



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

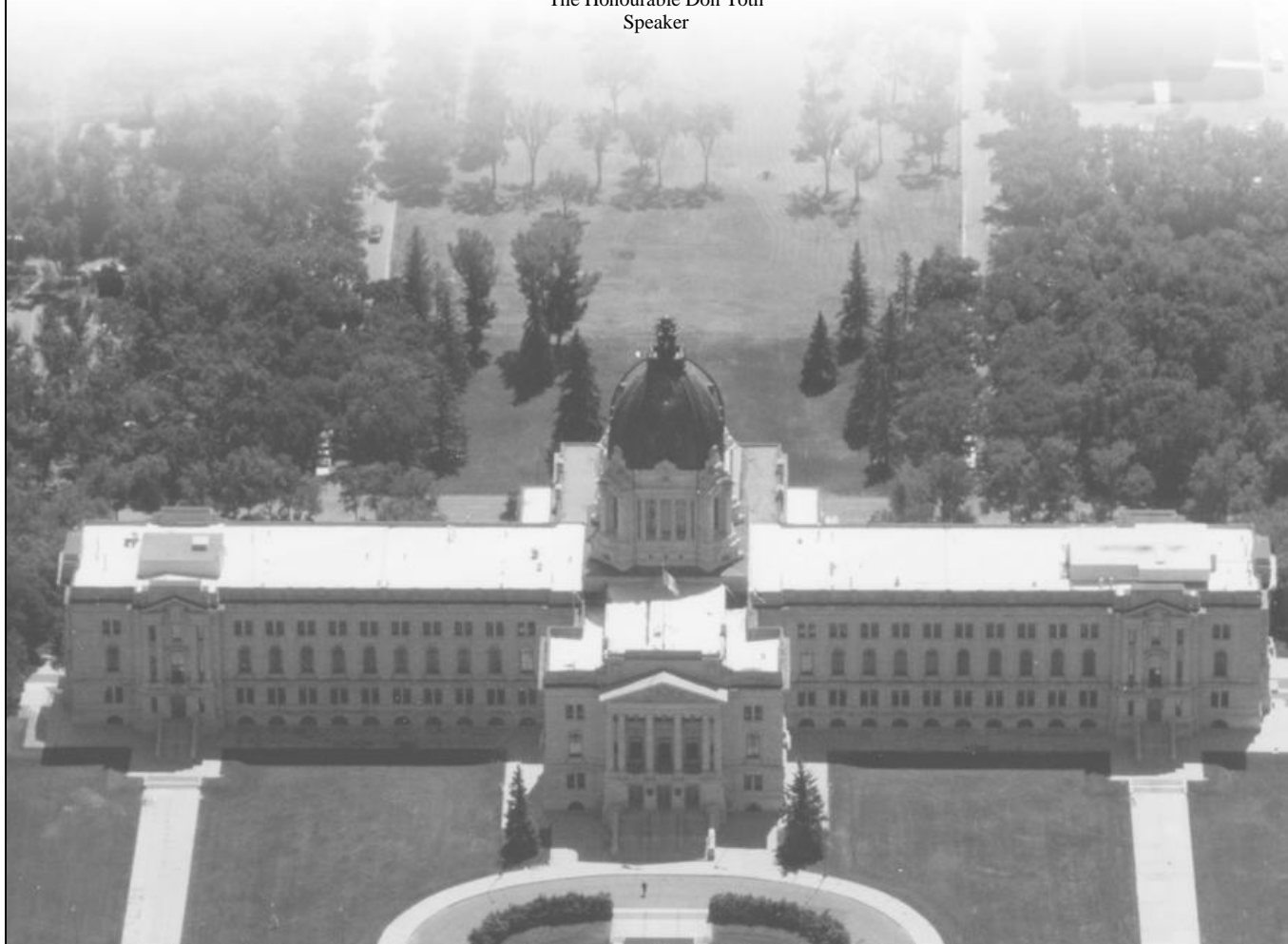
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Joining us in your gallery today is someone who quite literally has changed for the better the lives of thousands of Saskatchewan people. He's seated in your gallery. His name is Tim Marshall. And for a little while longer he'll be with STEP, the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, until he retires after 25 years of service when you combine STEP and his time with AgDevCo. He's joined by Lionel LaBelle, the CEO [chief executive officer] of STEP.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, by the way of introduction, tell you that Tim is currently the honorary consul of Mongolia in Saskatchewan. He's a fellow of the British Institute of Agricultural Engineers and a fellow of the European Agricultural Engineers. He speaks a number of languages, Mr. Speaker. He's familiar also with Russian and German, Danish, and Portuguese.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, he has served the province well, first at AgDevCo where he worked to open up markets to beef cattle genetics from our province and agricultural equipment into eastern Europe in exchange for textiles.

And very, very significantly over the last period of time in his career, he has pioneered in the opening up of markets of pulse crops — Saskatchewan pulses, lentils and dried peas and chick peas — all around the world. Mr. Speaker, 18,000 pulse growers today in the province owe, in no small measure, some prosperity and some success to his work in opening up pulse markets around the world to the point, Mr. Speaker, where our province is now responsible for two-thirds of the world's pulse exports. In no small way, this has been achieved with the help of, with the vision of, and the leadership of Tim Marshall.

Mr. Speaker, in 2010 he was recognized as the Pulse Promoter of the Year by the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers. If they had a pulse promoter of the decade or maybe of the half-century, he would be eligible for both of those awards as well.

Mr. Speaker, we want to just say on behalf of the government and on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan today, we want to say thank you to Tim. Thank you for all of his work. Thank you for literally improving the lives of many businesses and producers in this province. And we just wish him all the best in his retirement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the Premier in welcoming Lionel LaBelle, the CEO and president of STEP with us here today, as well as David Froh, one of our export specialists from STEP who have joined Tim Marshall.

I join with the Premier in congratulating Tim on a fine career in the civil service, one of the proud members of our Saskatchewan civil service, and one of the leaders as well in the establishment of STEP. And I remember very clearly at that point in 1996, I believe, Tim when you were leading the active promotion of moving the trade development out of the Department of Economic Development over to STEP. And you were very, very much involved in that action that has led to one of the, I think, the best organizations of trade anywhere in Canada, and one that I know you're very proud of, but so is the government and so are members of the opposition.

I just want to say as well, Mr. Speaker, that Tim and I, and I know, the minister in charge, last night we celebrated the retirement out at the Saskatchewan hotel. The minister said some very positive things about travelling with you. I'm going to stick to my commitment that what goes on the road stays on the road. We can talk about that another time.

But, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to welcome as well the members of STEP to the Assembly and wish Tim a very, very special greeting as he leaves his post, and the best in your next international adventure. Thanks, Tim.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome today paramedics in the gallery representing the Saskatoon Ambulance Employee Association. We have Scott Ingraham, president of the association; Paul Hill, vice-president; and Rob Dziadyk, operations representative. All three are paramedics in Saskatoon, and welcome to the gallery today.

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased today to have two special groups of people in the galleries to introduce. First is the Métis Nation Eastern Region No. II from Archerwill. We have with them 17 grade 7 to 12 students. They're from Nipawin, Melfort, Prince Albert, Tisdale, and Kelliher.

They also have with them today Helene Johnson who is the regional director, and Ryan Calder who is executive director, Percy Daoust who is the president of Nipawin Métis Local, and Dianne Homstol who is the president of Tisdale local. And they have as chaperones Ethel Lee Flanigan, Emile Tessier, and Celeste Calder. But, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that these students really don't need chaperones. They look like they're very well-behaved to me.

Mr. Speaker, the Métis culture is a very important part of our history, and I know it's going to be an important part of our future as well. And I hope the students notice the Métis sash on the table, and it's an important part of our legislature. So I'd ask everyone to welcome this group of people from Métis Region No. II to their legislature.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I'm also delighted today to introduce 30 public service employees who are seated

in the Speaker's gallery. They're here today to take part in the parliamentary program for public service, and I thank you very much for being here. The participants are employees from Agriculture; Education; Energy and Resources; Enterprise; Environment; Finance; First Nations and Métis Relations; Highways and Infrastructure; Intergovernmental Affairs; Justice; Municipal Affairs; Public Service Commission; Saskatchewan Financial Services; Social Services; Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank each of them for their dedication and hard work and their passion for their jobs and for working with the people in the province. Welcome to your legislature.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming the folks from Métis Nation Eastern Region II, particularly executive director Ryan Calder and regional director Helene Johnson from the home base in Archerwill. Certainly Region II is one of the most vibrant and with-it Métis regions in the province, the real leader in terms of business development and keeping that Métis culture alive, proud, and going on into the future. So I want to say congratulations to them on the work that they do, coming here with the students and with the presidents from the two different locals, welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

And I'd be remiss if while on my feet I didn't say hello to the group from the Treaty 4 student success program. I believe the group of students here are from Standing Buffalo, but they're accompanied by a couple of the administrators from the Treaty 4 student success program, Vera Tourangeau and Russ Marchuk, who I had the pleasure of going to school with back in the '80s at Scott Collegiate, although which side of the student, teacher divide I was on, I won't say. But anyway I won't comment on his current endeavours around political pursuits, Mr. Speaker, but it's good to see him and these students from the Treaty 4 student success program here in the gallery at their Legislative Assembly. And, Russ, may you have a fine view from the gallery for many years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to also introduce my special guests in the Assembly today, the students from the Standing Buffalo grade 9 class, who are here actually at the request of Vera Tourangeau. I asked her to help me out with some consultation work, some input for a report I'm doing to the Premier concerning what many term as vulnerable or at-risk youth, but what we've come to start describing them as, Mr. Speaker, as youth with promise and potential.

With the students today, I'm going to ask them just to stand and give us a little bit of a wave as I introduce them, is Juanita Bear, Kelsey Bear, Tristen Swampy, Chance Goodwill, Mackenzie Yuzicappi, Janine Bear — I apologize ahead of time if I've messed up any of the names, Mr. Speaker — Shayla Goodwill, Katrina Goodwill, Taylor Isnana-Hotain, and Alexandra

Moostoos.

And with these special people, Mr. Speaker, are, as has already been introduced, Russ Marchuk of the Treaty 4 student success program. Teacher Joel Russel is with them as well. Joel, give us a wave. And Vera Tourangeau is a very good friend of mine, Treaty 4 community engagement coordinator also involved with the Treaty 4 student success program. She's a pastor. She's an author, Mr. Speaker, of three significant books: *Miss, It Hurts*; *My Kohkom Prayed for Me*; and her new book, *Empty Arms*, a story of residential schools and their effects. And just as a note of interest, Mr. Speaker, April 20th, her second book *My Kohkom Prayed for Me* will be playing in town. So she has become a playwright. So I ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member from Yorkton in welcoming the Standing Buffalo grade 9 class that's here with us today.

Standing Buffalo First Nation is in the constituency of Last Mountain-Touchwood. It's in the beautiful Qu'Appelle Valley. The school is in between the Pasqua and Echo Lakes right near the park, just north of the park. And I certainly hope that our guests here today, along with the Treaty 4 adults that are with them, enjoy their stay in their legislature. And I ask all members to join with me in welcoming them.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I'd like to join the minister and also the member, my colleague on this side of the House that introduced a guest of the . . . I guess our Métis students and area director.

I just want to acknowledge Helene Johnson as a friend, a mentor, for your hard work, your dedication you do on behalf of the Métis people in our province. You serve us proud. You have challenges. But I just want to say, keep up the fight. Keep on doing what you're doing for our next generation — our grandchildren, my grandchildren, yours. Keep up the fight.

And Ryan, just want to acknowledge you as well for the good work you're doing. Continue to fight in your area, and I know the Métis people are in good hands when we have leaders like you fighting for us. Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce Mr. Kyle Addison. He's the president of the student union over at the University of Regina. Kyle has been a tireless worker on behalf of students, a vocal advocate of ensuring that their voice has been heard. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, he's helped to ensure that we have a very robust post-secondary system that focuses on excellence. I'd like to thank Kyle for his service and ask all members of this Assembly to join me in welcoming him to his Assembly.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission in welcoming all of the public service employees that are participating in the parliamentary program. I know that this is a program that's been going on in the province for many, many years, and literally thousands of public employees have had the opportunity to come to the legislature and see how this place works. I want to welcome these public servants to the legislature, and I'd ask all members to join me once again in welcoming these fine public servants.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, if I may, I wouldn't want the opportunity to pass for the chance to introduce to you and through you someone who has already been referenced in the introductions, Russ Marchuk who is the nominated Saskatchewan Party candidate in Regina Douglas Park, Mr. Speaker.

We're very pleased that he has, that he is willing to fly the standard for the Saskatchewan Party in that constituency, Mr. Speaker. We're looking forward to the day when his proximity to the chairs we occupy, as opposed to where he is right now, becomes a lot closer, Mr. Speaker, after the next election. We welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join all the, all the MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] that have welcomed the Aboriginal students and our Aboriginal guests today. I think what's really important, as one of the few Aboriginal members of the Assembly, is to always encourage the Aboriginal community to come and see what the Assembly is all about. And it's always a pleasure to see young students as young as grade 9 coming to visit our Assembly. And as always, in my own language of Cree I would say:

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

So in translation, I'm really proud that they're here. And I'm happy for them and that there's a lot of room, and I encourage them to keep coming to learn more about the Assembly. So to all the students in the gallery and the Métis guests, that this home, this House also belongs to the Aboriginal people.

So I'd like them to also join in welcoming all our students and Aboriginal guests today. Thank you very much.

[13:45]

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming Kyle Addison to the Assembly. Service as an elected official at any order of government or in an organization representing individuals is a good thing, and I do thank him for his service and would like to join with the

minister in welcoming him here today. Thank you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present petitions again on behalf of citizens in Saskatchewan who are asking support of maintaining quality health care services. The undersigned citizens are wanting the government to be aware:

That they ought to recognize the need for timely access to comprehensive and quality health care services for all communities within the province, including Wakaw and surrounding area;

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 area;

And that the cuts in access to timely and accurate diagnostic and laboratory tests within this community of Wakaw and surrounding area will not serve the needs of the residents;

And that the government 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 or recruitment issues and by 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.

