saskatchewan. And we know there's more work to do, but certainly the feedback I get is that those students and faculty members are very pleased to see the construction that's under way at last at the Academic Health Sciences building. Both wings are . . . we're seeing significant construction progress on each of those.

We can speak specifically to start with regarding the capacity to help ensure that excellence and affordability remain the watchwords for this priority in our partnerships with post-secondary education. That's why we've put forward \$24.6 million to limit tuition increases to an average in and around about 3 per cent. Obviously we respect the autonomy of the respective institutions and we work in partnership and collaboration, but that's the ballpark of what students can and should be looking for.

In addition to that, we've been able to move forward on yet another campaign promise — well over 100 of them kept, Mr. Speaker. \$3 million for the new Saskatchewan advantage scholarship. We know how important this will be. And certainly we're rolling up our sleeves, working with our post-secondary institutions and with some industry players that have already come to the table and said it's vitally important for trades to be included. And I want to make sure we applaud those individuals and entities that are putting dollars up front, applauding this initiative and saying that they want to continue to invest in Saskatchewan students as well.

In addition to this, we see \$97.8 million in support for students through a number of initiatives, and I'll highlight just a few of those. A number of initiatives including support for the Student

Aid Fund, the provincial training allowance, and a broad range of other initiatives including the provincial graduate retention program. And we know how important that is. That's a program that focuses on ensuring that as students are successful in their studies, that we encourage them to stay in Saskatchewan. And over the course of seven years that applies to those participating in and graduating from programs that range from apprenticeship programs all the way through to their undergraduate degrees. There's just a small sampling.

Now, some of the feedback that we've had within the post-secondary sector is very encouraging. It reflects and reinforces that we remain on the right track. While we know there's more to do, certainly there is considerable encouragement. From Chief Guy Lonechild: "This government has put its money where its mouth is." And to continue the quote:

This is an opportunity for us to start doing much-needed work to roll up our sleeves and start improving educational outcomes for First Nations people (including) early childhood development, K-12, and post-secondary education.

And there's just a brief snapshot. We know how much more work there is to do in partnership and in collaboration. And we applaud the efforts that Chief Lonechild's making as well as others are making, Mr. Speaker.

There are some additional quotes that I'd like to make reference to. From Robert Doucette, the president of the Métis Nation here in Saskatchewan, and recognized nationally for his good work. In fact, a few weeks ago he was at the table of the national Aboriginal organization, and did just remarkable work helping to ensure that Métis people right across the country were given voice, especially in key areas of education. And I'll just simply borrow a quote here.

"Whenever you can get increased resources to deal with the issue of education and re-education so people can enter the work force, it's a good thing for us," he said. "I'm happy with what I see."

And from a few other individuals: to draw on Richard Florizone's statement. He's the vice-president in finance at the University of Saskatchewan.

Compared to other universities around Canada and North America, it's a pretty good time to be in Saskatchewan. So universities are seeing a lot of cuts and adjustments across continents, and we're seeing good, strong support.

As well, Brett Fairbairn, who's the U of S provost, vice-president academic:

"Across the country we see other universities are suffering, but in Saskatchewan there are still positive investments," said Dr. Fairbairn. "We're fortunate to be in a province that is still investing in post-secondary education."

And one more quote:

It's a pretty good budget overall for the province, and within that we heard about some positive investments for post-secondary education and for students.

From the University of Regina, I'll draw upon the president of the students' union, Kyle Addison. He quotes generally that the budget has been positive for students. And specifically, and I quote:

"Scholarship funding is great," he said. "We'll take anything we can get. We'd like to applaud the government for actually putting more into scholarships."

And there's just a small sampling of some of the initiatives that we have. Certainly the apprenticeship component is vitally important, and with more than 9,000 people participating in the apprenticeship initiative, we've seen rapid increases over the last three to four years. And we want to applaud and continue to support that.

In addition to that, I've made reference to the continued funding regarding the Academic Health Sciences building, Mr. Speaker. And I'd also like to highlight that there is an additional \$6 million to continue the expansion of nursing and physician training programs here within the province, obviously first and foremost to ensure that people across the province have enhanced access to high-quality medical care that they know they can count on. And there's always room for improvement as well, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

We know there's more to do regarding health research. We can see that through a number of initiatives. And, Mr. Speaker, we know this because obviously there's also support for increased numbers of students, both within nursing and within doctors, as well as increasing number of residencies.

I'd like to speak specifically about an emphasis, an emphasis on First Nations and Métis peoples. Mr. Speaker, we have seen an additional \$7 million from the province for adult basic education and the provincial training allowance, targeted specifically First Nations and Métis students.

As well there's a initiative that we're going to be working with First Nations, and I hope also the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, focusing on education and employment. We're taking a key role in that. As well we've been able to put a specific focus — \$600,000 — on the apprenticeship piece to help ensure that more First Nations and Métis participants can actually succeed in their studies and then stay.

As well we've put forward \$1 million for the International Centre for Northern Governance and Development at the University of Saskatchewan. This is important as what we hear from communities in the North is they want more students not just simply studying in the North but also staying and succeeding in the North. And we know how important that is.

In fact on Friday I had an opportunity to visit both Stony Rapids and Black Lake. And I've seen some of these investments paying off, but most importantly, that these dollars are just simply helping to ensure that individuals have an opportunity to

reach their full potential. It was an inspirational day. And to the instructor, to Waldo, and to his magnificent seven students working away there at the arena, I just want to say how much I appreciated the opportunity to spend some time and share with them some of their experiences and the importance of their experiences.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that there are several other points that can and need to be highlighted here regarding immigration. We know how important immigration has become, not in isolation but as an overall strategy to help ensure that we continue to foster and facilitate the growth of more diverse, dynamic, and cosmopolitan communities.

First and foremost, as I've highlighted already through the post-secondary piece, investing in Saskatchewan students.

Secondly, inviting back expats, inviting back our expats. We know that there were tens of thousands of people that left the province under the NDP, Mr. Speaker. And since we have taken over, 45,000 people have come to Saskatchewan, either for the first time or returned to Saskatchewan. So we're hearing from families and communities, Mr. Speaker, how important that is.

We're also welcoming newcomers from across the country and around the world, and that's why we've added an additional \$1.8 million to enhance settlement services. Mr. Speaker, we anticipate that there will be between 4,000 and 4,100 nominations this year into the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program. And as a result, when we put in the families included into that nomination, into that nomination number, we anticipate that there will be 12,000 people moving to Saskatchewan in the coming year, Mr. Speaker. We know there's more to do, but this is a very significant sign.

As Tony Blair has said, Mr. Speaker, as Tony Blair has said, there's a very, very simple equation: are more people moving to a jurisdiction or moving from a jurisdiction? And from the members opposite, they were moving from the jurisdiction; under the current government, they're moving to this jurisdiction. In fact we've had a member of the opposition say, obviously people are going to go to where the jobs are, and certainly, Mr. Speaker, we see that.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there is much to do, but I would like to just highlight a few key areas of innovation. And, Mr. Speaker, through the areas of innovation, that's focusing on prosperity, a real prosperity agenda not just simply for today but for tomorrow. And that's why we're moving forward with nearly \$6 million to the international vaccine centre. Mr. Speaker, I want to give credit — sometimes I'm critical of the members opposite — I want to give credit in this instance: they started this initiative. And we wanted to make sure that we were helping to finalize this and get the international vaccine centre up and operational.

We're also moving forward with more than \$11 million in the Innovation and Science Fund, Mr. Speaker, and that's for a broad range of initiatives. As well we've seen a \$1.5 million increase to the Saskatchewan Research Council, another entity that I have the privilege of working with and helping to oversee, Mr. Speaker.

More dollars for the Canadian Light Source synchrotron. We know how vitally important that is. In fact what we've recently undertaken is key research initiatives with the Canadian Light Source synchrotron, first and foremost through the creation of a linear accelerator. I want give credit to our federal government. They came in with \$10 million; we came in with 2. We're moving forward with a linear accelerator to see if we can produce medical isotopes at the Canadian Light Source synchrotron. This will be cutting-edge research, not simply for Canadians but for all people around the world, being undertaken right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And we know how important it is.

That was then followed up by additional announcements, one regarding a cyclotron because we're moving forward with a PET [positron emission tomography] CT [computerized tomography] scan to help ensure that after years of neglect from the other side, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this province have access to a PET CT scan. As soon as we announced that, then the question is, will we be importing medical isotopes or creating them here? The answer is obvious and immediate. We want to create them here, hence moving forward with a cyclotron.

As well, Mr. Speaker, we've said we're also moving forward with a nuclear centre of excellence. We want to make sure we're focusing on nuclear medicine to help ensure health care increases here within the province for the people of our province.