There's over 100 signatures on this one today, Mr. Speaker, from Regina, Saskatoon, La Ronge, Maple Creek, Battleford, Cochin, Rouleau, Prince Albert, Langham, Carnduff, Lampman, and Swift Current. I so present.

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

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

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. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition to protect tenants from unreasonable rent increases through rental control. Since 2007 far too many tenants have suffered from monthly rent increases for hundreds of dollars with average rent increases of over 35 per cent in Saskatoon and Regina. The majority of Canadians now live in provinces with rent control guidelines including Manitoba, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island. Rent control in Winnipeg generated more housing units from 2007 through 2009 than Regina and Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately address the deepening housing crisis in Saskatchewan, evidenced by the soaring unaffordable rent increases in rent which have placed the cost of shelter out of reach for far too many Saskatchewan residents, and make known that Saskatchewan's housing crisis has worsened by the extremely low vacancy rates in Saskatchewan's urban centres which has resulted in dramatically reduced options for renters;

And in so doing, bring to the government's attention that the leave it to the market approach has proven to fail Saskatchewan renters, and now at this present time Saskatchewan renters need protection from the government to prevent further large rent increases;

And accordingly, Saskatchewan people would be best protected by enacting rent control without delay to ensure that the basic human need of shelter is put within reach of Saskatchewan's renters, thereby making Saskatchewan once again an affordable place to live, work, and raise a family.

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

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in

my place today to present a petition in support of the elimination of poverty in Saskatchewan. The petitioners note Saskatchewan's income gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow and now one in five children in Saskatchewan live in deepening poverty. The prayer reads as follows:

We respectfully request 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.

The petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by the residents of the city of North Battleford. I so present.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again rise today to present petitions signed by citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about the detrimental effects that Bill 160 would have on human rights law in the province if enacted. 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 and Frontier, Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present petitions from residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to the record that includes the tabling of deficits and increasing of debt at times of record highs of revenues, Mr. Speaker. This record includes increasing debt for the past three years, a record of \$1.3 billion of total debt being added to our books. This year alone, at a time of unprecedented highs in revenues, we see \$548 million of debt being added to our books. Of course this comes at a consequence for Saskatchewan people, both now and well into the future. 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

Kamsack, Vegreville, Prince Albert, and Regina. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm also pleased to present a petition:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to recognize that the Northern Trappers Association maintains the traditional value of hunting and trapping and also brings in millions of dollars to the provincial economy every year from the proceeds of fur harvesting combined with the economic spinoffs to the tourism sector and to the local economy; and in doing so, Mr. Speaker, to cause this government to stop turning their back to the northern trappers, but to all the people who live and work in northern Saskatchewan; and in doing so, Mr. Speaker, to cause the provincial government to immediately reinstate the funding to the Saskatchewan Northern Trappers Association.

And, Mr. Speaker, many, many people signed this petition. The people who have signed the petition here are from Sandy Bay. They're from La Ronge. They're from Buffalo Narrows. They're from Prince Albert. They're from Turnor Lake, Mr. Speaker. They're from all throughout the land, and I'm pleased to present this petition.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Nurses Practising in Saskatchewan

Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the number of nurses practising in Saskatchewan has reached a new record, topping 10,000 for the first time. A 6.4 per cent jump in 2009 was followed by a 3.8 per cent increase in 2010. This brings the total number of nurses working and assisting the sick and elderly in our province to 10,288. This is an increase of nearly 1,000 during the last two-year period:

"It's certainly positive," said Shirley McKay, registrar and director of the regulatory services for the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association (SRNA), which released the numbers in its 2010 annual report.

Mr. Speaker, it's because of initiatives brought forward in the last four years that we are seeing significant increases in nurses practising in our province:

An increase in the number of university nursing seats, taking effect this fall, is specifically targeted at filling future gaps, said Lorna Butler, dean of the college of nursing at the University of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government has made a promise to the people of Saskatchewan to hire 800 nurses in four years, and we have kept and succeeded that number, Mr. Speaker. I will say that it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that a former associate minister of Health and nurses' union president was unable to

increase the number of nurses in the province during the tenure of her government. Mr. Speaker, we are not afraid to make promises or goals. Our government's fulfillment of its promises and goals is moving Saskatchewan forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Senior Civil Servant Retires

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say a few words of congratulations on the retirement of a senior civil servant who has through his long career done a lot to benefit the province of Saskatchewan, the business people and families right across the province. Of course I'm speaking about Tim Marshall, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Marshall first came to Saskatchewan in 1986 and arriving from Zambia where he was involved in many export business concerns. Born in England, Tim Marshall is nonetheless a citizen of the world, a fact he could explain to you in German, English, Danish, Russian, Portuguese, or any number of African languages.

In an economy as export-driven as Saskatchewan's, Tim Marshall's skills at negotiation and global networking, getting contracts put together, ensured that the goods produced in Saskatchewan by businesses found markets overseas to ensure the success and economic growth of the province.

Tim Marshall was recognized at his retirement party last evening with friends, family, co-workers from Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Assembly to join with me in thanking Tim and his family for decades of work on behalf of the men, women, and children, families of Saskatchewan. And we wish the very best to him as he takes the next steps in the great adventure of life. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Arm River-Watrous.

Davidson Cyclones Win Provincial D Championship

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to talk about a championship hockey team from Davidson. The Cyclones from Davidson recently defeated the Gull Lake Greyhounds for the right to be crowned senior provincial D champions for a second year in a row.

The Davidson Cyclones have played well this past winter, but knew that the final game against the Gull Lake Greyhounds would be tough. Game one in Davidson saw the Cyclones defeat the Greyhounds 10 to 1 in front of a very packed rink. Many of these same fans travelled down to Gull Lake to cheer on their team to victory. The second game of the three-game set was played Saturday, March 26th in Gull Lake with the Cyclones taking it 4-2 in the end. Goal scorers in the Cyclones on this night included Derek Allan, Josh Sim, Jason Schneider, and Brent Leedahl.

In the provincials this year, the Davidson Cyclones had to defeat teams from Kenaston, Kelvington, Lucky

Lake-Dinsmore to get to Gull Lake and win the 2011 provincial senior D championship. While I'm on my feet I also want to remind the member from Cypress Hills about our little wager for a steak supper on the final game.

The Davidson Cyclones have a great success this year with a solid hockey team guided so well by local coach Jason Shaw, general manager Rob Allan, and trainer Tim Bruch.

I would like to offer the whole team my warmest congratulations and ask that the members join me in offering them our best wishes today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Battlefords Junior Citizen of the Year

Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to inform all members of the legislature today that The Battlefords 2010 Junior Citizen of the Year is Taryn Jackson, a student at the North Battleford Comprehensive High School.

Taryn Jackson has been a member of the yearbook club, the book club, the debate club, the drama club, the jazz band, the concert band, the school choir, and the student representative council. Outside of school, she is a member of the North Battleford City Kinsmen Band; the Saskatoon Youth Orchestra, both youth and adult choirs. She has been a volunteer at Zion Lutheran Church, the Western Development Museum, Telemiracle, Red Cross, and the Canadian Cancer Society. She has filled Christmas shoeboxes, collected food for the Food Bank, and assisted young musicians in developing their talent. She endeared herself to one of her teachers, her school, and her community last year by cutting her hair in support of cancer fundraising efforts.

And while doing all this, Taryn Jackson maintained a 94.7 per cent grade average in school last year. She has three years on the principal's honour roll, the Saskatchewan Elocution and Debate Association's Provincial Excellence Award, and she is a University of Saskatchewan Greystone scholar.

The high school students' services councillor said, "She is a very committed, dedicated youth who is passionate about the things she does and she has a social awareness mature beyond her years."

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Taryn Jackson, The Battlefords 2010 Junior Citizen of the Year.

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Spectra Place Fundraiser in Estevan

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Friday the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs and I attended a fundraiser for Spectra Place event centre in Estevan. Mr. Speaker, 770 people came out to celebrate the near completion of their new facility. Mr. Speaker, just over \$300,000 was the net amount raised at this event. This brings the \$23 million facility within almost \$2 million of being fully

funded.

Our government kicked in \$8 million towards this much-needed project, and the feds contributed as well. But, Mr. Speaker, the lion's share of the funding came from my community of Estevan as well as other local donors.

Guest speakers were Brian Burke, general manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs, and Gene Makowsky and Darian Durant of the Riders. A 2011 Ford truck generously donated by Senchuk Ford of Estevan was one of the many items auctioned off.

This event was also an opportunity to celebrate the area's athletic talent. Male Athlete of the Year went to Michael Bittman. Female Athlete of the Year went to Chelsea Peterson. Young Official of the Year was Dylan Lay, and the Volunteer Coach of the Year was Marco Ricci. Mr. Speaker, it was a wonderful evening and a great opportunity to celebrate our community. I want to thank all organizers and participants, and I look forward to the grand opening in April. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Vote for The Sheepdogs

Ms. Atkinson: — Music fans in our province are celebrating as our favourite Saskatoon indie rock 'n' roll revival band, The Sheepdogs, tours North America to rave reviews and a growing fan base. Recently they've impressed fans in Austin, Texas at the South By Southwest festival. They were loved in performances at the Western Canadian Music Awards. They performed to enthusiastic audiences in Montreal and at the JunoFest in Toronto.

The band has three independently full-length albums, the latest being *Learn & Burn*, which reached no. 21 on *Earshot's* national monthly top 200 charts.

Currently The Sheepdogs are one of eight finalists in a contest of new musicians competing for a place on the cover of the *Rolling Stone*, Mr. Speaker. Members of the band are: Ewan Currie, vocals and guitar; Leot Hanson, guitar; Ryan Gullen, bass; and Sam Corbett, drums. Band members write songs, rehearse, and record in their basement studio at the Corbett family home on 10th Street in Saskatoon Nutana.

Mr. Speaker, The Sheepdogs have recently travelled to New York to do photos, video, and recording for the *Rolling Stone* competition. The guys are going to be back in Saskatchewan tomorrow. I would ask every member of the legislature to vote for The Sheepdogs. This is one election, this is one election that we can all agree upon. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville.

Royalty Policies

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it hasn't taken long for NDP [New Democratic Party] members to distance themselves from their own leader's reckless policies.

Yesterday the member for Regina Dewdney said in his budget speech, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, so those who say that an NDP government would change the natural gas and oil royalty structure in Saskatchewan are absolutely wrong. And our leader does not say that. He does not say that. In fact . . . has emphatically said that oil and natural gas would not be changed.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in a transcript of an interview with the Leader of the NDP on CKRM on December 13th, 2010, the Leader of the NDP said, and I quote, "If I become the Premier in November 2011, I would institute a review of all the royalties in the province with industry, whether it's potash, uranium, oil, or gas."

There you go, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the member for Dewdney stood in this House and denied that the Leader of the NDP ever called for a review of oil royalties when the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what he's calling for.

Mr. Speaker, even the NDP MLAs are beginning to realize that their current leader and his policies are a disaster. They will kill investment, kill jobs, and drag Saskatchewan back into a have-not status. Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are committed to moving Saskatchewan forward.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Support for Emergency Medical Services

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, earlier in the week, the Saskatoon Ambulance Employee Association issued a press release. And in that press release they said the following, and I quote:

Saskatoon ambulance employees are alarmed that the provincial government chooses to ignore the needs of the province's land ambulance services and paramedics in the recent provincial budget despite warnings that there are urgent public safety risks that need to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that at the time the minister refused to comment on the issue of the lack of funding for ambulances and paramedics and the fact that families' lives, members of families' lives, are put at risk because of this lack of funding, can he comment today why there's nothing in the budget to deal with this issue?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the provincial government to thank EMS [emergency medical services] workers throughout this province that work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, Mr. Speaker, in some extremely difficult conditions, be it weather or be it extremely stressful conditions, Mr. Speaker, quite often early on the scene of an accident, Mr. Speaker, and the stress that that must cause for many of those workers. So on behalf of the government I

want to thank them specifically for the work that they do. Whether they work for a private delivery company or whether they work within the public system, Mr. Speaker, they do great work.

I will say that, Mr. Speaker, that this year's budget shows a significant increase to health regions, a \$260 million increase in health, but to the health regions alone an increase of 250 million, 60 million overall, 250 just for health regions, Mr. Speaker. These services, be it private or public, are employed through the health regions. They do the negotiating, Mr. Speaker. They make sure the proper services are provided and, Mr. Speaker, I think they do a very good job.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, there is little doubt that the EMS employees and the workers do a great job. And a number of them have come to the Assembly today. The reason they came is because they couldn't get any answers from the minister after he issued his press release on Monday. So they came here today to see whether or not the minister would answer issues like during the debate around the establishment of better rules, he issued a press release in 2008 in which he said:

"Saskatchewan people repeatedly tell me that emergency medical services need to be more effective, accessible and fair," McMorris said. "This review gives us an opportunity to be proactive in this area and make positive changes that will benefit patients, families, health professionals and communities across the province."

From that report there were 19 recommendations. And what the medical profession are telling us and people across the province are telling us is that none of the 19 recommendations have been implemented. Can the minister tell us why in the world he fails to implement the recommendations that his own study tells us we need to make the services of ambulance work in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, you know, there are private delivery services, publicly funded services through health regions, Mr. Speaker. And we've heard from the opposition on many cases that, many occasions that they're not in favour of any private delivery of services, Mr. Speaker. I would think that with that case in mind, Mr. Speaker, had they ever become government in the future, that many of these private services would be completely wiped out. That will not be the case under our government.

One of the recommendations, Mr. Speaker, was to look at the way we deliver services, emergency medical services. A committee has been struck to redesign that, Mr. Speaker. That committee will be meeting in the very near future to look at how we can better utilize all the services that we have, Mr. Speaker, integrated throughout the whole province.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the minister has had the

result and recommendations of the study for two years, none of which have been implemented. And the question to the minister . . . In regards to timing, we now have a situation, because of his lack of implementation of the recommendations, that in Saskatoon for 40 minutes of every day there is no ambulance service in the city of Saskatoon and surrounding area — for 40 minutes of every day. And that's true across the province.

Can the minister tell us how in the world families are supposed to take care of the sick, if there's a car accident, in cases of emergency, when for 40 minutes every day of the year there's no ambulance service in the city of Saskatoon? How's that supposed to work?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, I've mentioned many times in this House, and I'll mention it one more time to the opposition members — should be familiar with this — but the Saskatoon Health Region, for example, in Saskatoon is responsible for EMS services throughout the health region, Mr. Speaker, as is Regina Qu'Appelle or any of the other health regions.