Mr. Speaker, we're also moving forward on material sciences, and that's a broad range really from research in computers all the way through to cholesterol, Mr. Speaker, and we know how important that is. And added to that obviously, with our thoughts going to the people in Japan, we know how important more science is going to be in the area of nuclear research.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to highlight a few key projects within Greystone and in and around Greystone, and most especially being able to move forward with St. Matthew School, Georges Vanier School which has been on the list for years, and Holy Cross High School. Mr. Speaker, there is much good news, but it is rooted in the fundamental pillars of making sound investments within a balanced budget, paying down the debt, and lowering taxes for the people of this province. That is a recipe for success, not just for today but for the new Saskatchewan for future years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and speak to the budget as the member of Regina Lakeview. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that in my constituency, budgets are extremely important because many people are directly related to and are involved with the preparation of the budgets and then actually spending the money to provide the services to the people of Saskatchewan. And so, Mr. Speaker, it's not a distant thing that's happening. This is something that is right at the heart of what the people in Regina Lakeview and I would say Regina are concerned about.

Mr. Speaker, today we had an announcement on housing from the Minister Responsible for Housing that seems to be or is exactly the same announcement from a year ago. And the explanation that we understand was provided in the rotunda after question period is, well we've been working on it for a year. Well, Mr. Speaker, they're still working on it, as I understand it. It's not completed. I would suggest that ministerial announcements about programs should be completed before they're dealt with in this particular place. Mr. Speaker, this kind of off a piece of paper, ad hoc, sort of done at the last minute, these kinds of things are not very well done but they, more importantly, they hurt people. They hurt people who are concerned about housing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's another example of something that's not in this budget and something that's a fallout from last year's budget. That once again was a piece of paper that went out and then was denied. That was a piece of paper that went from the member from Canora-Pelly when he was the minister for Education where he said, oh you in your education districts, you're supposed to reduce the number of educational assistants. But then all of a sudden, no, that letter didn't go out. And what we have now a year later, Mr. Speaker, is over 300 educational assistants gone.

Now this affects those particular special education students, and often these educational assistants dealt with between six and fifteen people each, but more importantly it affects every student in the whole education system in the province. Mr. Speaker, that is fundamentally wrong, that these kinds of things are done once again sort of in a slapdash, poor way without an acknowledgement that that's what's being done.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we're doing now is taking a look at this budget and trying to figure out what are the things that are going to affect people as we move forward because we know there's a whole lot of flim-flam here. There's a whole bunch of surface cover that's disguising what's actually happening.

Mr. Speaker, we know that in the whole area of the arts, many people were expecting that when the economy is supposedly doing a whole lot better, that there would be some money replaced for the Arts Board or for other places. They got some fairly flatline budgets. The \$3 million that has been eliminated from this budget for the Saskatchewan Communications Network has just disappeared. It hasn't been transferred into other arts kinds of things.

Mr. Speaker, the people notice these things because they affect many, many groups, many, many people right across the province. And I give a lot of credit to our civil service who try to do the best they can with the resources they get. But, Mr. Speaker, when there's a fundamental flaw in the perspective of the Premier and the Minister of Finance about what makes a good community, then there's a fundamental flaw in the whole document that we have.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this particular budget, I think, is a dishonest budget. It's a fudge-it budget, if I can use the Minister of Finance's own words that he used a few years ago. And what I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that in 1992, in February, there was an attempt to try to sort out what kind of funny business had gone on in the end of the '90s and in '91. And in '91 as

everybody knows, we didn't even have a budget because the Premier was afraid to do it. But at that point, when people were trying to clean up the mess, they ended up preparing a report called the *Report of the Saskatchewan Financial Management Review Commission*, February 1992. And there's a whole number of recommendations in here, but the bottom one, the final one was the business of government should be open to greater public scrutiny.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that over the decades we've developed more reporting systems, more ways of getting that information out. We've got the quarterly reports, things like that. But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, in these budget documents this year, there's a whole number of issues that create risks for the public and for all the services that they received that are not fully stated in what goes on here.

Now just a simple example is that in March, a few days before the budget's released, and actually distributed at the same time as the budget is an expenditure statement of almost half a billion dollars that is sent out the door in March of 2011, prior to next year's budget. A lot of those things could have been included in this particular document, could have been done in last year's document. And, Mr. Speaker, we end up then with people playing around with the rules. And that's why I say that this whole document is fundamentally dishonest and it fudges things.

There have been all kinds of materials that have been distributed. And I know that this went out in the mail today, this bit of propaganda that came from the Minister of Finance. And in there, it talks about a balanced budget and where debt is being reduced. But when you actually read the document that the pamphlet was based on, page 60, it says very clearly:

Public debt is forecast to increase by \$375.9 million during 2010-11 and increase by an additional \$485.3 million in 2011-12.

Mr. Speaker, what is happening through this Premier and this Finance minister is that they are shifting the debt onto the Crowns exactly the same way as what the Gass Commission, the financial management commission in 1992 said. They're shifting it over to the Crowns so that they can look as if they've got some kind of handle on what's going on, looks like they're managing what's going on in the government. But in fact they're shifting debt over to another part of the government operation.

[15:30]

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that bond rating agencies, lenders, others look at when they look at the management of funds in a government, relates to how open and accountable they are in their financing and in their description of what they're doing. And, Mr. Speaker, the rules continue to evolve and change as the years go on to make sure that, as it relates to public companies that are trading on the stock exchange or other places, that the investors have accurate information on which they can base their investment choices.

Now, Mr. Speaker, part of what we tried to do when we were in government was to increase the visibility, increase the

accountability to the public for all of these things so that it would be clear what kinds of commitments were being made in each year by the government which would then have to be paid for by the citizens of the province and in many cases more likely the children or grandchildren of the citizens of the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, one of the newer concepts that's coming up in the accounting business — and now I'm going to quote from the Certified General Accountants' magazine dated March-April 2011 — is a description of hedge accounting. And basically this is the International Accounting Standards Board, has begun the process of looking at hedge accounting and making sure that those concepts are tied together with risk management.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that it's important that these concepts be used as we look at these budget documents because, Mr. Speaker, there are risks taken. There are hedges made. There are things that are done in this particular budget which have not been fully disclosed.

Mr. Speaker, we've asked questions about some of these things over the last years; we don't have the answers. You're probably wondering, well what is it that appears to be not disclosed? Well, Mr. Speaker, one that my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana has asked a lot of questions about is called Amicus Health. We don't know exactly what kind of commitment the Minister of Health has made through the Saskatoon Health Region to a third party. We don't know — it doesn't show up in the books of this province — what the long-term commitment is on the financing of that project. The minister refuses to provide us with copies of the documents.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, what happens is that this Minister of Health has come up with up another method of financing things because he hasn't been able to do a single new project as a Minister of Health. I'm very pleased, on Friday, Mr. Speaker, to go to Humboldt and be part of the opening of the new Humboldt Hospital, a project that was . . . We worked at for a long time to get built. And, Mr. Speaker, what happens is on Amicus Health, we have once again a situation where this government is hiding the information from the people of Saskatchewan.

Now let me go on to another project. Mr. Speaker, we have a project in SaskPower where they have effectively contracted out 10 per cent of the power production of SaskPower to Northland Power up by North Battleford. And, Mr. Speaker, we don't know what the terms of those contracts are on that particular project. We don't know what the risk is. We don't know what the hedging is that's been done there. And, Mr. Speaker, this is fundamentally wrong. It's fundamentally against the principles of public accountability.

Mr. Speaker, there's another one we can go on. The member from Kindersley has announced a project in Prince Albert relating to this new mill which conveniently is sort of spread over a couple of years. But, Mr. Speaker, once again we don't know what kinds of contracts that they have made around purchase of power. We don't know how long a term they are. We don't know what other subsidies are in that particular deal that are not totally revealed. We don't know what kind of

subsidies he's paid for the wood supply for that particular, particular mill or that particular plant.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are a whole number of things which have great risk to them, which are not revealed. And, Mr. Speaker, this is fundamentally wrong. It's fundamentally against the principles of public accountability.

Mr. Speaker, we have another kind of a deal that's been raised. There's an agreement with the Saskatchewan Medical Association. We have a bit of an idea what the responsibilities are there, but there appear to be some things that aren't totally revealed what the cost is.

We also are in a situation where we have a whole number of labour contracts that are not negotiated. They've been stalled out or whatever, whether it's the residents or whether it's the health sciences. And, Mr. Speaker, those things are not in this budget. Those amounts are not in here and we know that. When the Minister of Finance was asked about this last week, he said oh, it's somewhere in there, that we got some money that's maybe going to be a bit more. But it's not there.

Mr. Speaker, we also have the unfunded pension liability which continues to be a cloud over the books of this province. Now, Mr. Speaker, when we are in a situation like this where we have a Premier and a Minister of Finance who are not willing to provide the full information to the people of the province and more specifically when they don't want to answer questions that come from the people who have been asked to ask those specific questions, then we are concerned. We get very concerned because the net effect of deals that have risks, that are long-term ones, that create great obligations are that they then subsequently will be have to be paid. And at that point, services will be reduced. Good capital projects will have to be delayed. Many different things will have to be done to make up for the poor decisions that have been made earlier.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when the government gets into any kind of a situation where they start guaranteeing debt, then we need to know about that, and we need to know the full details of what they're doing. And I know this, that it probably would be advisable for the Premier, for the Minister of Health, for the Minister of Finance to sit down and read the comments from Mr. Gass, and even if they just read the four, five, six pages of summary at the beginning and to remind themselves why there were so many difficulties in trying to meet the regular services of the people after the budgets in Premier Devine's government because, Mr. Speaker, that becomes one of the fundamental issues as we move into a situation where we actually have resources.

And we know that the government right now has 10.7 billion, or approximately that amount, of revenue available for them as they move forward in providing the services in this province. And that's a substantial increase over the kinds of revenues that were here just a few years ago. But, Mr. Speaker, then the question comes, well what are they doing with those revenues? How are they being spent, and how are they being accounted for? And, Mr. Speaker, that's where the questions arise in this particular budget.

Now when one has the responsibility of governing, there's a

responsibility of making sure that decisions are done in a proper fashion. We know from some of the announcements earlier today around housing that there appears to be a sort of a recklessness in how some of these things are done. We know that the decisions as they move forward on a whole number of areas, they end up being ones that people will challenge.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people of the province want to believe that things are good and are going ahead in a very positive way. Unfortunately when you end up with budgets that seem to spend money in a lot of ways that don't directly help many, many people who need the help, a lot of questions are raised. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that's the fundamental problem with this particular budget. It leaves a whole number of people whose rents are going up, who have a difficult time affording the fuel to drive their vehicles, who are even looking hard at the cost of food. Many of these people are totally left out of what happens here.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the Social Services budget, that three years ago there was an annual rent subsidy that was budgeted in that budget of about \$5.6 million. I urge all of you to go and look at the Social Services budget in this one, where that same budget line for rent subsidy is \$31 million. So in three years you've seen this dramatic increase.

Now the difficulty is that there doesn't totally seem to be an answer about where all that money is going. I mean, there's a bit of an explanation in the sense that we know that rents are going up. But, Mr. Speaker, where are these dollars going? Are they actually helping people or are they going to places that end up not in a situation to be providing help to people?

So, Mr. Speaker, the fundamental question about any budget is, does it provide help for people, especially the people that have the toughest time in our society? And, Mr. Speaker, there are many things that we provide, but unfortunately that kind of an emphasis has been somewhat ignored as we look at this particular budget.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's an overall lack of accountability on the overall scheme of how this is being done. And we're going to pay for that lack of accountability, not just this year but 10 years from now and 20 years from now. So, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting for the amendment and against the main motion. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bradshaw):** — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to enter the debate today. At the close of my comments I will be supporting this budget. But prior to doing that I want to recognize and thank a number of people. First it would be my constituency assistants back in Yorkton: Lauretta Richie-McInnis, Ingrid Stumph. They do a lot of great work in helping me to serve the people of Yorkton. And we have a new addition to our team, a part-time addition, Ms. Sarah Stumph. It's a great, great news story there is that she moved back to Saskatchewan from Alberta, and she's expecting a child so soon we'll be recognizing another resident of our fine city, Yorkton. So firstly I want to thank them and recognize them for the hard work they do.



Secondly would be the staff here in this building — the caucus staff, the ministerial staff — that go out of their way to help us day to day to provide us with information, work through casework and the like. It is very appreciated and I really want to thank them as well.

Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Chair of Committees, would be my colleagues here. The opposition from time to time can be helpful. My colleagues on this side of the House are very helpful, very supportive, and it's great working with a bunch of people that we do have in the government.

[15:45]

As well, I really have to recognize the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Premier, the member from Canora-Pelly for the hard work, all the work that he's put in over the years to develop not only the party but develop platforms in all the work that we do, but build a strong opposition and now a strong government. Working through the Education portfolio and then now into the Finance portfolio, recognizing the good work done by the previous minister, the member from Melfort, and all the fine work he has done, the three balanced budgets prior to this one and now, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. The work he's done on this budget, which is recognized by not only us and many individuals around the province from a diverse background, but many people in the province as not only a balanced budget on the general accounting principles but also on the summary statement.

I also want to thank the people of my constituency of Yorkton, not only the people of the province for giving us the mandate to from government and serve them in the capacity that we do, but also the people of the constituency of Yorkton. They have given me the privilege and the honour to working with them and serving them in the capacity that I do and I look forward to serve them after November 7th if that is in their wishes. So I really want to thank them as well.

Lastly, but not least by any stretch of the imagination, would be my family. My wife and daughters, very supportive. I couldn't imagine doing this without their support, Mr. Chair of Committees, and they are very appreciated. And the support that I get from them day in and day out, it's hard to even put that into words, Mr. Chair of Committees. The love and the support that they show me makes this job a lot easier to do.

My one daughter actually described it to a friend of hers as, having a dad that's an MLA is very much like living in a fishbowl. And you do come under criticism. You can't be all things to all people. But the way that they handle themselves, respectfully and honourably in the community, and supporting me as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is very, very acknowledged by myself and I'm very thankful for that.

Well I'll start into some of the notes I have on the budget. And I've got to admit, as I was drafting these comments right after the budget last week and then over the weekend, different ideas kept coming to my mind. And, you know, I handwrote a whole bunch of pages here that I had to get through before I got to the budget. And the reasoning for that is a lot of things that had happened in history and things that I've seen, I personally witnessed in this Legislative Assembly, really called into

question some things. And I just wanted to address those as I move along here from time to time.

And there's no doubt I really like the theme of this budget, *The Saskatchewan Advantage*, slightly borrowing from Alberta, but clearly Saskatchewan at this point, as especially my colleagues on this side of the House recognize that we truly do have an advantage, not only across many provinces throughout our whole country, but as well around the world. And that advantage is getting very well recognized, largely due — I know our Premier's quite humble about this — but very largely in and because of the work done by our Premier in telling the Saskatchewan story around the province where we have, we're blessed by divine providence in this province with our resources, our environment, our people.

We are now, as the releases showed last week, way up above 150,000 people and climbing — the highest population we've had ever — and truly realizing our potential that this building was built to support a province of a couple million, 3 million people. A third largest at the time in economy and third largest in population when this building was built, and now the building . . . the forethought of those of our forefathers building this building, and now we're growing into that potential.

The theme of the budget, Saskatchewan advantage, keeping that advantage going, if you really look at the nuts and bolts of this, it's mainly about keeping our momentum, increasing that advantage. But to what end? The Premier's very clear, over and over again, that we have to recognize, what is the use? What is the benefit of having that strong economy? Is it just for creating numbers, creating wealth?

Well, Mr. Chair of Committees, I would say yes. But the end would be delivering that quality of life for people of the province. And by the theme of this budget, we can see by lowering taxes for mainly the lowest income of the low income, as well as other people benefiting it as well, 114,000 people will now be off the provincial income tax rolls. Lowering that debt which makes our interest payments on the debt lower, Mr. Chair of Committees, helps us to be able to finance the support, that quality of life improvement that people realize in this province.

You know, I've got to admit the day after the budget I walked into the Assembly — I'm usually in here a little bit earlier and we usually have a little bit of fun across the floor — and I had to ask the Finance critic if somebody played a joke on him. Did somebody punk him? And he asked why. And I said, well surely somebody gave him a different copy of the budget than we had seen because, by what we had seen, it was a positive budget. All the feedback we got, a very positive budget. People of diverse backgrounds as well — whether it's in the social background, educational background, business background, all different backgrounds — really saying that they really liked a lot of different things in this budget. Again, not all things to all people, but a very positive budget that serves the people of this province very well.

And I guess it shouldn't have surprised me too much, you know, being in opposition and, you know . . . My view of opposition is to offer positive ideas, you know, different things that we can do. If we're not addressing things as well as maybe

we can, offering other ideas, not just trying to shoot holes in something for the sake of shooting holes, not just criticizing for the sake of opposing but to offer different ideas. And I didn't really see a whole lot of that. And I think that was reflective in a lot of the media reports that came out afterwards somewhat criticizing the Finance critic for some of his comments.

Although again it shouldn't surprise me, I suppose. I've spoken publicly with, alongside some of the members of the opposition, and I've actually heard them say that New Democrats by nature are critical people. And that somewhat surprised me. I thought, you know, maybe it was just a bit of a game that gets played in this building. But truly I do see that crabs-in-a-bucket mentality, where you see a crab climbing out of the bucket. Instead of the other crabs helping them out of the bucket, they'll drag that crab back down, which is I guess the critical-by-nature type of a thing.