Mr. Speaker, we have done . . . Over the last number of years under our government, Mr. Speaker, in '06-07, Mr. Speaker, the budget for EMS in this province was \$43 million. Mr. Speaker, in '09-10 the budget, Mr. Speaker, for EMS services was 54.6, Mr. Speaker, and continuing to increase. We are funding health regions to supply EMS services. The level of services those regions decide on, Mr. Speaker, is their responsibility, Mr. Speaker, the same as it was under the former government.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if they're asking us to run the EMS service out of the Ministry of Health. That would not be appropriate. It didn't happen under their government, and it won't happen under ours.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the minister is responsible for health services in the province, including ambulances. It may come as a surprise to him, but families in this province expect the minister and the Premier to be responsible for medicare, which includes the services surrounding the delivery of ambulance services.

In light of the fact that we have a wait of too long, too many minutes, too many hours in some cases, waiting for ambulances, and in the city of Saskatoon, 40 minutes a day families go without service . . . And the minister shakes his head and members opposite laugh about it. This is no laughing matter. We need service in the province, and the people of the province deserve better than waiting 40 minutes with no service every day in this province. When will the minister properly fund ambulances so families don't have to have that wait?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have increased the budget for health regions, Mr. Speaker, in this provincial budget by, on the health region side, \$250 million that will go to covering off many of the issues that health

regions face. Whether it's wages, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's increased volumes, that \$250 million, a much bigger increase than ever seen under an NDP government, will go to dealing with that, Mr. Speaker. But I find it absolutely amazing. I really cannot understand where the opposition is coming from. Today they're pushing and . . .

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, today they are pushing for more money going into private delivery of health care. Mr. Speaker, when we talk about reducing surgical wait times, they're absolutely against it. A little bit earlier, they were fully in favour of private delivery of chiropractic service. They wanted more money to go into that, Mr. Speaker. That's perfectly fine. But if we have private money going into a CT [computerized tomography] scan, that's not all right, Mr. Speaker. If it's privatization under their watch, it's perfectly fine, Mr. Speaker. When we expand it under ours, the sky is blowing up.

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

Contract Negotiations with Teachers and Funding for Education

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people want the provincial government to deliver excellence in our education system. But this government has been undermining our education system by not providing a stable funding formula to school boards and by firing educational assistants. Now we have learned that negotiations have broken down with the province's teachers. To the minister: why is the Sask Party government failing to deliver a deal that is truly fair, reasonable, and competitive for our province's teachers?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government truly does value teachers within our province and we have to remember, we all recognize, that negotiations are a process, not an event. We know that the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation will be meeting with their local representatives this weekend, Mr. Speaker, and we encourage both sides to return to the bargaining table. What we will not do, Mr. Speaker, is have the negotiations here on the floor of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Broten: — What the government has put on the table is obviously not fair, not reasonable, and not competitive. That's why the teachers had to walk away from negotiations. Here's what one teacher wrote as she asked for more respect from this government: "I hope this letter convinces you that teachers deserve to be paid equivalently to other professions. We are as dedicated, educated, and caring as police officers and nurses." Another quote: "When it comes to contracts and what we get paid, I feel we are undervalued and not respected."

To the minister: why is the Sask Party government disrespecting teachers by refusing to make an offer that is actually fair, actually reasonable, and actually competitive?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say again that we encourage both sides to return to the bargaining table. We will not conduct the negotiations here on the floor of the Assembly.

[14:15]

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, there's a problem with responsibility with members opposite. We have a Minister of Advanced Education that tells us he's not responsible for his merger mess. We have a Health minister telling us that he's not responsible for EMS shortfalls in the province. We have an Education minister telling us that she's not responsible for funding education in this province properly.

I don't know how this minister can stand in her place and claim that the offer the government made is fair, reasonable, and competitive when the teachers viewed it as so insulting that they walked away from negotiations. Here's another quote from a teacher:

I know that the extra work I put into creating a better learning program will in turn help create a better society, but I feel that I am the only one who truly recognizes the extra effort I put into my career in order to meet the needs of students. There are a tremendous amount of expectations on teachers, and it would be wonderful if those expectations were accurately acknowledged and properly valued by the government.

Again to the minister: what does she have to say to this teacher? When will the government properly value the work of teachers and give them a fair deal?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I know the member opposite is trying to spin that we don't take responsibility but, Mr. Speaker, it's just spin. We took responsibility for education. That's why we've increased the money that goes to school divisions year over year over year. Mr. Speaker, we are now over 16 per cent increases to the school divisions within our province.

Mr. Speaker, we have made unprecedented investment into infrastructure within this province, Mr. Speaker. We have now, in one term, we have invested \$422 million into the infrastructure within our school system in our province, Mr. Speaker. We take responsibility for child care spaces and we've increased those by over 35 per cent now, Mr. Speaker. And we've taken responsibility for early childhood learning as we expand pre-K spaces year over year over year. This is a file

that's been sadly neglected under the NDP. And, Mr. Speaker, we've taken responsibility and we've increased funding in each and every area.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, will the minister stand and take responsibility for breaking a promise to provide a stable funding formula to school boards? Mr. Speaker, will the minister stand and take responsibility for reducing the number of educational assistants in our province? Mr. Speaker, will the minister stand and take responsibility for not treating teachers with respect?

Another teacher goes on to say, "I hope this letter confirms that we deserve to be recognized and valued for the demands we meet and the commitment we exercise by making sure we offer a quality education to the youth of tomorrow."

And another one: "I definitely do not feel that I'm adequately compensated for the work that I do, but I am a confident teacher and I'm committed to my profession despite the setback."

To the minister: what does she have to say to these teachers? And why is she undervaluing their work?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have said at the onset and I'll say it again, we do value the work that teachers do, and they do a great job. I myself have had nothing but fabulous teachers for my own three daughters, one of . . .

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible] . . . extra, extra help. But, Mr. Speaker, the promise we made, just to remind the member opposite, the promise we made was to reduce the dependency on property tax in this province, and we kept the promise in this budget, Mr. Speaker. We have dramatically decreased the dependency on property to fund education in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the funding formula that we're still using is using the formula that was used under the NDP. If they didn't like it, then why didn't they change it?

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

References to Ministry of Justice

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Justice, when asked for the third time about matters referred to Justice by the Minister of Advanced Education, matters which have been raised in the Assembly for weeks, the minister finally responded by saying essentially, how would I know? I'm only the minister.

To the minister: is this the government's definition of ministerial responsibility?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Justice provides legal services, as I indicated earlier, for all areas of government. We provide competent, professional service. Matters are referred routinely from officials in other ministries. They're referred across. They do not go through the minister's hands of either the ministry that creates the request nor do they go through mine unless there's a compelling reason that they should or must, Mr. Speaker. It is like any other law firm. And I'm very pleased with the competence and professionalism of the lawyers that work in my ministry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's my view and it was my view when I sat over there that questions raised in the Assembly are a compelling reason for the minister to be briefed, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in a letter to the editor published in *The StarPhoenix* today, Klaus Gruber, former executive director of Family Service Saskatoon said, and I quote:

It has been difficult to get the attention of the provincial government regarding the issue of homelessness.

It appears that advocates have been going about things the wrong way. They should have bought every homeless person a membership in the Enterprise Club.

According to Brad Wall, that "would ensure that their comments and ideas will be heard."

To the minister: in light of the continuing concerns Saskatchewan people have, will the minister co-operate with the Chief Electoral Officer in a review of donations made under the banner of the Enterprise Club of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I've answered this question in the House earlier. I had indicated that there is a professional, Graham Pearson, that's appointed to look after the affairs of one of the colleges. The review is under way. And I indicated as well that, as recently as a day or two ago, information and requests for information were still going back and forth. It's not my intention to interfere with that process. My officials have indicated that if there is something untoward or something comes up that would warrant further investigation, they will refer to the appropriate police agency.

And, Mr. Speaker, I also indicated, and I want to reiterate again today, if there is something that involves members of this government or people that are close to this government, my officials will immediately refer the matter out of province. Nothing has arisen like that, but that is what will happen with this government. That is what should've happened with that government. I suspect that it did when they were in office and,

Mr. Speaker, that is the tradition that has taken place, a good protocol, and we will continue to have that protocol in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister may want to review the record, and I appreciate that it was members on both sides of the House that were carrying on during my question and he may have not heard it.

But my third question: Mr. Speaker, last Thursday when asked about the Glen Kobussen donation to the Sask Party under the banner of the Enterprise Club, the Minister of Energy and Resources said, "... there was a cheque cut in September for a 2010 membership donation which will be fully disclosed in our 2010 annual return as in the normal course of business."

Mr. Speaker, on Monday when asked by the media, the Minister of Justice said the donation wouldn't show up on the Sask Party returns, and only a portion of it ever would have, but because of a payment to the St. Peter's College, none of it would show up on the returns.

Given the confusion between Enterprise Club members on the front bench, will the Minister of Justice co-operate with the Chief Electoral Officer in doing a complete review of donations to the Sask Party under the banner of the Enterprise Club?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, a cheque was received from Mr. Kobussen in September of 2009 for a membership in the Enterprise Club for the year 2010. As I've indicated earlier, Mr. Speaker, there is a portion of that membership that is eligible for a contribution receipt. That amount is determined dependent on what the costs are for meals, etc., or other things that take place during that year. A receipt is issued in early 2011 for that portion of that donation.

Mr. Speaker, the funds were returned . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. The member from Regina Walsh Acres will allow the minister to complete his response. I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, in early 2011 when the matter was raised, the funds were returned. Mr. Speaker, I can advise as well . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I think the minister was trying to respond and provide the answer. I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I've advised the members opposite, I've advised the media that when it turned out that the funds were actually paid by a third party, the funds were returned. A letter was sent to Mr. Kobussen and to Canada

Revenue Agency indicating that they cannot and ought not rely on the tax receipt that was issued.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing untoward or irregular on that. We have returned the donation that was made, Mr. Speaker, and indicated to Canada Revenue Agency that it ought not be relied upon.

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

Payments Regarding Parkridge Nursing Home

Ms Atkinson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Government Services. In June 1985, the Grant Devine government handed out quite a deal to Wolfe Group Investments to lease and purchase the Parkridge nursing home in Saskatoon. For the last 25 years, the province of Saskatchewan has made yearly payments to Wolfe Group. Can the minister tell us how much the taxpayers of Saskatchewan have paid in lease fees to this landlord?

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

Hon. Ms. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite should know and would know from her time in office and government, lease costs are not made public. The practice of keeping lease costs as confidential is long-standing. Thank you.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Parkridge deal was a sweet deal, giving a large amount of money each year to Wolfe Group to lease a facility the Saskatoon Health Region has operated. We asked for information on this deal through not one but two written questions but this minister refused, choosing to use legislative procedure to hide information the public has a right to know. So to the minister: what is the total amount of money the people of Saskatchewan have paid Wolfe Group Investments to lease the Parkridge nursing home? Or is she going to continue to hide the answers from the public? Is this accountability and transparency?

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

Hon. Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much. And I'd like to again thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Government Services's position regarding the disclosure of lease information is based upon avoiding disclosure to third party of economic information that would be harmful to the firms that the ministry does business with. Consistent with the intent of the freedom of information legislation is to protect third party and support of private sector parties to the minister's policy. This is the same policy that the previous government upheld.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — It's been 25 years since the deal was made. That's a long time for this company to profit but it now appears that Wolfe Group Investments has received one last payout. Quorex's own website says the provincial government now owns the facility. So to the Minister of Government Services: when did the government buy the Parkridge nursing home and how much did it pay for it? And is it true that we have paid over \$30 million in lease fees and that we paid \$5.1 million to buy the facility and we're going to pay \$19.5 million worth of repairs and remediation? At the end of the day, that's \$55 million. Is that true?

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

Hon. Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much. It's interesting that the member would pose that question since they were the ones that in fact, for the majority of that time, were responsible for the payments for that. This facility provides incredibly well . . . rather provides services for long-term care patients. Because of that, the people in the city of Saskatoon do appreciate this facility.

As I said earlier, this is a policy that was put forward by the previous government that we would never, they would never reveal what is being paid in leasehold payments because it does affect the marketplace. So because of that, and with Government Services being a substantial leaser within the province, we would never want to interfere with the marketplace. Thank you very much.

[14:30]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question 970.

The Speaker: — Question 970 is tabled. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to order the answer to question 971.

The Speaker: — Question 971 is ordered.

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 Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise in the House to provide a response to the Speech from the Throne with regard to the budget speech, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have heard the budget speech, and I want to start off by saying I was exceptionally impressed by the member from Canora-Pelly in his new role as Minister of Finance. And I want to tell the members that I will be supporting the main motion and certainly not voting in favour of the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, usually members at this time use this opportunity to briefly pay some respects and some acknowledgements around their personal life and around their constituency. Mr. Speaker, my constituency of Saskatoon Southeast continues to see very rapid growth in the areas of Rosewood and Stonebridge. We're pleased to see this. It's a sign of the economic prosperity and growth in our province.

There is under way at the present time, the expansion for the new south bridge going across, and I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, the province provided some ninety-eight and a half million dollars for that. And I know the constituents in my constituency are enduring some road construction and at times where the freeway goes down to single lane and the speed limit has been reduced to some 60 kilometres an hour during this period of time. We realize that this is one of the prices that we pay for progress. And we'll be pleased a year from now when the construction is finished. The construction work is well under way and is under budget, we're pleased to indicate as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize some of the people that have worked and provided support. In my constituency office I have Gordon Rutten, and he is assisted by a university student, Laine Goertz, who many of the members will know about because she has spent some time working in the legislature.

In this building I have got some very good staff. Jean Watts and Michelle Chyz are the admin assistants. I have a communications person, Judy Langford, and two other MAs [ministerial assistant], Lara Zaluski and Matthew Glover. My chief of staff, Denise Batters, has worked in the ministry since I've been there, a very competent, professional individual and has once again worked to put on a golf tournament, the David Batters Memorial Tournament, and raised \$20,000 this year for mental health. I'm very proud of the work that she does and pleased to see that that's happening.