You know it's no wonder. The Leader of the Opposition, he's been talking recently again about equalization as part of their plans in the future. And we clearly see the people of this province recognize that we are a have province. In order to get back into equalization payments, we have got to become a have-not province. And I don't know. The members opposite seem to be wanting to go down that road. I don't know why. For the sake of getting a handout or a welfare payment from the federal government.

I don't want to go back to where we were before. I would rather be building our economy, helping those that we need to help within our province, and using those resources and that expertise to go outside of our borders and help others outside of our borders. Not be so inward-looking, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, but to be outward-looking and to help those who need help regardless of where they are. And I think we are very well suited to be doing that in the state of the country, the world, and considering again our blessings in this province that we should use those for the advantage of many.

A lot of the comments made so far about the budget by the opposition, one comment that struck me awfully strange, and I've got to focus on this a little bit: the only people that are doing well is the government. Now, Mr. Chair of Committees, I'm not sure what the members opposite thought when they were in government. I'm not . . . It's just I was really flabbergasted by that comment. It is not the government's money. The government manages the money for the people of this province. It's the people of the province's money that we manage for them.

And judging by the feedback of this budget, they're very, you know, 70 per cent that I've seen, 60 to 70 per cent, are very encouraged by what they've seen. About 20 per cent don't really care either way. They think it's positive, but they're not really too engaged. There's about 10 or 15 per cent that aren't really happy about it. So you know, not that you can be again all things to all people, but a lot of positive feedback.

So in that respect it is the people's budget. And I've heard a little bit of criticism from some of the media about the 140-some-odd thousand dollars spent for letting the people of the province know the details of their budget. A lot of them don't listen to the Assembly. A lot of them don't get a lot of the

media hits. So it's important, I think, for the brochure that was sent out to let people know what's in the budget for them so that they can take advantage of that.

I will point out one thing though, that, you know, it's their budget. We send out that brochure for them to know about their budget. We look not so long in the past when the New Democrats were formerly in government. They spent around \$500,000 or so for their Finance minister of the time to star in his own commercial. And when asked why, he said, well it's my budget.

So I guess if you look at the terminology, you look at the way they think, you know, their budget, their money, not the people's money. Maybe more the . . . I don't know, the fatherly mentality of, you know, we'll take all the taxes we can and we'll designate it where we see fit, rather than our philosophy of leaving more monies in people's pockets so they can spend where they see fit. Although the key is to still have enough taxation to deliver the core services that government needs to deliver — public safety, health care, education, and social programs for those that need help. So I think that's very important to strike that balance of proper taxation, not overtaxation. And I believe in deciding for myself where to invest my money, not into firms in BC and potato farms and whatever else we might see invested in.

So that really struck me as odd. And I really like how the Premier pointed out very clearly — I think it was on the last question in question period last week — where he admitted, yes, Sask Party supporters are the ones benefiting from this budget. But also, he clearly pointed out, New Democrat supporters are benefiting from this budget. Liberal supporters are benefiting from this budget. Green Party supporting are benefiting from this budget. Apolitical people in the province that don't even vote are benefiting from this budget. So clearly all people in the province has the opportunity to benefit from the budget brought down by our Finance minister, the member from Canora-Pelly, including newcomers that are immigrating to the province, people coming from other provinces to our province, and expatriates.

Especially I want to focus on expatriates that are now coming home. We've heard many stories of people that have moved away. With some of the business tax changes, the personal tax changes that have been announced, they are now looking to come back to Saskatchewan to take part in our economy, contribute to our province, and keep us moving forward as we have been.

Very much like I operate my office at home, Mr. Deputy Chair of committees, we treat everyone the same. Now regardless of political stripe, we have people from all political stripes coming to our office to seek help. And quite frankly in a town the size of Yorkton, you pretty much have a good idea of where political affiliations lie. But really that doesn't matter a whole lot to me when people come to my office with a problem. Regardless of where they sit politically, they get the same treatment. They get the best treatment I have within my ability. And I do continue to do that. And I'm very proud that this truly balanced budget does the same — treats everybody the same.

Now some of the inconsistencies I've noted that really struck

me as odd as well, this one thing really stood out to me. It came to my mind this weekend. Last year's budget, it was a good and balanced budget, but admittedly there were some things that the media poked at and the opposition poked at. And I mean that's fair game, the little room to criticize. But one thing I did notice, the Leader of the Opposition took advantage of that opportunity. He took to his feet and left his critic, his Finance critic sitting in his chair, which should be his duty. That's his position is to bring this budget to show the shortcomings or whatever he could find, yet the Leader of the Opposition took advantage of that opportunity to take the camera. Well that's one thing that struck me as a bit odd last year.

But then I pondered, what happened last week on Wednesday was the opposite. This year we have, by all accounts, independent sources from very diverse backgrounds saying this is a good, balanced budget. If I have time, I'm going to try and get into some of those quotes, but very little to criticize brought out by the media, by again people with very diverse backgrounds. This year the leader finally allowed the Finance critic to make his speech, say his piece, and speak to the budget.

So I guess by being critical by nature, you can't say much good about it. I suppose that's their job to try and poke a whole bunch of holes that aren't there, and I understand, you know, to bring to light the things that maybe are falling short. But when you just start the shotgun approach to try and blow the whole thing apart, it doesn't serve you well. It doesn't give you any credibility.

But I found it was very odd that in an opportunity like this, the Leader of the Opposition did not take to his feet. He let the Finance critic take to his feet, try and blow holes in this budget and pretty much took one for the team. Or I would consider that the Leader of the Opposition actually threw his Finance critic under the bus. So I don't know if I would agree. That's just not the type of leadership style that we have over on this side of the House, but you know, I just found that it's very odd.

Another inconsistency I started thinking about this weekend, over the last three years I've heard the same rhetoric over and over again about this inheritance left by the New Democrats, left by the former government to the Sask Party government — 1 billion, then it's 2 billion, then it's 3 billion. Yet on the other hand they say over and over again that, oh we would have done all these things you guys are doing if we had the money. Well if you've got 1 billion, 2 billion, \$3 billion to let the next government look after, why would you leave that to chance without spending it where you need to spend it? It just doesn't square with me, Mr. Chair of Committees. I couldn't figure that out.

[16:00]

So when you look at all those things, if they have the money and then they have this inheritance rhetoric, why wouldn't they do something with it? And I go back to a statement I made just previously about the former Finance minister and saying, well I was in the commercial, a half-million-dollar commercial, because it was my budget. Which makes me think they think it's their money, not the people's money. It just doesn't square.

So I guess in that respect it makes sense if they left that

inheritance for the next government to start addressing some of the shortcomings and infrastructure potholes and the like that they left behind. That kind of squares. But again they must have thought it was truly their money if they actually left that money for the next government to spend, but didn't allow the people to benefit from it. Did they truly think it was their money? Were they leaving it in a mattress? I'm just not too sure, Mr. Chair of Committees.

But one thing I will say, you know if you're going to make a story, if you're going to develop a story, you have to stick with it. You have to be consistent or it's unbelievable. You can't say, uranium is good; uranium is bad. This is good, then it's bad. You know if you waffle and you flip-flop on just about every subject depending where the wind blows, to try to shore up support and get some support, you lose credibility. And I think the people of the province are really starting to see that happen.

Another example a year ago: boom to bust. We saw our Premier very, very clearly displayed on a very poor photocopy of a poor brochure, describing this boom to bust. The only difference, the only thing was that the only people that thought there was a bust going on was the New Democratic Party across the floor. Nobody else even thought there was a problem. Now they say there's a boom and no one is benefiting. So again, inconsistency: bust, boom, boom, bust. You got to pick a story and stick with it. What is it? Again it doesn't square.

I heard it said at one point that if you're going to tell a fib often enough, it will become the truth. But members opposite need to stick with the story that once it's been crafted. That's one suggestion I would give to them if that's the tactics they want to use.

So that's enough of the inconsistencies for now and questions I had. My head's been spinning all week in thinking about these inconsistencies and trying to square it. And I don't know, I just couldn't make sense of it. I would spend the rest of my time on our budget, *The Saskatchewan Advantage*.

The one last thing I will point out though, Mr. Speaker, came to my attention today after the convention the New Democrats had this weekend. And I'll quote from this press release: "NDP Leader Dwain Lingenfelter talked tough about potash royalties and heralded the party's new policies as [what?] a "beacon of light" during the . . . annual policy convention in Regina." And you know that phrase stuck in my mind. I thought I'd heard it somewhere before. So I looked back a year ago in some of our own documentation. And *The Globe and Mail* on March 25th of 2010 had this to say:

Amid the ruin that has devastated most governments' balance sheets, Saskatchewan stands a beacon of light, tabling another balanced budget yesterday. The province has a tradition of fiscal rectitude that crosses party lines, but what is encouraging about this budget is that the government has taken a pre-emptive stab at spending cuts, although times there are relatively good. Other jurisdictions could stand to learn from its example.

And that's *The Globe and Mail* from March 25th, 2010. So I don't know if you'd call that plagiarism or what you'd call that, Mr. Speaker, but I guess the best, the best form of recognizing

somebody is impersonations. So I guess that's what we're seeing here.

I realize my time is coming to a close. There's so much information and so many quotes here I'd love to go through, but I know over the course of few days, my colleagues will definitely be going through that.

So thank you for the time to spend to point out some of these shortcomings and these inconsistencies, Mr. Speaker. With that I will just close by saying, I will be supporting the budget brought forward by the member from Canora-Pelly, the Finance critic, Deputy Premier. I will not be supporting any amendment.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

**Hon. Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed an honour to stand here today and join in this important budget debate. Mr. Speaker, before I begin to speak about this budget, I would like to take a moment to thank the people of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, the good people of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley and the constituents who have contacted me at my office over the past year. And they have brought forward many important issues to my attention. It is indeed an honour and a privilege to represent these constituents and as their MLA in the Regina, Saskatchewan legislature.

I'd like to also take this time to acknowledge my family for their ongoing support. As well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my staff in my constituency office and in my minister's office. They work hard to serve the citizens of this great province. I'd like to thank my constituency assistant Kelly for doing a wonderful job in my constituency office. It is through her support and help that the job gets done. Mr. Speaker, I would like to also thank the ministerial staff in my office here at the legislature: Selena, Gary, Sally, and Joette.

I would also like to take the time to thank the Minister of Finance for the leadership that he displayed in delivering this very fine budget. Mr. Speaker, this is our government's fourth balanced budget. In this budget we have balanced discretion on the revenue side with sound spending while taking an overall balanced approach to the province's finance. We understand that as a government we need to invest in key capital areas that ensure that the citizens of this province continue to receive important programming and services. We did this in a way that focuses on sustaining and enhancing our core government services with a view to reducing the footprint of government while being fiscally responsible with government spending.

Mr. Speaker, our government's vision is a secure and prosperous Saskatchewan, leading the country in economic and population growth while providing opportunities for a high quality of life for all the residents of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I am proud that the Saskatchewan advantage budget builds on economic momentum that the province has experienced over the past couple of years. This budget also reflects the overall optimism that the people of Saskatchewan have. This budget will continue to strengthen our economy and make life more affordable for the people of Saskatchewan by reducing their taxes. This is the Saskatchewan advantage.

Since introducing our first budget, we have paid down the provincial debt by \$3 billion. We introduced the largest budget for our highways in Saskatchewan's history. Mr. Speaker, we had to do this in order to deal with the provincial infrastructure deficit left behind by the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget, the Saskatchewan government introduced the largest single-year income tax reduction in Saskatchewan's history. And what does this mean, Mr. Speaker? It means there was more money in Saskatchewan people's pocket. This is the Saskatchewan advantage.

Mr. Speaker, as we watch what is happening in Saskatchewan, we see that there's more jobs now than there has ever been in the history of this province. We have so many reasons, Mr. Speaker, to be optimistic in this province. And I want to talk about a couple of those things because this province is rich in resources, and we are very fortunate.

We have been affected by the worldwide recession and we have felt the recession in this province, but other provinces were impacted far more than we were. As we know, Ontario was a have province and Saskatchewan was a have-not. Now that is no longer the case, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is now envied for what is happening here. We are at the front of the pack, Mr. Speaker, and this budget, along with the last couple of budgets, will prepare this province for the future. This budget will continue to strengthen our economy and make life more affordable for Saskatchewan people with tax cuts that were introduced in this, the Saskatchewan advantage. Saskatchewan is rich in resources. We have potash, diamonds, uranium, oil, gas, coal, and we have a vibrant agricultural sector in this province. There are so many good things going on in Saskatchewan that we are a government that welcomes growth and investment.

I would like to take a minute and speak about the ministry I'm responsible for, which is Government Services. The Ministry of Government Services may not be well-known among the public, but without the hard work of the Government Services employee the work of government would not be able to happen. Government Services leases or owns 741 buildings across our province, and we manage the central vehicle agency, the government fleet of vehicles which is approximately 4,800 vehicles. We manage the government's air fleet that also includes three aircrafts for the province's air ambulance, as well as three aircraft for executive air services. Beyond the Government Services other core businesses include mail service, record management, telecommunications, and the operations of the purchasing branch.

Government Services supports government's desire to have a smaller footprint. We are focusing on reducing government's footprint through the following initiative, the provincial space management strategy. Government Services continued to review its portfolio and manages plans of owned and leased spaces. We analyze space requirements and accommodation, the options for tenant's requests, and lease renewals.

Identifying opportunities and devising plans to reduce the government's footprint, Government Services uses forward planning, an approach to provide adequate, usable space for all the ministries we serve. This work will become more

increasingly important as all the ministries implement their workforce adjustment strategies and will renew their workplace standards.

Mr. Speaker, previously there was no standard for government working space, which meant that the workspace in government offices ranges anywhere from 18 to 27 square metres per employee. Now we have brought that standard across government down to 18.6 square metres. Now this new standard is going to result in a much smaller footprint for government. The challenges will be to relocate these spaces in ways that increase the efficiencies of government through smaller accommodation and the footprint decreased cost for taxpayers, and reduces the environmental impact on government's operations.

Mr. Speaker, within the central vehicle agency, we introduced fleet right-sizing strategy. Progress has been made to reduce the size of the fleet, and as a result of reusing vehicles, reuse inventory, and disposing of aged Crown corporation vehicles and discontinued services to non-government organization, the central vehicle agency has reduced its overall fleet by 15 per cent. During the 2011-2012 fiscal year, the central vehicle agency will continue to pursue the reduction of its fleet through initiatives such as reducing the size of the central vehicle agency's redeployment and daily rental inventory.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Government Services is committed to the philosophy of resource and energy management. The ministry has implemented a number of energy management initiatives in its core buildings that has significantly reduced energy consumption, resulting in a 17 per cent reduction in the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint for buildings. Mr. Speaker, this results in less money being spent by government.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, this budget will continue to strengthen our economy and make more life affordable for Saskatchewan's people. Mr. Speaker, this budget builds on strong foundation that we introduced in our first budget and will continue to build on with the following. We will continue to build on the successes we have had in rebuilding this province's infrastructure and revitalizing the economy through historic tax cuts. Mr. Speaker, this is the Saskatchewan advantage.

Mr. Speaker, when I was campaigning in 2007, knocking on doors and talking to the residents in my constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, they told me they wanted a fiscally responsible government that would keep an eye on spending and pay down the debt. On March 23rd, we had tabled our fourth balanced budget. While our neighbouring Western provinces posted deficit budgets, we will post a surplus which is expected to be at 54.3 million.

Mr. Speaker, the 2011-2012 budget will see a debt payment of 325 million to the General Revenue Fund, bringing down the debt to 3.81 billion. That is a reduction of 3 billion or 44 per cent since our government took office. That's within four years. Now this is the lowest level since 1987-88.

[16:15]

Mr. Speaker, this budget will continue to strengthen our economy and make life more affordable for Saskatchewan

people by reducing taxes. Saskatchewan families with dependent children will earn more tax-free income than anywhere else in Canada. The basic and spousal exemption amounts to an increase by \$1,000, and the exemption amount for dependent children is increased by \$500 per child. This will result in the savings of almost \$2,500 in income tax for a family of four earning \$50,000. This is the Saskatchewan advantage. This tax reduction will see another 22,000 people coming off the tax rolls. That means since our first budget was introduced in 2008, 114,000 Saskatchewan people are no longer paying provincial income tax.

The 2011 and 2012 budget fulfills the government's commitment to reduce education property tax while making very important investments in school capital projects. The reduction in education property tax will mean a savings of 55.6 million on farm land, residential property, and commercial property owners. That translates into an approximately 20 per cent reduction for residential property owners and by approximately 80 per cent on farm land.

Saskatchewan farm families have shouldered an unfair burden of education funding through property tax on their land. Now our government is committed to creating a fair, balanced budget by reducing this tax burden. And we have kept that promise. Our government continues to work to meet the needs of Saskatchewan farmers. More than three-quarters of this year's Agriculture budget will fully fund business risk management programs including crop insurance, AgriStability, and AgriInvest. With this commitment, producers can head into the upcoming growing season knowing this government will stand behind them.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, when speaking with my constituents from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley they expressed their concerns for wanting to see more money in infrastructure. And our government listened and responded to those concerns. In this budget we also wanted to make sure that we maintained our momentum in eliminating the infrastructure deficit that was built up over many years prior to us forming government. The growing economy and population has put more demands on our roads and highways, and this budget will see 556.2 million invested in highways. In the four years, the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure has improved over 6170 kilometres of provincial highways, and efforts to improve and repair Saskatchewan's long-neglected highways continues. And what does this mean? This means safer roads for our school buses to travel on. It means, Mr. Speaker, our children, the future of Saskatchewan, are safer.