I also would like to recognize Deputy Minister of Justice Gerald Tegart and the people that work at the Ministry of Justice, and Deputy Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety Mike Carr, and all of the employees that work in both ministries as well as the Workers' Compensation Board. As members of the legislature, we are fortunate to have a skilled and professional public service.

Mr. Speaker, in my personal life, I would like to recognize and thank my mother-in-law for the very good baking and the butter tarts — my mother-in-law, Mildred Simpson, from Rosetown. I was out last week. I think sometimes she dreams up excuses with her computer that make me travel out there to fix it and get

it back on track. But it is always worth it for the butter tarts.

My own mother continues to live in Saskatoon Nutana. I am trying to persuade her to move into my own constituency because it may be one of the votes that I could count on absolutely, although she does frequently remind me of the visits of the member for Saskatoon Nutana, and is an avid watcher of question period and offers significant critiques and criticisms of both sides of the House. And I'm well appreciative of my mother who is nearly 90 years old.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to as well recognize and thank my wife, Sandy, for her continuing support. She works at Robertson Stromberg Pedersen. We've been together for nearly 25 years and, Mr. Speaker, she's a wonderful person. She was raised in an all-girl family, and she has never quite got over the fact that when you live with men things are called something different. Whenever I travel, she asks me whether I've got my makeup bag, and in spite of the last 15 or 20 years I've corrected her and referred to it as a shaving kit, she still continues to refer to it as a makeup bag. She asks me whether I have enough blouses, and I tell her that they're shirts. And I will not tell you, Mr. Speaker, what she refers to underwear as.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just recognize and thank all of the people that work in this building: the Pages, the legislative staff, and the people that work hard to keep the building looking very pristine and very polished. When you have a 100-year-old building there are certainly lots of challenges and we are very well served by the people that are here.

I would like to commend and thank the very good staff that work at the Ministry of Labour and Workplace Safety. We continue to have, tragically, Mr. Speaker, the second worst record in Canada for workplace injuries, even though in the last two years we have seen a 37 per cent reduction and we're continuing to see a drop. All provinces are seeing a drop, so where we stand with regard to the other provinces has not improved, although our accident rate continues to decline. But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that even one injury is one injury too many. So that continues to be of significant concern, not just to myself but should be a significant concern to all of the members. And I think all members in the Assembly would want to thank the good work that is being done at OH & S [occupational health and safety] and at Workers' Compensation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a little bit about this budget. It is a budget that is balanced. It is fair. It will help us build a strong Saskatchewan for the future. We are investing in health, in social services, and in education. This budget increases spending on health care by 6.2 per cent, for a total of \$4.46 billion. Our social services budget is increasing by some 8 per cent. Spending on education is up over 9 per cent, and for Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration, an increase of 3.2 per cent.

We are, Mr. Speaker, investing in highways and infrastructure: \$285 million for repaving and capital infrastructure projects; \$129 million, an increase of about \$1.9 million, to continue restoration and maintenance work on road and bridge infrastructure; \$25 million to maintain funding for the winter maintenance programs. I would like to mention in particular,

Mr. Speaker, the twinning of Highway 11 between Saskatoon and Prince Albert, a stretch of highway that is heavily used by people in my constituency going north to Prince Albert and to the lakes north of Saskatchewan. It is part of Saskatoon's gateway to the North. Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier the work continues on the Circle Drive project in Saskatoon. I would like to mention again the contribution of our province of ninety-eight and a half million dollars.

We are investing in health care: \$250 million increase to regional health authority base funding; \$2.8 billion total base funding for compensation, drugs, and medical supplies and operating costs; a \$12 million increase for the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, a total funding for the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency of \$121.9 million. This will include funding for new patient appointments, chemotherapy treatments, mammograms, a doubling of the bone marrow transplants by providing this procedure to patients who previously had to travel either out of province or out of country, additional colorectal cancer screening. Ten point nine million dollars to increase patient volumes for cardiac care, diagnostic imaging, and chronic kidney disease; \$2 million to revitalize the kidney transplant program. And we have developed a partnership with the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society or STARS.

We will invest \$5 million for a new emergency helicopter air ambulance service to better meet the needs of critically injured patients in rural and remote Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, there will be funding of \$937 million which will allow Government Services to hire 15 full-time equivalents over two years to bring air ambulance services in line with industry standards, which will include two pilot crews per airplane. This is in addition to our existing support for the children's hospital to be built in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, most members will be aware of the \$200 million investment by the province in that particular project.

Mr. Speaker, we are as well investing extensively in education: \$36.4 million for a 2.3 per cent increase in school operating funding, \$2 million for English as an additional language to accommodate the increased level of immigration to the province, \$2.9 million to support greater education success of Aboriginal students, \$1.4 million for First Nations and Métis initiatives fund, \$1 million for a high school completions fund, and half a million dollars for individual achievement grants to support greater educational success of Aboriginal students; \$1 million for enhanced intensive support funding for students with disabilities and learning difficulties; \$2.1 to develop 500 new child care spaces in 2011-12. This will increase licensed spaces by 4.1 per cent to a total of 12,700.

Four million dollars to support the development of 500 new child care spaces of which some will be designated to post-secondary institutions; \$2.6 million to develop an additional 40 pre-K [pre-kindergarten] programs, bringing the total number of programs to 270, and provide new spaces for up to 640 three- and four-year old children targeted to high-needs areas; \$6.1 million for planning of nine new high school projects in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, things that I'm particularly proud of, we are investing in a safer Saskatchewan: \$167.5 million for policing services including increases of \$7.6 million for the provincial

policing service; 5.2 million to fully fund and complete the government's commitment to hire 120 police officers over four years; and 250,000 to continue the redevelopment of the western gang database; \$104 million for adult corrections, including increases to deal with increasing custody and community supervision caseloads; and 500,000 to expand anti-gang programming; \$114.6 million for provincial disaster assistance program; \$7 million to begin construction on a 32-cell addition to Pine Grove Correctional Centre; \$1.2 million to implement year three of *The Road Ahead*, an action plan to improve safety and security in the province's adult corrections; \$13.8 million to begin construction of an addition to the Court of Queen's Bench on Spadina Crescent in Saskatoon.

Five hundred and ninety thousand dollars for a serious violent offender response program; 200,000 for the Aboriginal courtworker child protection pilot program; \$100,000 for a grant to Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City Inc.; \$50,000 to the Rotary RAP [restorative action program] program in Saskatoon, restorative action program in high schools; 50,000 for northern transportation initiative to help women and children in abusive situations get to shelters. These budgets fall and issues fall under the ministries of Justice and of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to these items, we are modernizing the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. Under the leadership of Human Rights Commissioner Judge David Arnot, the commission has developed a strategic plan to increase efficiency, help people to settle complaints without litigation, and make broad-based systemic changes to resolve issues that affect large numbers of people and increase awareness of human rights in the province. One of those changes will be the elimination of the Human Rights Tribunal and that the complaints will be heard by the Court of Queen's Bench. Mr. Speaker, we are pleased and proud of the progress we are making.

Turning back to the budget, we are paying down the provincial debt. Mr. Speaker, the budget strengthens the foundation for the future by reducing debt by another \$325 million. While other jurisdictions see debt rising with deficit budgets, Saskatchewan's debt and interest payments are falling. Government general public debt at March 31st, 2012, will be \$3.8 billion, a decrease of \$3 billion from March 31, 2008.

We are reducing taxes and supporting municipalities. The basic and spousal exemption amounts are increased by 1,000, and the exemption amount for dependant children rises by \$500 for each dependant child. The increase will raise the basic and spousal exemption amounts to \$14,535 and the dependant child amount to \$5,514 per child for the current year. Together these measures will save taxpayers some \$60 million a year. The small-business tax rate will be reduced from 4.5 per cent to 2 per cent beginning July 1, 2011, which will save small businesses an estimated \$80 million a year.

[14:45]

Education property taxes will be reduced by a total of \$55.6 million in 2011. Savings amount to \$31.3 million on farm land, 18.7 million for residential property, and 5.6 for commercial property.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other commitments that was made was the beginning of revenue sharing with municipalities — \$216 million in revenue sharing to meet the government's commitment to fully implement the new municipal revenue-sharing agreement, which will equal one full point of provincial sales tax, an increase of \$49.4 million.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud and pleased to do these type of things. We also in the various ministries to try and save money and be efficient and give taxpayers the best and most value for their dollars, we have implemented lean initiatives where the workers are called upon to try and develop strategies and techniques that will make their processes more efficient and will give better service to the public.

Mr. Speaker, we have done some of those things in our court services and in the Office of Residential Tenancies. And some of those processes are now complete and under way. And they have saved turnaround time on filing processes and saved aggravation and irritation points on people not being able to access a live person when they needed something as simple as directions or an address or an indication that they were going to be able to . . . [inaudible] . . . a hearing date because of an illness or other reason.

Mr. Speaker, some of the things that we've done have had little or no cost but have saved the taxpayer a substantial amount of money. We commend and thank the individuals that participated in those programs and look forward to working with them on those type of things.

Mr. Speaker, this is a fair and forward-looking budget. This is a budget that promotes the Saskatchewan advantage, Mr. Speaker. We are proud of our government. We are proud of our finance, Mr. Speaker. I will be opposing the amendment. I will be supporting the main motion, Mr. Speaker. I thank you very much for the opportunity to participate.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly in the life of a legislature there are a number of speeches that have a bit more focus, a bit more attention, a bit more hype and hoopla than others. And the budget speech would certainly fall into that category of one of the more important speeches in the life of a legislature, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess one of the things that I've come to be interested in — certainly as the budget speeches are delivered by this government — is the way that things are presented in the budget speech and hoopla'd and ballyhooed, and then the way things actually play out on the ground. And certainly there are a lot of things that sound really great in the budget speech, Mr. Speaker, and this speech is no exception. But then the way that, the way that there's this yawning chasm between the rhetoric that is delivered by this government on the one hand and the reality on the ground on the other is fairly alarming, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess we've heard no end of talk about the new Saskatchewan and all the glories therein and, you know, some years they declared this year country, Mr. Speaker. And then

when they blow the potash revenue projections, then it's back to next year country. And sometimes it's a little hard to keep track of what year they're operating on in terms of their calendar. But anyway, this year again we saw the return of the declaration of it being this year country in Saskatchewan.

And there's a lot of self-congratulation that goes on on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if it was the five self-congratulatory standing ovations that were given on that side during the speech itself. The way that, you know certain of their members broke down, it was kind of like watching James Brown do his thing where he'd sort of break down and then get propped back up and come back out to the microphone and carry on with his song, Mr. Speaker. Or the way that you listen to the different speeches that have taken place on this side of the House where various members on that side have talked about the hard work of the Saskatchewan Party government. And it's not giving credit to the Saskatchewan people, but referring to their hard work and congratulating themselves on their hard work.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, it's a bit strange to watch from this side of the House. But certainly the people of Saskatchewan have been working very hard. The people of Saskatchewan are trying to put food on the table, develop businesses, build homes, build lives, and certainly what a government should be doing is to support those efforts. But the way that you see this government take credit for, you know, everything under the sun that is good, and decry everything that is bad and blame that on somebody else, well, it's a bit much, Mr. Speaker.

So again, this budget was declared by various of the bright lights on that side of the House to be one of the best budgets in history and this measure is historic and that measure is the largest ever and on and on. And it reminded me of the member from Carrot River Valley and the potash budget that ultimately went boom. And I don't mean that in a good way, Mr. Speaker, but where the projections turned out to be so bad that they had to pay the potash companies money. I think the member from Carrot River Valley declared that budget to be the best in the universe. So I think you'll forgive us if we on this side tend to be a little reticent when it comes to taking their own comments as the gold standard on whether their budget is a good thing or not.

I guess what I want to speak about, Mr. Speaker, is what I see on the ground in my home neighbourhood of North Central in my constituency of Regina Elphinstone and what I see throughout the province. And I guess for a government that likes to pat themselves on the back for the boom times, I think it's interesting to note that it's different than what Kennedy used to say, Mr. Speaker — a rising tide in their case has not lifted all boats. A rising tide has not lifted all boats.

In fact, we see social assistance caseloads going up under this government. We see food bank utilization rates going up under his government. We see a housing crisis that is worsening, Mr. Speaker. And we see an Aboriginal employment situation where this should be the great golden opportunity to bring First Nations and Métis people into the mainstream of economic life in this province. And what do we see under the past three years of this government but Aboriginal employment going backwards.

So when you measure those things up alongside the hype and the hoopla that is deployed by the members opposite in the self-congratulation parade that seems to be never-ending over there, it's kind of hard. It's like cognitive dissonance, Mr. Speaker. They say it's one thing in here but you see something else out on the streets and in communities, and it's very hard to reconcile.

We see some good things in this budget, yes. We see some measures that on the face of them look good, and I hope to goodness that they carry out being good measures on the ground. But the problem, as with many things in the life of this government thus far, you know, what does it say about the priorities of this government?

And a constituent of mine who has very intimate dealings with autism and the kind of challenges that that can pose in a life, Mr. Speaker, what she had written to me was about the child and youth agenda and the way that all the costs broke down in that. And she couldn't believe that of the 900,000 that was devoted for autism and the way that this was being played by the members opposite as a breakthrough — and again any dollars that go towards autism are a good thing and affords different measures in that agenda — but she had a hard time understanding how it was that . . . or what this said about the province's priorities where you've got 900,000 for autism and you've got \$5.1 million for off-sale liquor vendors.

And she couldn't understand how it was that this is the way that the government was approaching this and making its priorities known, while she was off that night to a fundraiser, a steak night, for a friend of hers who is raising money for ABA [applied behaviour analysis] therapy for her child that is dealing with autism, and what that says about the government's priorities, Mr. Speaker. So again there's a question of new monies and, you know, new programs that are ballyhooed off the start or hyped up, but we'll see how they play out on the ground. There is also a question of some of the priorities in this budget.

Another one with the 5.1 million for off-sale liquor vendors, but you've got \$1.7 million in actual money for housing programs. Of course this government can't talk about housing without talking about the \$32 million that was put towards housing after the third quarter financial update. And again, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't compare to the cutbacks that housing has taken under this government from the start. One of the first budgets that they brought into this place, they cut back the budget for Sask Housing by \$8 million. And of the \$32 million that was brought in the third quarter, guess what the vast majority of those dollars will be going towards, Mr. Speaker. They'll be going towards maintenance. They'll be going towards actually keeping up the housing stock that Sask Housing already operates with its partners throughout the province and the various housing authorities.

So again this is a government that likes to play the game of how optics work and how public image works, but in terms of how it works on the ground for people dealing with a wretched housing situation, that \$32 million is not the hype that it's equal, nor does it tell the story of the dollars that were clawed back in the years previous and nor does it tell the story of the inadequacy of that gesture in the midst of a housing crisis.

So then again we have the 1.7 million come forward in the budget, and again they can't even keep it straight in terms of how many units this is going to represent from their budget speech to their budget propaganda, Mr. Speaker. And then we have the 250-odd million dollars come forward under the immigrant investor fund and this would seem to me to be a piece of creative financing worthy of the old Devine era, Mr. Speaker, in terms of, you know, not being upfront with the people of the province in terms of the way that this program has been rolled out. And there was a Throne Speech that introduced it and then there was another budget that brought it forward, and it's only now that we get the details on it this year after in the budget, Mr. Speaker.

So we've got a government that has presided over a housing crisis. Their first action was to take \$8 million out of the Sask Housing budget. Their emergency response to the budget criticism that they got in 2008 around housing was to appoint the Merriman-Pringle task force. The Merriman-Pringle task force comes back with a bunch of recommendations, most of which sit on the shelf. The others aren't taken up on, Mr. Speaker. And the housing crisis gets worse. So then the geniuses on that side of the House decide that, well you know, obviously a task force isn't enough to throw at this, what we should throw at it now is a summit.

So they're going to throw a summit at it, Mr. Speaker, and instead of waiting for the summit to throw out their creative financing masterpiece, which is this immigrant investment fund piece, you know, they get enough heat on housing coming out of the budget that, okay well, we'll roll that out of the gate a bit earlier. Then we'll have all these different groups that we've been consulting with that are supposed to be coming to the summit in good faith, although their good faith has worn mighty thin a long time ago, Mr. Speaker, given that they've already been through the task force and seen the crisis get worse for their troubles. So the summit is going to be the big answer to things. Well I think it's pretty easy to see just how hollow these measures are, how hollow these measures ring on the part of this government, Mr. Speaker.

And again since 2008, we've seen increasing food bank utilization rates. We've seen increasing social assistance caseload numbers. And on the housing file, we've seen increased wait loads with the different housing authorities. And in the city of Regina alone, we've seen upwards of 3,000 people that are in housing trouble on a consistent basis. And that's the good work of people like Hirsch Greenberg, Dr. Marc Spooner, and the others that are involved with Pathways Regina or the HIFIS [Homeless Individuals and Families Information System] study and the work that is done there.

And again, for a government that talks about being ready for growth — it ran on a platform of ready for growth, ran on a slogan of ready for growth — one of the most fundamental things to a growing economy is making sure that people have housing. That people have the shelter to be able to get the education, to carry out the job, to do those things that make them more economically viable in the economy. And if you don't have housing, Mr. Speaker, it makes a lot of things very hard. And it makes it particularly hard if you're somebody that's trying to go back to school or trying to establish yourself in the workforce.

And there are different community-based organizations and different organizations in through inner city of Regina and Regina Elphinstone-Centre that have the people, that have got the courage, that have made a decision in their life to try and go back to school, try to get that education or to try and get themselves attached to the labour force, and to provide a productive role in this so-called booming economy.

But they, if they're housing surfing, if they're couch surfing, Mr. Speaker, or they're in overcrowded conditions or if they don't even have a house and they're living out in the backyard in a tent, then how are they to take advantage of the booming economy? How are they going to keep themselves going in to that program every morning at 8:30? How does this work?

Well how it works, Mr. Speaker, in the current circumstance is not very well. You have people that are making that effort, that have made that decision and are trying to do their level best to get themselves into those opportunities to take advantage of this labour force that we've got that should be getting developed. But instead they have housing problems and it exacerbates whatever other problems they've got going on in their lives. And how does that work for a community? And how does that work for a society? Well it doesn't work very well.

[15:00]

But the worst of it is, Mr. Speaker, is that those individuals who have taken the trouble in their lives who should be, who should be supported in these efforts, who should be, who should be applauded for making this effort, they're going to be looking at this housing response from this government, Mr. Speaker, and they're going to be saying, okay, this is targeted at units that are valued at 180 to \$300,000. What are they thinking, Mr. Speaker?

That's a segment of the market that . . . Again, I'm not a housing expert. But in terms of where the pressure points are in the market, Mr. Speaker, in terms of people that are in rental and low income, to target your program at 180,000 to \$300,000 builds is sort of like saying, well there's a fire and what we'll do is we'll go around the block and we'll throw water on a tree or something instead of actually getting at the problem itself. And we've seen that for housing for the past three years, so I guess it shouldn't be that much of a surprise, Mr. Speaker.

But for them to come back again with all this ballyhoo and all this hype with a solution that is not going to address the problem, I think speaks about the way that that government is out of touch, the way that that government doesn't understand the problems that present in places like inner city Regina, let alone around the province. This is a government that dismisses out of hand the question of rent control, Mr. Speaker.

Rent control was under serious consideration in the summer of 2007, and at that time in conversations with the real estate developers, there was a lot of talk around no, no, don't do rent control. Let the market do its thing. And this was of course alongside efforts by the government to add to the public housing stock, to add to the affordable housing stock that were fairly robust, to use a favourite word of the Minister of Advanced Education, Mr. Speaker. But what happened with those market efforts? We didn't see those come to deal with the

housing crisis, but what we did see was rent go up and up and up.

And again if you approach problems in a pragmatic way, Mr. Speaker, and if you've got all things being equal and you try to be less than dogmatic about it, but if you're interested in what works, the premise on which rent control is based on is making sure that people have predictable, sustainable increases on their rent. And what we've seen instead, Mr. Speaker, in an absence of rent control is the way that rents have skyrocketed over the past three years. And that is unsustainable and that is not, that's not workable for the pocketbooks of the families of this province.

So again on housing, we see this government come forward with just, you know, sort of dogmatic, slavish obedience to their ideology and not looking at something that holds out the promise of working, as it has worked, Mr. Speaker, in the province of Manitoba.

I guess another thing that I'd like to comment on under the heading of measures that look good but the way it plays out on the ground is something else, Mr. Speaker, is the question of the renewal of Scott Collegiate, the revitalization of Scott Collegiate.

And so I guess one of the things that I was very proud to participate in as a member of the then government was the providing of monies to take the work around the North Central shared facility, which was a project advanced by the health region and by the Regina Public School Board and by the local community association centred on Scott Collegiate, to revitalize Scott Collegiate and to build out a shared facility that incorporated a number of components — a joint-use library, a lot of different sort of community space and common space, ways to bring in the primary health care aspect, ways to bring in the service learning model that the school board has advanced quite a long ways in. And we, as the government, thought that this made good sense.

Scott Collegiate is the high school in the youngest neighbourhood in the city of Regina. It should be a real anchor for our community. And where the school board was coming forward and saying that, yes we want to make this a priority, that had changed from years previous where the future of Scott Collegiate had been somewhat in question and what was going to happen with it. And that, frankly, Mr. Speaker, shows in the facility itself and the way that has been sort of been glued together and jerry-rigged together and made to serve the students that go there. But obviously it's a school that its physical life had long since passed its best-before date. But with the North Central shared facility project and with the centrepiece of that being a revitalized Scott Collegiate, the provincial government of the day thought that was a very important way to go about this. And the community was very much looking forward to this project taking place.

And I guess in February 2007, we had been able to advance planning money as part of a larger package around housing and education opportunities in through the inner cities, Mr. Speaker. But that effectively launched the skilled trades centre here in Regina and provided the planning money for the North Central shared facility as well as put \$60 million province-wide towards

housing. And I guess the way that that project was advancing, it got a lot of good response from the community. Then in the summer of 2007, back when the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] provincial capital list meant something, it had advanced to number two on the province-wide K to 12 capital list.

So in the budget of 2008, and again this is after the then NDP Calvert government had been defeated and the Wall Sask Party government had come to power, in the budget of 2008 — and thank you for your indulgence on that point, Mr. Speaker — we were very . . . I was ecstatic to see that budget 2008 contained monies for Scott Collegiate. And again this is in accordance with the way that the provincial capital list used to be accorded to, and that sort of autonomy that local school boards had.

And then again, you know, there was some more planning went on and then by the time of March 9th, 2009, then Associate Deputy Minister Ball in human services said that the Scott Collegiate project has completed its schematic design phase and is ready to go to detailed design sometime later this spring. So again it gets the initial tranche of money in February 2007 and '08, 2007. Then budget 2008, it's recognized on the capital priorities by the government opposite. It's re-recognized in 2009, and then what happens, Mr. Speaker? Well we go on and wait.

Well and again I'm glad that the minister from Regina South is interested in this, because he's been to Scott, and he's been there to comment on what a great project this is and how great it looks. And again this is one of the problems with this government, Mr. Speaker, is that they'll come into communities and say yes, this is great. This is really good. And then what happens down the line? Well the Regina public school board is still waiting to get the approval from this government to go to detailed design phase. So a project that was supposed to have the shovels in the dirt this summer, Mr. Speaker, is still waiting for that government to give the approval.

So again it gets the initial approval in budget of 2008, and meanwhile we've got the youngest neighbourhood in Regina. We've got a school where somebody like Paul Martin comes to town and recognizes it and does a joint entrepreneurship program with the Regina Chamber of Commerce, where you've got a lot of good things going on in terms of different learning models and service learning. And what happens at that school, Mr. Speaker? We get the announcements from this government, but we don't get the action.

So as the centrepiece of how this government conducts its business, I hope this isn't one more thing where it looks a lot better at the announcement phase than it does when you're waiting for the thing to actually show up. But the people in North Central Regina are waiting and have waited for quite a long time for the approval to at least go to the detailed design phase, and for that government to make good on monies that have already been allocated in budgets previous. So how much longer do they have to wait for this project to proceed, Mr. Speaker?

And for so many reasons, that's a neighbourhood, that's a community that needs a school, that needs a shared facility like has been planned and worked on and dreamed upon and prayed upon by the people of North Central and by the people of

Regina. So how long will it take, Mr. Speaker? I hope, I hope not long. But it's already overdue, and we can't wait much longer for this government to make good on the hype of the announcements with the reality on the ground.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I know that other of my colleagues want to participate in this debate, and I've gone on long enough. I just want to say at the end that this is work that you can't do without the support of family and friends and that I am very grateful for that. I'm grateful of the people that I work with out of the constituency office and out of the riding association.

But to close, Mr. Speaker, this budget doesn't add up. If past is indeed prologue, this budget will not add up to the hype that it is presented with. I will therefore be voting against this budget and in favour of the opposition amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's certainly my delight to be able to rise today to offer some comments on the budget that has been delivered by the Sask Party government as recently as March 23rd.

Mr. Speaker, before I start my comments, I'd like to make a few personal remarks. And that is I owe a deep sense of gratitude to some people who are very integral in helping me with my role as Environment critic and as MLA for Regina Walsh Acres. Obviously the primary people in my life would be my husband, Jeff Morin, and my daughter Morgan Morin. They are very supportive and very encouraging and very understanding. Numerous times, there are a lot of times when I have to call and say I won't be home or I'll be late or, you know, other things that come up, Mr. Speaker. And as I said, I owe them a deep sense of gratitude for the support and encouragement they give me to allow me to fulfill my role as the MLA for Regina Walsh Acres and as the Environment critic.

In the same breath, Mr. Speaker, I also have to thank my constituency assistant, Nathan Markwart, as well as Sherry and Lynn. They are incredibly dedicated individuals, very professional. There is no one that calls my office that doesn't encounter them in a very positive fashion, a very helpful fashion, and in a very caring fashion. So I'm deeply indebted to them and thank them for their dedication to the constituency of Regina Walsh Acres and the constituents of Regina Walsh Acres, Mr. Speaker, and obviously their assistance for me whenever required, Mr. Speaker.

I'd also like to thank the constituents of Regina Walsh Acres for placing their faith in me in representing them and their concerns in terms of the bringing forward those issues to the legislature and to various ministers on occasion with respect to the situations that arise. So I want to thank the constituents for placing their faith in me, and especially the constituents that do a lot of volunteer work on behalf of the constituency for the people of Regina Walsh Acres.

Mr. Speaker, I want to offer my comments on the budget speech, and I want to start off with looking at what it doesn't

offer, Mr. Speaker. And what it doesn't offer is a lot of encouragement and a lot of hope for the people of Saskatchewan wanting to see some aggressive and some positive action with respect to issues around the environment, Mr. Speaker.

There is very little in this budget with respect to aggressively attacking the issue of climate change, Mr. Speaker. We have seen from the Saskatchewan Party government in the 2000 election platform targets that they had promised the public of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, they promised to stabilize emissions by 2010 of greenhouse gas emissions. They promised further reductions for two other periods going forward, Mr. Speaker. And then we saw them completely renege on that promise, Mr. Speaker, and quite frankly tell, well admit, I should say because they are not really good about being open and accountable when it comes to telling the public much, Mr. Speaker, but were certainly having to admit that they were breaking that promise, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

And, Mr. Speaker, this isn't just a small promise that's being glossed over in the document, the platform that the Saskatchewan Party put forward in 2007, Mr. Speaker. This is a significant promise that they are breaking to the people of Saskatchewan. It's obvious to the people of Saskatchewan now, Mr. Speaker, that despite the fact that they adopted those targets from the NDP administration that had put those targets in place in the spring of 2007, despite the fact that they adopted those targets, Mr. Speaker, they had no plan as to how they were going to achieve those targets, Mr. Speaker.

And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, not only did the Saskatchewan Party government not have a plan as to how they were going to achieve those targets that they put into their election document, into their platform document, Mr. Speaker, but they took the plan that the NDP administration had in place as to how the NDP was going to achieve those greenhouse gas reduction targets, Mr. Speaker, and they completely gutted them. Completely gutted them, Mr. Speaker.