Mr. Speaker, we have more people living in this province than we have ever had before. Our population is now at an all-time high. Mr. Speaker, we are seeing Saskatchewan family members coming home. They're coming home to new job opportunities. And we are welcoming new residents from across the country and from around the world. In my own constituency, Mr. Speaker, I've witnessed that growth first-hand.

On February the 1st, 2011, the Premier along with Mayor Pat Fiacco joined the Canadian Logistics Service president, Joe Roeder, in celebrating the grand opening of the company's new distribution centre at the Global Transportation Hub. This

distribution centre will generate up to 800 jobs when fully operational, and this, the Canadian Logistics Service distribution centre, is the first of major development at the Global Transportation Hub located in west Regina. And this Global Transportation Hub is stimulating the provincial economy by providing enhanced and efficient global supply chain for Saskatchewan exporters.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the need for everyone to have the opportunity to participate in the workforce. Thus our government has improved child care, and this budget has provided 2.1 million for 500 additional child care spaces since forming government. The number of child care spaces in Saskatchewan will have increased by more than 30 per cent. Now this is the Saskatchewan advantage.

Mr. Speaker, our government is investing 34 million in the children and youth agenda. The children and youth agenda identifies funding and programs across several ministries that addresses common problems facing children and families at risk. Our government is committed to responding to the recommendations that were brought forward by the Saskatchewan child welfare review panel.

Mr. Speaker, our government has not forgotten about low-income earners. As previously stated, our government has introduced an income tax reduction that will see another 22,000 people coming off the tax roll. Our government has not forgotten about Saskatchewan's most vulnerable.

Investments will bring on commitment to improve the quality of life and that sense of community that are the hallmarks of Saskatchewan. The 2011-2012 budget includes 2.3 million for the continued development of Saskatchewan assured income for disability program. We are committed to an additional 14 million for further support for people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities. This funding will continue the progress on the multi-year initiative that provides specialized residential and day program services for people with intellectual disabilities. These investments, combined with across-government investment in Saskatchewan child and youth agenda, will work towards the goal of ensuring that our province's most vulnerable people receive the support they need.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Minister of Social Services, announced today Saskatchewan's advantage for affordable housing plan. Now this plan builds on the government's actions since taking office in 2007. We have invested \$80 million to complete over 860 new, affordable rental housing units across the province. We have assisted nearly 400 households across the province to achieve ownership.

Our government has five programs that will help increase housing supply and address housing affordability. The first is Headstart on a Home. The second is affordable home ownership. Third is rental construction initiative. The fourth is 34 million investment in rental units. And the fifth is more money for Habitat for Humanity partnership.

Our government will continue to embrace the benefits and the challenges of economic and population growth by creating more housing supply and working hard to make sure that life is

more affordable for people in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we are investing in health care. *The Saskatchewan Advantage* budget will see an increase of 260 million from last year's budget. Our government is committed to provide Saskatchewan people with timely and quality health care services. This budget invests in the health needs to help the people of Saskatchewan who demand it. We are meeting the demands of our growing population.

Mr. Speaker, when the members opposite were sitting on this side of the House, they refused to set targets to tackle the serious nursing problem, the shortage of nursing in our province. Our government set a target to hire 800 nurses. Now this target has not only been met, but surpassed.

We are addressing the need to access top physicians and health care providers in this province. We are funding more recruitment and training so Saskatchewan people can receive more timely access to health care. This budget continues with education and recruitment and retention of health care providers.

For many years, Saskatchewan was actually losing people. People couldn't build their futures here. Saskatchewan is now the fastest growing province in the country. People are looking for opportunities and a great quality of life. And that's what we have right here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that is what we call the Saskatchewan advantage.

Mr. Speaker, I can't imagine nothing better than having everyone in this House vote in favour of the 2011-2012 budget, a budget that will continue to promote and move our province forward. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this budget, and proud to do so. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to enter the debate on the budget of 2011, Mr. Speaker, the budget of the Minister of Finance delivered last week on March the 23rd. Mr. Speaker, this is certainly an interesting budget. We're hearing a number of things from government members, in government brochures, and in government speeches around the province, Mr. Speaker. But the important thing is, is that Saskatchewan people need to ensure they have all of the information necessary in order to judge this budget.

And it's not just a single budget, Mr. Speaker. In fact this government is on its first and perhaps only term, electoral term, in government, Mr. Speaker. First elected in 2007 and now, Mr. Speaker, this is the fourth budget delivered since that election. We should perhaps, Mr. Speaker, judge this government and this budget, not on the specifics of one budget, Mr. Speaker, but on the specifics of all four. I think, Mr. Speaker, you will hear me say a couple of times over the next 20 minutes, four years and \$40 billion later, what have we for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? Four years and \$40 billion. It's about priorities and where, Mr. Speaker, does the Sask Party place its priorities as opposed to where do the people of Saskatchewan see their priorities.

Let's start, Mr. Speaker, by having a look at what has been written recently, Mr. Speaker. An editorial in the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* the day after the budget, Mr. Speaker, the headline on the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* editorial is "Vision for future needed to retain Saskatchewan advantage." Mr. Speaker, the first paragraph of that editorial reads, "Budgets, particularly in an election year, are as much political documents as they are a blueprint for the upcoming year's revenues and expenses."

Mr. Speaker, the editorial then goes on, and I'd like to quote this paragraph from the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* of March 24th:

This year, the Saskatchewan government chose to hang its political hat on an openly plagiarized slogan from the heady times of its western neighbour. Finance Minister Ken Krawetz recently told *The StarPhoenix* editorial board that his budget slogan, "Saskatchewan Advantage," is copied directly from the "Alberta Advantage," [Mr. Speaker].

Interesting point, the Saskatchewan Party in opposition used to think a lot about, used to speak a lot about how good things were in Alberta and how poor things were in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, now in government over the last four years we can point to a large number of policies and programs and events, Mr. Speaker, that show that this government would rather be an Alberta-related party, Mr. Speaker, than a Saskatchewan-related party. Obviously their election budget presented last week in this Chamber, the slogan for that budget — advantage — is taken directly from the direction organized by or previously set out by the Alberta government, Mr. Speaker.

Now let's take a look at another article from *The StarPhoenix*, Mr. Speaker. This is an article that came out just before the budget. *StarPhoenix* article on the third page of the March 17th edition of *The StarPhoenix*, the headline on the article is "The Alberta way now takes the wrong path". And the article in the third paragraph says, and I quote, "In spite of Alberta's great resource wealth, this most prosperous of Canadian provinces has run up successive deficits while depleting savings accumulated over decades to pay for runaway spending."

[16:30]

Then the article quotes Roger Gibbins, political scientist and head of the Calgary-based Canada West Foundation. The article says:

According to Gibbins, Alberta's experience only confirms how difficult it is to control public spending in times of plenty. For governments to say "no" to spending demands is easy when there's no money. When there is plenty of money coming in, it's easier to say "yes."

Mr. Speaker, the article then goes on to conclude, "What is required [in a province like Saskatchewan] . . . is an iron-clad [iron-clad] savings plan and a consensus that the savings are inviolable, except under the most dire circumstances." And finally, Mr. Speaker, the article concludes, "Here, the Saskatchewan Party . . . has indicated it is open to the idea of saving a percentage of resource royalties . . . Except that provincial debt increased this year, with government spending at a rate that requires all our resource revenues and then some."

Mr. Speaker, the article says, "That's more like Alberta under Ed Stelmach than it is like Norway," a country that the article also praised, Mr. Speaker, for dealing with resource revenues adequately.

So, Mr. Speaker, here we have a government that brings down a budget based on an Alberta example, an Alberta example that's big on debt, big on spending and, Mr. Speaker, depleting the province's savings. So does this budget or have any of the budgets over the last four years, Mr. Speaker, followed the example of the name, the advantage that is Alberta's, Mr. Speaker?

Well interestingly enough, as we're seeing, while the government talks about this budget reducing debt, Mr. Speaker, I think the Saskatchewan people need to and have access to page no. 61 of the budget document, Mr. Speaker. While there's a nice, glossy pamphlet circulating or about to be circulated in the province, Mr. Speaker, about the Sask Party government paying down debt, page 61 of the government's own documents, Mr. Speaker, shows the public debt of the General Revenue Fund in 2009 being \$7.7 billion; 2010, \$8 billion; 2011, \$8.4 billion; 2012, \$8.9 billion; 2013, 9.7 billion; 2014, 10.3 billion; and 2015, 10.5 billion.

Mr. Speaker, while the government will tell you that they're paying down debt — and to a certain extent they have indeed applied some money to the government's general revenue debt, Mr. Speaker — the public debt of the General Revenue Fund shows, establish, and proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that that comment in the pamphlets and the speeches is misleading the Saskatchewan population, Mr. Speaker. The public debt of the General Revenue Fund is increasing this year and will continue increasing through the four-year projected period of the budget to the year 2015.