Let's talk about a few of those examples. For instance, the Office of Energy Conservation, that was already in full running, Mr. Speaker. The Office of Energy Conservation was completely gutted, Mr. Speaker. It no longer exists. They talk about some of those employees existing thankfully, but they've been shuffled off to other areas within the Ministry of Environment. But the office that had the responsibility of promoting energy conservation, of educating the public on energy conservation and on promoting and advocating the cheapest form of energy, Mr. Speaker — which is energy that is saved, energy that is saved through conservation — is the first thing the Sask Party government gutted, Mr. Speaker. So that was the first thing they did.

Second thing they did was the office of the climate change secretariat, which was introduced by the NDP administration, Mr. Speaker, which was already in the process of being set up, Mr. Speaker — the hiring process was already going through the Public Service Commission — what did they do with the climate change secretariat, a secretariat that under the NDP administration would have its own deputy minister so it would

have the clout to be able to deal with truly promoting the issues of climate change, Mr. Speaker?

So what did the Sask Party government do after when it was elected in 2007? Despite the fact that it said it would reach the same targets that the NDP administration had put in place in the spring of 2007, it gutted the office, the climate change secretariat, Mr. Speaker. It gutted it. So that's two essential and integral parts of being able to achieve those greenhouse gas reduction targets, and the Sask Party government decided to gut both of them as the first order of business when it got elected.

Now let's talk about the over \$400 million that the NDP administration had allocated to ensure that the financial commitment was there to be able to achieve those reduction targets, Mr. Speaker. What did the Sask Party government do with the over \$400 million that were allocated to achieving those greenhouse gas reduction targets, Mr. Speaker?

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's anybody's guess because they certainly don't exist in that fund any more. It was reduced to \$40 million under the Sask Party administration. And the rest of it I guess was spent on the interesting priorities that the Sask Party government seems to have, which obviously are not the priorities of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, because it's not addressed in the concerns of Saskatchewan people when especially we're looking at, for instance, a housing crisis in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So those are some of the examples, Mr. Speaker, that one can give about what's lacking in this budget document yet again, which is the last budget document that we're going to see from the Sask Party government before the election in the fall, Mr. Speaker. Once again we see nothing to address any serious commitment to the issues of energy conservation or the issues around climate change, Mr. Speaker. Once again we see nothing.

Now the Sask Party government is very, very good — I will give them credit for this, Mr. Speaker — they're very good at spin, Mr. Speaker. Boy they've got spin down to a science. They can take anything anyone says in a negative way and they can spin it so it smells like roses according to them, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, the opposition, the NDP opposition, the other parties that are interested in representing their constituents in the government, I mean in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and the Saskatchewan electorate and the people of Saskatchewan, they're not duped by this, Mr. Speaker. They're not duped by any of the Sask Party's spin, Mr. Speaker. They know the truth. They see the truth and, Mr. Speaker, they will make sure the Sask Party understands that they have the truth, Mr. Speaker. They will do that, Mr. Speaker. Because as I said, they are not going to accept the spin that is put on everything by the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to issues of the environment, we've seen an absolute lack of ability to meet any expectations, Mr. Speaker, whether that's a fiduciary responsibility to First Nations regarding energy policy, whether that's consulting with the public of Saskatchewan on energy policy.

Let's look at an example of that, Mr. Speaker: for instance, the flawed process under the Uranium Development Partnership which was the future of uranium in Saskatchewan. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's spin was that, well the process was hijacked. That's the Sask Party's spin, Mr. Speaker. Now the process, Mr. Speaker, that they talk about being hijacked is interestingly enough supposedly hijacked by the people of Saskatchewan. Now the people of Saskatchewan said loud and clear in that process, Mr. Speaker, that they wanted to talk about an integrated energy policy. That's what the people of Saskatchewan wanted to talk about.

What did the Sask Party government want to speak about? They wanted to talk about the future of uranium in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They wanted to keep it on a very narrow focus. Why? Because they wanted to build large nuclear reactors in the province of Saskatchewan because they'd already signed a deal with Bruce Power which they've still not given us any details on, Mr. Speaker. So again we see why the people of Saskatchewan had to voice their opinions in a very clear fashion, in a very exercised fashion, Mr. Speaker, because their government is not meeting the needs that they want to see met, Mr. Speaker. And that's being repeated over and over again since that process took place — the shammed process, Mr. Speaker.

And then of course they had to cover that up again, Mr. Speaker, with the public hearings which were again so condensed, in such a short fashion, that the information couldn't even be provided to the people of Saskatchewan so they could involve themselves in the process in a more comprehensive way, Mr. Speaker. That's how the Sask Party government likes to handle things. They like to monopolize, manipulate, and shut things down when things don't go their way.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I find that very interesting because it seems that they're taking their education, shall we say, on how to do that from none other than the Harper Tories themselves because we're seeing that very controlled, very strict messaging system coming from the Harper Tories for the entire time that they were the minority government, Mr. Speaker, and we're certainly seeing that now while he's on tour. Because of course Mr. Stephen Harper is allowing a grand total of five questions from the media per day with one of those, Mr. Speaker, luckily enough coming from the local media. So how fortunate for the local media to at least be able to get one of those questions per day.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, we can see that there are other provinces that are doing quite different things, Mr. Speaker, like, for instance, Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia is also under an NDP government, Mr. Speaker. And what are they promising? They're promising 25 per cent renewable energy by 2015, 40 per cent renewable energy by 2020, and a promise to reduce coal from 75 per cent to 40 per cent by 2020. Now, Mr. Speaker, that is quite the difference from what we're seeing from a government, a Sask Party government that has already had their mandate approximately three and a half years, Mr. Speaker. None of those initiatives from the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, probably the most shocking thing that's

lacking in this budget document, Mr. Speaker, is the way they are treating the crisis of housing in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We have individuals who can't afford their rent any more, Mr. Speaker. We have individuals that . . . I mean the prospect of buying a new home seems remote and distant, Mr. Speaker. And what did the Sask Party government do in this budget document to address that crisis, Mr. Speaker? They allotted \$1.7 million for housing in the budget speech, Mr. Speaker, in comparison to, for instance, \$5.1 million for beer sales, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, their priorities are very confused, very confused. They're providing an extra \$5.1 million out of the revenues from Saskatchewan taxpayers, they're providing an extra \$5.1 million for beer sales but they're telling Saskatchewan taxpayers, we're only going to commit \$1.7 million for the housing crisis that exists in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the renters in my constituency of Regina Walsh Acres are very upset by this, very upset, Mr. Speaker, because they've seen their rent increase by up to 40 per cent in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, by up to 40 per cent.

Now it's interesting that they get very silent, very silent on this topic, Mr. Speaker, because they recognize that they made a big mistake in the budget, Mr. Speaker, a big mistake. Big, colossal mistake, Mr. Speaker. They recognized that through the comments that were coming from the opposition, the NDP opposition. They recognized that through their own constituents reaching them, Mr. Speaker, because some of those constituents that wrote to their MLAs actually gave the copies of those letters and emails to us as well, Mr. Speaker, so that we could know that those MLAs were contacted about the issue, Mr. Speaker.

So what did they do, Mr. Speaker? They decided that they were going to slap together a quick band-aid with the help of their friends, none other than some, you know, familiar names like Merriman and Pringle, for instance. But they were going to throw together something really quick to address this, Mr. Speaker.

And what did they do? They came up with a budget — not a budget, sorry — an allotment of funds, Mr. Speaker, outside of the budget in the amount of \$250 million. Now what's interesting about that, Mr. Speaker, is that this came out, not a week after the budget document, not a month after the budget document, not six months after the budget document but, Mr. Speaker, days after the budget document. The budget document was released on Wednesday, March 23rd. The announcement was made on Monday, March 28th.

Now is this coincidental with the fact that we had five — yes, five — Sask Party staffers at the NDP convention on the weekend who heard from the microphone on the floor that people were most irate that the issue of housing was not being properly addressed by their government, Mr. Speaker, by their government? Because the Sask Party government is supposed to govern for all, but unfortunately the Sask Party government doesn't realize that or doesn't recognize that or doesn't want to recognize that, Mr. Speaker.

The Sask Party government instead looks out for, for instance, the Bill Doyles of the world to ensure that they get their \$500

million on our potash resource, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the people of Saskatchewan look forward to five cents on every dollar of Saskatchewan's potash resource that is owned by the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely reprehensible that this Sask Party government is promising the Bill DoYLES of the world, and the other potash corporations, that they aren't going to do a potash royalty review for 16 years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can understand the confusion with the 16 years, given that that is the mantra of the Sask Party government whenever they want to find an excuse as to why they shouldn't be held responsible for something, Mr. Speaker. That's when they come up with their, for the 16 years under the NDP administration.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know, we're very proud of those 16 years. We're very proud of the fact that we were able to, under the NDP administration, turn the fortunes of Saskatchewan around from being in a bankrupt position in 1991 when the NDP administration took power, Mr. Speaker, to being in a situation when in 2005, under the NDP administration, Saskatchewan became a have province, Mr. Speaker. And the good fortunes that have continued since then are due to the due diligence and the good policies that the NDP administration put forward to ensure that once there was a recovery period, that there would be significant growth and prosperity in the province, Mr. Speaker. That's what the NDP administration did.

And that is a legacy, Mr. Speaker, that we can be proud of versus the legacy that the Sask Party government is wanting to hide through a name change, because they couldn't call themselves the Conservative Party any more. Why? Because they rang up the \$15 billion debt when they were in power in the '80s, Mr. Speaker. That's why.

[15:30]

Now, Mr. Speaker, what's happened since then? There are still true Conservatives in this province, Mr. Speaker, that don't subscribe to the policies of the Sask Party government. And so they would like to resurrect a Conservative Party in the province, Mr. Speaker, to be able to participate in the democratic process that they have a right to in the next election, Mr. Speaker. And they have a right to access the funds that they believe are coming to them.

Now let's look at who holds the keys to that \$3 million Progressive Conservative trust fund, Mr. Speaker. Two people have been named from the Sask Party. Who are they? The Premier and the Deputy Premier themselves have been named in the lawsuit, Mr. Speaker. And that's how they want to control democracy in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about the budget and we talk about housing, since I have very little time left, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the fact that, like I said, we have a housing crisis in the province. Now let's look at this from a statistical perspective, Mr. Speaker.

So we're looking at, for instance, the University of Regina Faculty of Education professor, Marc Spooner, who is also

going to be running in the federal election for the NDP, Mr. Speaker, and we're very proud that he's doing that. He quoted from a 2009 study that indicated that there were 3,618 homeless people in Regina. That was in 2009, Mr. Speaker. And we know the situation has gotten worse since then.

So, Mr. Speaker, we were in a crisis in 2009 already. This isn't earth-shattering news, Mr. Speaker, and this should've been appropriately addressed in this budget, Mr. Speaker, not \$1.7 million for housing and 5.1 million for beer, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely deplorable.

And, Mr. Speaker, then we will look at for instance, Shawn Fraser from Carmichael Outreach who noted again that although Saskatchewan is enjoying a booming economy, the downside is a 40 per cent increase in rent, Mr. Speaker. So this isn't just anecdotal evidence from the constituency of Regina Walsh Acres, Mr. Speaker, constituency I should say, but it's actually documented by the Carmichael Outreach and by Shawn Fraser, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the editorial in the *Leader-Post* from March 16th by Murray Mandryk, says this:

It also needs to recognize that a lack of affordable accommodation is a detriment to growth. If skilled construction workers and immigrant families moving to this province to take advantage of the boom can't find an affordable place to live, we don't grow.

So, Mr. Speaker, what they're not recognizing is that not only is this a housing crisis for people that they don't feel are going to support them anyways, Mr. Speaker, it's also going to be a detriment to what they're constantly touting as the Saskatchewan advantage in terms of growth, Mr. Speaker. So they could at least heed that, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, Murray Mandryk also says this. And you know, these are very good quotes, and they should listen:

The Sask Party government needs to get past the partisan rhetoric and realize that finding affordable accommodation in this province is now as big an issue to a hard-working small businessperson who's sending his son or daughter to university as it is to the working poor.

So, Mr. Speaker, what are they saying? They're saying that we want you to come and work in this province, but we don't care if you find affordable housing. We want your small businesses to survive and to thrive and to grow, but we don't care about the fact that you're going to have to send your son and daughter to university outside your community and have to pay an exorbitant rent for housing. Mr. Speaker, it's amazing the Sask Party government just doesn't get it. And they just don't care, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I've run out of time, so I'm going to support the amendment from my colleague from Regina Rosemont and hope that the Sask Party government will do the same when it comes to the vote, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

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

Ms. Schriemer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is going to be my last speech in this House, and I know everyone is very sad about that. Anyway I just want to say that it's been an honour and a privilege to serve the citizens of the province, especially the constituents of Saskatoon Sutherland. And they honoured me by electing me.

I have to thank first and foremost my family, my immediate family: my spouse, Gary, my children Jarrod and Elise. And on my first campaign team, my campaign team was made up out of my family, including uncles and aunts and brothers and sisters and friends. And that grew, Mr. Speaker. It grew to the point now where, you know, there's 25 active executive members of the constituency. And they're working very hard to help the next candidate move forward and keep the constituency in the Sask Party family.

Also the most important person in my life through politics has been Danielle Velazquez. She's my constituency assistant in Saskatoon Sutherland, along with Judy Peddle, who's another CA [constituency assistant]. They both have worked extremely hard and have done so diligently and with caring and compassion. I can tell you that there's a lot of very difficult files in Saskatoon Sutherland, given the demographics. And these two women have gone above and beyond to take care of the constituents of Saskatoon Sutherland.

I would like to talk about the budget in reference to Saskatoon Sutherland. This budget is a great budget. I will be supporting this budget. And first and foremost, Saskatoon Sutherland is probably the most unique constituency in all of the province. It has the University of Saskatchewan, the University Hospital, Innovation Place. It's got an industrial area, it's got an old residential area, and it's got, you know, relatively affluent residential area as well. So it's extremely diverse. And this budget is so good for Sutherland because it meets the needs of all of those areas. And all of those areas are reflected in the province of Saskatchewan, so I think it's safe to say that this budget reflects the province and supports the province as a whole.

First of all to do with health. This budget continues to improve on Saskatchewan's health system by allocating \$4.46 billion in this year's health budget, Mr. Speaker. In addition to meeting our election commitment of hiring more than 800 nurses and providing better patient care, this year's health budget includes funding for physician positions and other health initiatives.

The 2011-12 budget continues with education recruitment and retention efforts for health providers, including an additional 1.5 million for clinical and medical teaching units at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], Regina General Hospital to ensure students have access to appropriate training.

Now we can all stand up here and talk about budgets. And the member from Athabasca should probably listen. He doesn't know this part.

The fact that we're supporting medical teaching units and other health provider positions is important because when one doesn't understand or know or go through the health care system as a patient or as a critically ill person, we don't get just how vast our health care system is and how many people it

takes to create the team to care for you. For example, as a patient who underwent open-heart surgery, I had two valves replaced. And that took a team of specialists, not including just the surgeon, but the perfusionist whose job it was to put you on the heart-lung machine to make sure that your blood stays oxygenated. Now without him, the patient would die.

So you know, we need to look beyond just doctors and nurses. And I think that this government has done that and recognizes the importance of the paramedical people in our health care system. And so training and extra monies to secure these people to come to the province and make sure we retain these people are a very, very important piece to our health care system.

We also need to teach our medical people. And we've added \$800,000 for four faculty positions at the College of Medicine to ensure a stable supply of pediatricians. Mr. Speaker, with the children's hospital on the horizon, it's extremely important that we have the expertise to staff that hospital to ensure the best care for the children of this province.

\$10.9 million is to address the increased volume in diagnostic imaging services, cardiac care, and chronic kidney disease. Mr. Speaker, it's so important to have proper diagnostic care and access to diagnostic care when one is ill.

Medical technology has advanced so much in the last three decades that we're able now to actually do a scan on a person's body to determine if there's cancerous cells throughout the body. That's called a PET [positron emission tomography] scan. And I don't know what the P-E-T means, but I know what the PET scan does. And we were one of the provinces that didn't have a PET scanner, and people were going out of province to get them done. And now we're going to be able to do it here in our province. It can give us advance notice of any carcinogenic areas in the body, and therefore early treatment would give us a much greater chance of survival.

We also, Mr. Speaker, opened a transplant ward where the air is on positive pressure. You have to have a very sterile environment and clean air in and out of the rooms. And we put in \$4.2 million for bone marrow transplants to be undertaken here in the province. They've started already. A friend of the family's, a friend of my family was one of the first stem cell transplant patients in Saskatoon. And the ability to have that done at home with a support system in the same city is extremely important.

So there's a lot of human factors in the budget when we take away just the money and talk about just the humanness. And what does that mean to the people of the province? What does that mean to the citizens that put us here in this great House to discuss these matters and plan for their future?

We've put in \$1 million for autism spectrum disorder assessments, intervention, and training as part of the children's youth agenda; \$600,000 for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder prevention, diagnostic supports as part of the government's children and youth agenda. This is fantastic, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder] is a huge issue in our province. It's unfortunate because it's 100 per cent preventable. And if it's 100 per cent preventable, then there's a

fix. And that fix is going to come through understanding and proper education by way of young women who are maybe suffering from addictions or living in poverty and drinking. And, you know, that down the road, if we can save one young woman from having a fetal alcohol syndrome disorder child, we've saved the system costs down the road millions and millions and millions of dollars.

\$2.8 million for additional specialist services, some of which will be located in Saskatoon. 2.4 million for electronic medical record expansion into physicians' offices. Mr. Speaker, you know, I understand the privacy issue with regard to health care. However, you know, just like you can educate people not to drink and drive, you can educate people not to take drugs, but some people will do it. Is it the government's fault that they do it, or is this a human choice that they're making? And it comes down to choice. Behaviour is choice. We choose our behaviour. It's the only thing we can control is our behaviour.

And so I understand the concern that the opposition had, given these files being found. However someone chose to put them in that bin and, you know, making another law or whatever isn't going to change the fact that someone down the road may choose to put those medical records in a garbage bin, and therefore they may be found and read.

[15:45]

So I'm, you know . . . Legislation alone does not change behaviour. So I think the work the government has to do is maybe some more education or some way of handling those records differently. Now what our government has done is put \$2.4 million into electronic medical record management. So if it's an electronic record management system, I think we'll have a better chance of monitoring and making sure that those records, you know, are not sent out into the public. However there's lots of computer systems, CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], tax computer system, Government of Canada, sometimes those things are breached. It's just the way life is. So we can't get rid of it totally, but this is a very positive step towards that.

What I found extremely disturbing, however, is that when watching the news that night where the medical records were found and the Privacy Commissioner was there saying how awful it was, I noticed that the member from Regina Elphinstone was assisting in carrying these medical records . . .

An Hon. Member: — Dewdney.

Ms. Schriemer: — Or Regina Dewdney. Pardon me, Mr. Speaker. Correction. The member from Regina Dewdney was helping to carry these records out. Well I don't think he has the authority to do that, and I would suspect that . . . I mean, what gives him the right to have possibly a look at someone's medical record in an open box that he was carrying?

So I think that if people are going to throw stones that they need to be looking at their own behaviour and behaving in a fashion where they're respecting privacy also themselves. And I would probably say that to the Privacy Commissioner as well. If he's going to have a system to remove documents like that, the system should be such that it's a secure person in a secure area.

Anyway with respect to housing in Saskatoon Sutherland, there is a lot of apartment buildings and a lot of rental properties. Our government is building 1,000 new beds through the university, in partnership with the university. Those beds are going to take the heat off of other rental properties, and therefore supply and demand would logically say that the rent should be then going down.

One of our new proposals and promises in the budget is funding towards affordable housing where the person could purchase their own house. This is absolutely fantastic. I've talked to constituents that are very excited. These are the people that make around \$72,000 a year, that just can't save enough money for the down payment, Mr. Speaker. There are programs through the city of Saskatoon, and the government now will have a program to assist these people in purchasing their own home.

Imagine that, Mr. Speaker, being a family that could not in their foreseeable future be able to purchase their own home now being able to look toward actually purchasing their own home where their mortgage payment would be equal or less to their rental payment. They would be building equity. What a fantastic idea. What a wonderful, wonderful move towards independence and success for that family. And that is the kind of approach we need to affordable housing. We don't need an old-fashioned, old-time fix of, you know, rent controls. We need to use imagination, and that's what our government's done, and it will benefit these citizens better.

The other issue to do with Saskatoon Sutherland, Mr. Speaker, is the SIGA [Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority] and FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] offices are in my constituency. The urban reserve, first urban reserve ever is in Saskatoon Sutherland constituency. And I must say, CreeWay Gas is a wonderful facility, and I gas up there often. Excellent service.

And this government recognizes the need for employment and education for our First Nations and Métis peoples. So \$2 million to establish a task force on First Nation and Métis education and employment, to provide recommendations aimed at eliminating the education and employment gaps. This is huge, Mr. Speaker. Seven million for adult basic ed and provincial training allowance targeted to First Nations and Métis students; 2.9 million to increase high school completion rates and improve achievement for First Nations and Métis students.

Mr. Speaker, we have an untapped resource in young First Nations and Métis peoples. They need to be part of the growth of this province, and they want to part of the growth of this province. This government is recognizing this and instead of throwing money at a situation or, you know, talking about, you know, poor this and poor that, we're discussing it as adults, sitting down and saying — as leaders — and saying okay, what are we going to do about this? Let's work together, and let's get First Nations and Métis people educated and in the workforce.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, over the last 20 years I've noticed more and more First Nations and Métis people getting into the job force, getting education, becoming role models and leaders, and this is wonderful. And they're becoming more independent

and starting businesses. There's a lot of really, really good stuff happening in the First Nation and Métis world.

One of the last things I'd like to talk about, Mr. Speaker, is my passion, and that's policing. Our government promised 120 police officers would be hired during our mandate. We have done that. We have hired, this government has hired and put in place 120 police officers. We have met that commitment. In this year's budget, we spent 2.7 million on fulfilling our promise, the last 30 officers.

Now some people oppose the idea of having police officers because they believe that it's strictly an enforcement subject matter. And it's not, Mr. Speaker. The work that law enforcement does, if done properly, delves into the fabric of our society. It protects our society, and it ensures that our society stays stable and works toward the safety, security, and human rights of every citizen.

As an example, Mr. Speaker, some of the police officers we hired made up the CFSEU [combined forces special enforcement unit], which is a task force in Regina and Saskatoon, and it's the combined forces selective enforcement unit. They primarily focus on organized crime. The commitment that our government gave to law enforcement was to make this a complete unit so that they could go after organized crime. And they have, and very successfully. Just last week, the CFSEU, which is a joint forces unit so it has some RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and some Saskatoon city police . . . In Regina it has some Regina police and some RCMP. So they're able to work throughout the province.

And organized crime hits the fabric of our society. Organized crime brings in the drugs. It does the violence. It encourages the gangs. It's extremely, extremely destructive. The Terror Squad, which was a gang that started about 2003, had grown to the point where they were a predominant force in Saskatoon and other parts of the province. They were distributing cocaine. They were doing enforcement through violence. They were linked to homicides. This was a very, very dangerous gang, Mr. Speaker. And this gang was arrested and charged, 14 members of this gang. This gang was not only disrupted but it was dismantled, which is huge, to take down an organized crime group like that. And they were charged with organized crime charges as well.

So there will be a void, but now that we have in place CFSEU, the police will be able to monitor and see who comes in to fill that void. And when you get on top of it and you target these organizations, you can continue to dismantle and disrupt them, and they can continue to do less damage.

Now people would say, oh well maybe we should put the money into more addictions work. There needs to be a balance, Mr. Speaker. Because a drug trafficker and a drug group is disrupted and dismantled, it means that there's less drugs on the street for that period of time. So the daughter, your daughter, your son that goes to the party where the drug dealer is saying, here try some coke, try a line free, you know, give you a ecstasy tablet, give you one free so you can try it free, there's going to be less supply. So the chances of someone coming into the drug world is affected. So the less chance of coming into the drug world and experiencing those drugs for the first time, the

less chance you're going to get addicted, the less chance you're going to be in the life.

So this all works together, Mr. Speaker. And without our commitment for these extra police bodies to be able to do those extra investigations . . . And these are in-depth investigations, Mr. Speaker, wiretap investigations. When you write a paper to obtain a wiretap investigation, sometimes they're as many as 200 pages long. And the police officer writes that. It's a lot of work. When you follow somebody, you need at least five police officers. It's not like in the movies where you can just, you know, follow behind someone and they won't notice. So you know, it's very in-depth.

Another thing that our police officers have been able to do because our government gave them the bodies is to complete and have investigations in the Internet child exploitation teams. Those are the ICE [Internet child exploitation] teams.

Mr. Speaker, when the Internet became available, it is like a smorgasbord for pedophiles. Pedophiles can go online and they can get pictures of naked children at any age. They can get pictures of children being sexually abused online, involved in sexual acts online. And these sick offenders are pedophiles that abuse their victims, take photographs, and post them online.

The other thing that these pedophiles do is they go into chat rooms and they try and meet someone, a child. They pretend to be the child's age and they start to get into sexual conversations. And this is a very special area of law enforcement where there's rules around going online, looking for target words so that the offender could be rooted out.

And there have been cases, and we know of one in — what? — 2008. I think there were two from Swift Current or two in Saskatchewan where a girl met an older man online and ran away with him. And she was eventually brought back home. However if she wasn't brought back home, you can guarantee that she would become a sexual slave or sexual victim.

[16:00]

These kind of investigations are international. Our police here in our ICE units are working internationally with police officers from all across the globe. For instance, a couple of weeks ago, a case out of the Netherlands, it was started in the Netherlands, there were approximately 600 charges. One of the people arrested was from Saskatchewan for possession of pornography, child pornography. And they were able to do this through the computer system with the co-operation of the ICE unit in Saskatchewan.

In that investigation alone, Mr. Speaker, that whole investigation was able to save 220 children from regular sexual abuse and being photographed and published online — 220 victims. These are the kind of investigations that the ICE unit is entering in in Saskatchewan and this is just fantastic. We couldn't do that before. There were very few special teams, and again, the ICE unit is a unit where you need . . . you know, it's not just one officer. You need specialty officers. You need a computer specialist. When you do a search warrant on a house, when you're seizing a computer, the computer has to be taken down a certain way because a lot of times there's a

self-imploding virus that is in the computer so that if you do the wrong thing, the computer will erase itself and you won't be able to capture the evidence from the computer.

So pedophiles, beware. Our government won't tolerate it. We've funded against it, the same as drug traffickers and organized crime and victimizing people. We will not tolerate that. That's not going to happen. This government will not stand for it. Our police will be held to account to do the right thing for the citizens of this province and protect them.

The last point I'd like to make is, because of the police officers that we've put in place, there's gang enforcement and drug enforcement in the Far North. I'll tell you, when I was in the drug unit in Saskatoon it was very difficult to do anything in the Far North because the communities are small. If a new person or if you try and inject an undercover operator into that environment, it's not successful because that person is known right away to be an outsider. So with a larger unit and more bodies to investigate and gather intelligence, we'll be able to meet the needs of the northern communities by way of disrupting or dismantling drugs going into those communities.

So, Mr. Speaker, all in all, I'd like to say again thank you to the citizens of Saskatoon Sutherland for honouring me to allow me to represent them. Thank you to my colleagues and opposition members as well. I think we're all here for the same reason. We want to make Saskatchewan a better place. I have a little trouble sometimes in the House when it gets raucous, especially across the way. I almost want to make an arrest for public disturbance but I held back. So I would just like again to say thank you very much and I will proudly stand and vote yes in this fantastic budget from this very progressive government. Thank you.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm also very proud to rise today to give my response to the budget which I, at the outset, want to tell the people of the North that it totally ignores northern Saskatchewan people and it ignores a lot of sectors of Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, at the outset, this budget is not worthy of northern people's support, Mr. Speaker, and as their MLA and other MLAs throughout the opposition, we will stand against the budget in recognition of its shortcomings.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before I go into detail as to why the budget is not good for the North, I want to recognize a number of people. I know that I've got one of the most supportive families around. I've got a very big family, but my immediate family is, of course, my wife, Beckie, and I've got three girls: Michelle, Kellie and Taylor. And one of the greatest stories out of the North is everybody is very, very happy that all my girls look like their mother. And, Mr. Speaker, even my family is happy.