That having been said, Mr. Speaker, when the government says that they have taken funds this year to pay down government general debt . . . they're reducing that debt, as the member from, who spoke just before me, Mr. Speaker, they're taking that general debt from 4.1 billion to 3.8 billion. Mr. Speaker, if you look at the projections for the next four years, remembering this is an election budget, that 3.8 billion remains exactly the same through the next four years.

All said and done, Mr. Speaker, this debt repayment that the government's talking about is not overall debt. But also, Mr. Speaker, it sends a message that this government believes in paying down debt when funds are available. There's no future debt paydown planned after this budget is concluded, Mr. Speaker, which is after the next election. So pay down some debt, go into an election, and don't project any further debt paydown at all.

The public that is saying to the members of the Sask Party on the doorstep and in the coffee shops in their constituency, we want you to pay down debt. Mr. Speaker, they're being told by the Sask Party we're not paying down any more debt after this election. We're not paying it down. Mr. Speaker, it's clearly itemized on page 61 of the budget documents.

Also, Mr. Speaker, we should be paying attention to the fact that this budget one week later is already out of date. It's not

actually accurate, Mr. Speaker, as far as the so-called surplus is concerned or the debt line items.

Two things have happened, Mr. Speaker. After the budget was brought out, questions were asked of members of Treasury Board and the Minister of Finance. Teachers are in salary negotiations, Mr. Speaker. The teachers of the province of Saskatchewan are currently without a contract, and when a settlement occurs, if a settlement does occur, Mr. Speaker, it will apply for this fiscal year. Where is that money in this budget for settling a new contract with teachers, Mr. Speaker? Whether it be 2 per cent, 3 per cent, 10 per cent — Mr. Speaker, where is that money in the budget? The Treasury Board has indicated, Mr. Speaker, that it's not in the budget. It will be dealt with later. And funds for the teacher settlement, Mr. Speaker, will come out of where? Listen carefully, Mr. Speaker. It comes out of the surplus money available to the province.

So in fact, Mr. Speaker, this surplus that their members are so haughtily talking about doesn't actually exist in the number that's in the budget. If the teachers' salary negotiations are completed, Mr. Speaker, that amounts to anything more than \$50 million, this is a deficit budget, Mr. Speaker. And the government knows that. They know that clearly. But they're ignoring it, Mr. Speaker, in the interests of having their message communicated to the Saskatchewan population.

And just today, Mr. Speaker, the government announces a new housing program that's going to rely on \$200 million worth of loan guarantees. Where in the budget does that debt show, Mr. Speaker, if not for this year, in the four years projected out? Mr. Speaker, it's not in the budget. It's not in the budget. Two hundred million dollars of loan guarantee is government accepting new debt. It's not there.

This budget is already out of date one week after it's delivered in this Chamber. The message that the government is moving to the Saskatchewan public about spending under control, about taxes going down, about debt going down, Mr. Speaker, this message is completely false. The debt is underrepresented, Mr. Speaker, and the surplus is misrepresented, Mr. Speaker. This budget is out of date, and it's out of whack, Mr. Speaker, and we should be holding . . . the public will be holding the government accountable to those matters.

But let's go back to some of my original comments, Mr. Speaker. This is one of four budgets, four years of . . . This is the highest-spending government in the history of Saskatchewan. Members opposite in their speeches have talked about having spending under control, Mr. Speaker. But four years and \$40 billion later, what do we have, Mr. Speaker? We have a housing program that's mostly debt based, the cash available, \$1.7 million, \$1.7 million.

Mr. Speaker, we in The Battlefords could spend that on one project. For a provincial plan, Mr. Speaker, this is inadequate and it doesn't represent the needs of Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, a growing economy needs the government to pay attention to certain things. This government, over this four-year period, has not paid attention to these things; and going into an election, Mr. Speaker, the public will hold them accountable.

In The Battlefords, as in the rest of the province, Mr. Speaker,

for a growing economy to sustain itself, for an economy of any kind, Mr. Speaker, to be able to sustain long-term growth, we need to ensure that we have a good, strong labour force, Mr. Speaker, and we need to be able to accommodate that labour force.

So in The Battlefords, our issues are significant. They are similar to everywhere else, Mr. Speaker. We need to have a commitment to housing. We need to have a commitment to training. And we need to have a commitment to transportation and highway management, Mr. Speaker.

We have seen an inadequate response to housing in the three years to date and an inadequate response to housing in the current budget. We have a inadequate response to training, Mr. Speaker. This budget, as far as funding for regional colleges for training outside of advanced basic education, a hold-the-line or a maintenance budget, Mr. Speaker. No additional funding for training for the employees of our new growth industries in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of The Battlefords in any case, certainly trying to find funding to ensure that we can manage the transportation crisis that we have going on, Mr. Speaker, there's absolutely nothing in this budget addressing that. Mr. Speaker, we've got Highway 4 North that's overwhelmed with trucks coming down from Meadow Lake because primarily the railway from Meadow Lake has been shut down, Mr. Speaker. And there's no more lumber, no more forest product moving on the rail line, Mr. Speaker. It's all on the highway. It's increased damage to the road, and it's increased safety problems on Highway 4 North, Mr. Speaker. The communities have been talking to the Ministry of Highways for the last three years, Mr. Speaker, and so far nothing to reply.

At the same time, just north of The Battlefords, Highway 378, Mr. Speaker, a very narrow, very curvy road, Mr. Speaker, that's received virtually no support over 40 years, Mr. Speaker. Obviously for the community to grow north of The Battlefords and contribute to the economy of The Battlefords, we need to see activity on that secondary road and other secondary roads across the province.

The member from Meadow Lake is trying to engage in the debate. I anticipate a great speech about the rail line from Meadow Lake coming from the member when he gives his speech. I'll look forward to that, Mr. Speaker, because the RM [rural municipality] of Meadow Lake and the town of Meadow Lake or the city of Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker, are very concerned about the lack of rail line access to that important part of the province, Mr. Speaker. Lots of very, very important things happening there.

Speaking of four years, \$40 billion worth of spending, Mr. Speaker, and what does that mean for Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford? Mr. Speaker, the mayor of North Battleford is disappointed that this budget contains no funding for Saskatchewan Hospital. The president of the Battlefords Chamber of Commerce is disappointed that there's no funding for Saskatchewan Hospital. The representatives from Prairie North Regional Health Authority disappointed that there's no funding for Saskatchewan Hospital. Representatives of the mental health community, Mr. Speaker, and professionals in the



mental health field are disappointed that there's no funding for the Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford. Mr. Speaker, representatives of the Canadian Mental Health Association are disappointed that there's no funding for the Saskatchewan Hospital.

There's really no excuse for this, Mr. Speaker. When Prairie North made its first proposal for including a replacement of Saskatchewan Hospital as its priority for regional spending in 2004, Mr. Speaker, the response was very well received by the Department of Health. And, Mr. Speaker, as funding became available, the commitment to the Saskatchewan Hospital replacement project was made, Mr. Speaker, in 2006.

Mr. Speaker, I have in my hand the proposal that was made by Prairie North Regional Health Authority to the Saskatchewan Party government earlier this year, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the minutes of the regional health authority would indicate that the board approved this proposal coming forward in October to ensure that it would be considered in the budget planning for this year.

[16:45]

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to read from the conclusion of the Prairie North proposal that has gone back to government, Mr. Speaker. Here's the conclusion that's in their report, and I quote:

Individuals struggling with long term psychiatric illness and/or high complex needs are amongst the most vulnerable members of our society. Their needs often go unexpressed by virtue of the individual's limitations. Their voices are amongst the most difficult to hear. It falls to us all to listen, reflect, and act to address their needs across the entire continuum of mental health care and service by providing appropriate facilities and programs, with appropriate resources and supports that other segments of society have come to expect. The provincial strategy proposed by this report — with replacement of Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford at its core — puts the needs of these patients/clients first.

Mr. Speaker, this government came to office four years ago. They said, we are going to address health care from a patient-first perspective. Four years and \$40 billion later, the health region is saying to this government they have not yet put the patient first in the mental health field, Mr. Speaker. It's time to do that.

The Prairie North Health Region also says:

Replacement of Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford affords the perfect opportunity to improve the quality of care, the quality of life for all mental health patients and clients across the provincial spectrum of mental health services.

Mr. Speaker, having received that document, having reviewed that document, Mr. Speaker, having reviewed the entire Health budget, Mr. Speaker, that contains more spending this year than ever before, the Minister of Health had the audacity to stand in this Chamber just a week ago, a week and a half ago, Mr.

Speaker, and say that it's time to take mental health delivery out of the back bushes of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

The minister misunderstands the proposal in front of him, he misunderstands the needs of the mental health community, and he has failed to convince the Minister of Finance and his cabinet colleagues of the value of this project, Mr. Speaker, to all Saskatchewan residents represented by people not only in The Battlefords, but across the entire spectrum in this province.

Mr. Speaker, this is a hugely important project. The folks at Prairie North Regional Health Authority have been working since 2004, Mr. Speaker, to package this appropriately for government. They acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, in the very first study that they did, Mr. Speaker, with the backing of and support of Saskatchewan Health and the minister of Health in 2004, they put their facility audit and building program analysis together, Mr. Speaker. This was the first major step towards ultimately getting a new hospital. This 2004 report was done by Friggstad Downing Henry Architects, Mr. Speaker, and the first recommendation in the report was: the time is past due to redirect facility changes at Saskatchewan Hospital, North Battleford.

Mr. Speaker, another recommendation: the program requirement for Saskatchewan Hospital, North Battleford can be much better served in a new facility which is designed to meet current functional programming objectives.

Mr. Speaker, in 2006, Prairie North Regional Health Authority, Saskatchewan Property Management, and Saskatchewan Ministry of Health retained and paid for Cannon Design in association with AODBT architects and planners to undertake a process redesign study, a functional program and concept design, for the new provincial tertiary psychiatric rehabilitation facility in North Battleford.

Prior to the 2007 election, Mr. Speaker, all of the work of that architectural and concept study, Mr. Speaker, was presented to a public meeting in the city of North Battleford and approved by the community as a whole. The next step, to be funded by the Saskatchewan Party government after the 2007 election, Mr. Speaker, was to take those designs and move them to the bid process, Mr. Speaker. Four years and \$40 billion of spending later, and that still has not been done, Mr. Speaker.

This budget could have had a simple, simple line item in it that indicated this project can be moved to tender, Mr. Speaker, by having the concept work moved to the architectural work, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the contracts can now be bid upon, that the contractors have an opportunity to tell us what the cost of this project is going to be.

This government failed, Mr. Speaker, to respond to that. They have failed to provide the necessary funding to take this project further, Mr. Speaker. All they have done is called for a rescoping of the project which in fact is reducing the number of beds in the facility, Mr. Speaker, and developing a broader based response to mental health needs in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will acknowledge and accept that we need a broad-based strategy to deal with mental health in Saskatchewan. I think Prairie North has hit the nail on the head,

Mr. Speaker, in the way in which it has presented its plans to the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. At the core of it, however, at the core of the plan is the replacement of Saskatchewan Hospital, North Battleford — replacement that could easily have been started by funding from this government.

There's been money for a domed stadium that's not going to happen. There's been money set aside for a carbon capture project that's not going to happen. There's been money set aside for an isotope development program at the University of Saskatchewan that's not going to happen. But four years and \$40 billion worth of spending later and still no further development at the Sask Hospital project. Mr. Speaker, this is disappointing. It's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker. The commitment of this government has to be to the people in the mental health community in Saskatchewan.

Let's go back to my comments off the top, Mr. Speaker. *The StarPhoenix* said, in response to the March 23rd budget, vision is needed for the future in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. If there's an advantage in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and it's not just a duplication of Alberta's advantage, if there's an advantage in Saskatchewan, we need vision to ensure that it moves ahead. Mr. Speaker, that vision includes a new Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford. It includes a housing program that is not just adding debt to the Saskatchewan bottom line. It needs a transportation policy that takes into account changes in the way transportation is occurring. And it needs training opportunities for the new labour force, Mr. Speaker, that's going to help to develop a long-term, sustainable economic growth program for the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's very simple to see why I cannot support the budget that's brought down by this government. Not only the budget presented this year, but when you accumulate everything that's been said, Mr. Speaker, the misrepresentation of the debt in the province and the lack of commitment to those things that will really help our communities, Mr. Speaker, it's obvious I can't support this budget. I will support the amendment that's on the table, Mr. Speaker, because it talks about building growth in this province, specifically on housing, and providing a revenue base that will allow us to build a savings program.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity for letting me say a few words about the budget today. And, Mr. Speaker, as everyone in my community knows, I'll be happy to answer questions in The Battlefords on the budget on any opportunity provided to me. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much for the privilege to speak on this fantastic budget. First of all, I would like to thank the people of Batoche. My Batoche constituency is a very diverse, very diverse communities. We've got a large Ukrainian population, a large French population, a large Métis population, and a large Norwegian population, and also a large German population.

So we are very diverse, but it is a beautiful, beautiful

constituency. I'd also like to thank my CA [constituency assistant] Mary Anne Telfer and her husband Don for the work they do for the constituency, and it is muchly appreciated. Thank you very much Mary Anne and Don. I'd also like to thank my wife Valerie for her years of support and her constant aiding and assisting me in my duties.

Mr. Speaker, after 16 years of NDP government promises, the Saskatchewan Party government is moving forward — not just promising — moving forward with projects like the building of the St. Louis Bridge. With the groundwork well under way, it is an exciting project to actually see coming to fruition. For the people of the area, it means a lot of possibilities that were not achievable before. To the province, it means the final link for primary weight hauls on the No. 2 Highway from Regina to La Ronge. We are all looking forward to the day of the grand opening of the new bridge.

Mr. Speaker, three and a half years ago, even though the forest industry world wide was going into a slump, the former NDP government proposed dumping \$100 million into the P.A. pulp mill. With the way world markets made their downward spiral, this would have meant Saskatchewan people would have lost \$100 million along with the pulp mill.

Now the Saskatchewan Party, through due diligence and careful planning, has guided the sale of the Prince Albert pulp mill to a company called Paper Excellence. They will be manufacturing pulp fibre that will be processed into rayon cloth. This is fantastic news for Prince Albert and surrounding area, in fact all of Saskatchewan. This is truly a win-win situation for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's birth came in 1905, but Saskatchewan's rebirth comes with this budget. After 60 years of dormancy, Saskatchewan has come out of its cocoon. We have shed the cocoon-like blanket that has been smothering us and dragging us backwards since the dirty thirties. Just like that cocoon, Saskatchewan was hanging in the dark, upside-down world with no hopes, dreams, or expectations of a brighter day — just eternal darkness, failure, and continued decline as we begged for more equalization payments. These were the barriers surrounding us on all sides, letting no one in, driving away investment, and sending our children to seek their futures elsewhere. Everyone said woe is poor Saskatchewan, the poor, little have-not province.

Now Saskatchewan is like an emerging butterfly spreading its wings for the first time. Now we can finally believe in ourselves and take our destiny in our own hands. We are shedding the blanket of fear, loathing, and insignificance that has been dragging us backward and destroying us as our young people left and our population fell. As we take flight, we can see on our horizon sights that, just a short three and a half years ago, seemed unattainable. We see Saskatchewan as an economic powerhouse, not just in Canada but as a global juggernaut.

As we spread our wings, the world is watching. We have what the world needs. And the world's population growth, the need for potash grows. Today and the future, world food supplies will be dependent, dependent, Mr. Speaker, on Saskatchewan potash. In order to supply the food needs of the growing population of this planet, maximum food . . .

**The Speaker:** — It being 5 p.m., the House will take a welcome recess. We'll resume again at 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

McMorris .....	6909
Broten .....	6909
Wall .....	6909
Lingenfelter .....	6909
Iwanchuk .....	6909

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

Higgins .....	6910
Junor .....	6910
Forbes .....	6910
Broten .....	6910
Morin .....	6911
Iwanchuk .....	6911
Quennell .....	6911
Wotherspoon .....	6911

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

<b>Remembering the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire</b>	
Wilson .....	6912
<b>New Democratic Party Convention</b>	
Chartier .....	6912
<b>Team Canada Wins Silver in World Women's Curling</b>	
McMorris .....	6912
<b>Saskatchewan Housing Strategy</b>	
Forbes .....	6912
<b>Reaction to Saskatchewan Budget</b>	
Elhard .....	6913
<b>Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendments</b>	
Morin .....	6913
<b>Fiscal Fitness</b>	
Stewart .....	6913

**QUESTION PERIOD**

<b>Supply of Physicians</b>	
Lingenfelter .....	6914
McMorris .....	6914
<b>College Merger</b>	
Broten .....	6915
Norris .....	6915
Quennell .....	6916
Morgan .....	6917
<b>Housing Announcement</b>	
Forbes .....	6917
Draude .....	6917

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

<b>Housing Plan</b>	
Draude .....	6918
Forbes .....	6920

**POINT OF ORDER**

Yates .....	6919
D'Autremont .....	6919
The Speaker .....	6919

**MOTION UNDER RULE 59**

<b>Audit of Colleges</b>	
Broten .....	6921

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

Weekes .....	6921
--------------	------

**SPECIAL ORDER**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

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

Hickie .....	6921
Norris .....	6925

<b>Nilson</b> .....	6928
<b>Ottenbreit</b> .....	6930
<b>Ross</b> .....	6934
<b>Taylor</b> .....	6936
<b>Kirsch</b> .....	6940

# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

## CABINET MINISTERS

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Hon. Don McMorris**  
Minister of Health

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

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

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

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