So I think one of the notions I often say is the sign of a good salesman is an ugly guy with a pretty wife. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm one ugly guy that has a very beautiful wife, and I want to recognize her for all the work and all the sacrifice and, of course, all the frustration that she goes through. And as well with my daughters, Mr. Speaker, they have always been very

supportive and again, they have worked very hard and I'm very proud of all the things and the careers that they have done.

But what's the greatest gift that my wife and, of course, my daughters have given me, right now I've got three grandchildren. The oldest one is Mieka and Mieka is six years old. Brodey is five, soon to be six. And then we have a little one called Nixon. And Nixon is only two years old, Mr. Speaker. And just a brief history of my grandkids, like, they're absolutely wonderful people. Brodey is from the Dionne clan and Mieka is from the Laliberte clan and Nixon, the little one, is from the Roy family. So we have a fairly big surrounding family that certainly are proud of these kids as I am.

But Brodey is, just to give you a history of Brodey, he's one of the best looking guys around and right now he is attending school in Saskatoon. He is taking French immersion and I often hear him speaking French around his mother and also speaking English to me. And I do intend to teach him how to speak Cree, Mr. Speaker. So I think Brodey with his good looks and his charm and his hockey playing skill and also his French and English and Cree ability is certainly a person to be reckoned with.

And while Brodey is quite exciting, there's no question that the big boss in our family is Mieka. Mieka is the oldest of the grandkids and she's quite intelligent, very pretty, and she's quite bossy, Mr. Speaker. But we blame the other side of the family for that. Mieka I know right now is going to be bossing both her cousin around, Brodey, and certainly her younger brother Nixon. So I want to say to Brodey and Mieka, keep going to school. Keep working hard. Because your papa's very proud of you, and I have great hope and great belief in your future.

Now the littlest guy, Nixon, Mr. Speaker, is two years old. And this guy is trouble. Let me say in the Assembly, March 30th, 2011 that as his grandpa, I know this guy's going to be major trouble, because right now he's two years old and he's arguing with his grandmother. In fact he's got his finger pointing up to his grandmother, and we're not sure what he's saying, but we know he's arguing. And he's got some good points, and if only I could understand what he's saying, Mr. Speaker, and then I'm sure Nixon would be able to explain a lot of things in this world even at the fact that he's only two years old. But mark my words, Mr. Speaker, that I think Nixon is going to be in the Assembly in the next 25 to 30 years, because this guy is really coming on strong. And he's two years old and I see his future being very, very bright.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when I talk about the budget itself, I want to tell the people out there that have voted New Democrat, the people over the years that stuck with the New Democrats, that they should be proud of the work that was done. There's no question that Saskatchewan is enjoying a lot of prosperity today. There's no question about that. The economy's hot. People are moving to Saskatchewan. Housing is in short supply. And, Mr. Speaker, a lot of that work, a lot of that work could be attributed to the history and the work that the NDP done alongside of the people of Saskatchewan. We can't forget that the taxpayers certainly done their work.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you listen to the Saskatchewan Party,

you figure the world was created three years ago when they assumed power. And nowhere in the history of Canada, nowhere in the history of the free world have we ever had a government that come into such largesse in terms of the budget income and the booming economy.

These guys inherited a gift, Mr. Speaker. It was a huge gift that was built on the backs of the Saskatchewan people, but more so certainly with the guidance of the NDP government. And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP has got nothing to be ashamed of their history of rebuilding this province and nothing to be ashamed of about the opportunity that we provided in terms of listening to that guidance by the people of Saskatchewan and developing the brand new economy, Mr. Speaker.

So for every New Democrat that's out there, you be proud of that work. Be proud of the sacrifices. Be proud of the decisions that were made many, many years ago to rebuild this economy, to rebuild our financial position, and to bring in a bold, brave new Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. This work took a good 10, 12 years, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't take two or three years, as the members opposite would like to suggest to people.

And that's certainly not very fair, Mr. Speaker. People of Saskatchewan are a lot more intelligent than that. They know that the boom and the opportunity and the money that's coming to the Saskatchewan coffers right now isn't certainly part of what the Saskatchewan Party is doing. They inherited that. It's a gift, and they're welcome. And we hope, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan will recognize that.

Now let's look at the issues of the northern roads, Mr. Speaker, on the North. What effect did these guys did and what have they done to support northern Saskatchewan? And as I stand here today, Mr. Speaker, spring is certainly on its way. And once again you look at some of the highway conditions in northern Saskatchewan. Whether you're driving down the Dillon road or whether you're driving down the Canoe Lake, Jans Bay, Cole Bay road or down the Patuanak road or down the Turner Lake road or down to the Pinehouse road, you're going to find wet, soggy conditions, Mr. Speaker.

These roads are in terrible shape. And yet this government and this minister gets up and says, we have \$50 million for northern roads. And guess what, Mr. Speaker? Forty-nine per cent of that are for operating costs, Mr. Speaker — 49 per cent of that 50 million for operating costs. So there is no grand prize of \$50 million for northern roads. Once again northerners will be driving roads that are in terrible, terrible shape, Mr. Speaker. And yet they want us to stand up here and support this budget. And I say, no way. We're not going to support this budget because you totally forgot about the North and you always have and you always will because that's your politics, Mr. Speaker.

Now I want to point out as well, when it comes to health care, Mr. Speaker, there are services that are lacking in northern Saskatchewan. We've done as best we can to build up those services given the time that we have. But one of the most crying shames, Mr. Speaker, in northern Saskatchewan is our elders. When the older people travel to southern Saskatchewan, whether it's for medical appointments, whether it's for dental or whether it's for vision care, many older people have told me that, Buckley, given — sorry, Mr. Speaker — Mr. MLA, given

the fact that we live on a limited income, we only have \$1,100 a month as our senior pension plan, \$1,100 a month. We've got to pay our power. We've got to pay our food. We've got to pay our housing costs. We've got to pay for a number of other things, and at the end of the month we don't have a whole heck of a lot of money left. Now when we get appointments to go to Saskatoon for our health, because as you get older your health deteriorates — whether it's again, dental care or vision care or health care — we've got to travel 600, 500 miles to get the services and nobody out there helps us.

So once again I look at this budget. There's no provisions or help for senior citizens to help them find some dollars to travel south for some very necessary care, whether it's in health care, dental care, or vision care, and nobody seems to care. That party doesn't care, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the things that I'm going to tell the people of northern Saskatchewan, in particular the elders, is that, remember that you've got to pay a lot of extra money to travel south for a lot of appointments. And that's not fair, but that party don't care, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Party doesn't care, Mr. Speaker. And I want the old people to remember, the elders to remember that, Mr. Speaker.

Now I look at some of what their friends are, Mr. Speaker. When you see the Potash Corporation, the CEO Bill Doyle making — what? — \$350 million in some of his pension offers or his shareholdings. One guy gets \$350 million from the PotashCorp. And the other point is, you look at this American-based company, Mr. Speaker. They made \$1.8 billion last year in profit off a Saskatchewan resources. And there you see their leader, their Premier, hugging him onstage saying keep making all that kind of money — while many people travel poor highways, while many people, elder people in the North don't have the kind of support that they need to come forward to look for health care, certainly dental care and vision care, Mr. Speaker.

Now one of the things that I notice in the North is again in the budget. One of the crying shames in northern Saskatchewan is the amount of suicide we have throughout the North, Mr. Speaker. It is not something that families want anybody to go through. I've been to a number of funerals where young people who are bright, articulate, they're educated, they're fantastic people, and they take their own life because they lose hope.

[16:15]

And this budget comes along and commits \$2 million to the northern suicide strategy, Mr. Speaker. And it's not really programs. It's not really programs per se. They're going to have a travelling road show for the next six, seven months to see what they can do about it. And I'm not very good at math, Mr. Speaker, but if there's 35, 40,000 people in northern Saskatchewan and you look at the \$2 million answer that the Sask Party's put forward for suicide, that's — what? — fifty-seven cents for every person. And, Mr. Speaker, I think our people in northern Saskatchewan are worth a heck of a lot more than that, Mr. Speaker.

So I go along, Mr. Speaker. I look at the fishermen, the fishermen that were supposed to have been supported by these

guys. These guys turned around and they didn't do nothing for the fisherman. They led them down the garden path. Oh we're your friends. We're going to help you. We'll get rid of Freshwater. And, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, not one red cent to help the fishermen develop their industries.

Trappers, you might as well get out of the way too. They don't want trappers as well, Mr. Speaker. People that own land, leases, people that have leased land for years, they're trying to get rid of them too, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, people of the North are sick and tired of this government even after three years because: (a) they take credit for something they've never done; (b) they continue to try and fool the rest of the people of Saskatchewan; and (c) they know that they don't serve northern Saskatchewan — the young people, the families, or the elders — at all.

And people in northern Saskatchewan know this, Mr. Speaker. The fishermen know this. The people that have trouble with housing know this. The people that have gone through suicide know this. The people that have challenges in commercial fishing, trapping, or trying to hold on to their land, they know this government don't care, Mr. Speaker.

And right where you start looking at all the options, when you start telling people, well stand up and vote and let's fight these guys together, they come along with another Bill, with another Bill saying, oh you've got to have photo ID [identification] to vote now. Now, Mr. Speaker, what kind of system is that where a party . . . [inaudible] . . . along and trying to stifle democracy? The reason why they want to make sure people have a photo ID before they vote, Mr. Speaker, is to stop them from voting. That's what their objective is, Mr. Speaker.

So we look at the lack of support whether it comes to highways, health care, or housing, suicide, fishermen, trappers, protection of the land, developing our future, our young people — this budget doesn't do nothing. They put \$2 million in the budget for suicide prevention and that amounts to 57 cents for every man, woman, and child. And that's a disgrace and that's shameful, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I again go back to the point that the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan should be called the potash corporation of America. The only thing that they have done, Mr. Speaker, is given their shareholders \$1.8 billion while the North gets nothing, Mr. Speaker. Only thing that the CEO, Bill Doyle, gets is 350 million in share options — for one guy. We get 70 million for well over 1 million people, Mr. Speaker. Now is that fair to the northern people or to Saskatchewan? The answer is no, it's not fair. It's shameful, Mr. Speaker.

Now one other thing I wanted to point out as well, Mr. Speaker, is that this Saskatchewan Party . . . You know, people out there tell me, how long are they going to be around? And I tell them, so far they're going to war with the working people. They're ignoring a lot of the health sector people. They're now ignoring teachers. They've taken on the chiropractors. They've ignored the Aboriginal people. They've certainly ignored certain sectors of the province, including the North. So sooner or later, all these little battles that they're getting into and really showing their colours, it's going to come across and the people in those

areas are going to unite and they're going to come back. They're going to vote NDP. They're going to send the Sask Party government packing in 2011, Mr. Speaker. That is my prediction, Mr. Speaker.

And why? Because we certainly worked hard to rebuild the economy and rebuild our finances. And this . . . At the time when the Sask Party took over, they really had nothing else to do but spend money and appear to be a great party, Mr. Speaker. And appearance as we know now is certainly deceiving all the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I kind of looked at an article last week. There was two articles I looked at. First one was in *The StarPhoenix*. They had the Telemiracle. There's a nice picture of the Telemiracle. They made a nice chunk of money. There's balloons and people were all having a good time and celebrating the great work that the Telemiracle people did. And right next to the Telemiracle picture was a picture of the Premier. And the headline is, and I quote from the headline: "Wall rallies troops." Front page, Mr. Speaker. Now I'm saying, what is up with that? The Telemiracle people should have the front page for the work that they do and the work that they should have done.

And what I think happened there, Mr. Speaker, is that they got their front page simply to build up the hype of the party and to help their fortunes along to try and convince the masses. And, Mr. Speaker, that kind of front page coverage to try and convince people to vote for the Sask Party is not going to work, Mr. Speaker. It is not going to work at all because people know their record. They know what they're about and they're starting to be worried about these guys, Mr. Speaker.

Now I would point out that if you look at the pretend government — I call them the pretend government — all you've done so far is hand out good news, and everything's going great. Pay down debt, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, the whole notion is that people out there know that after three years in government you can't do the things you're doing unless the work was done before. They know it; we know it, Mr. Speaker; and the people of Saskatchewan are starting to know it.

And that's why I tell every New Democrat that's out there, or people looking for a party that comes home, that really reflects the values of Saskatchewan, that the NDP are proud. They have nothing to be ashamed of. And that that party should thank them for all the work that was done and the benefits that they now enjoy and hand out like they done all the work, Mr. Speaker. That is the furthest thing from the truth. And they know it, and we know it, and the people of Saskatchewan are certainly starting to know it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I was kind of amused at the second headline that I seen, where somebody mentioned our Premier being the most popular premier in the country. And I said, oh okay. So I started looking at this. I started looking at their leader.

And I said, okay, let's go west. The Premier Campbell, I think he stepped down, so there's no premier in BC [British Columbia]. I think he stepped down. Then you go to Alberta. Well Stelmach, I think he's on his way out. I think he announced he is going to retire. And then as you go west, then

you hit Manitoba and then, well that person just started a couple months ago, Mr. Speaker. And then as you head further east, Mr. Speaker, then you come across Ontario, and McGuinty's been there for a while. He's got a lot of challenges when it comes to the whole notion of the economy of Ontario, so he's not going to be very popular. Then you go further east. Then you hit Quebec. And Charest, of course, has his problems.

So, Mr. Speaker, there really is nobody else out there that they can compare their leader to right now, because everybody's either coming in or quitting. And that's why I say to people out there, if me and the member from Cumberland entered a beauty contest, then just two of us — one of us is going to win. Because nobody entered, right? One of us is going to win if only two of us enter. One of us is going to win. So when the media or the Sask Party says our Premier is the most popular premier, not because he's the only one around right now that hasn't quit or is on his way out so, Mr. Speaker, I go back to my point. If there's a beauty contest and me and the member from Cumberland entered and there's only two of us, one of us is going to win. Because nobody else entered. And that's exactly the case with this pretend government and their leader.

The fact is that three-quarters of the premiers that have already left — Danny Williams is gone, Campbell is gone, Stelmach is gone, and a number of others are gone — and he's the only one left. So guess what? That makes him the most popular premier by virtue of nobody else is around, Mr. Speaker.

So that point that I would make, Mr. Speaker, is that that Sask Party has always been a pretend government. They pretend to build the economy of Saskatchewan. They pretend to build up the population of Saskatchewan. They pretend to pay down debt. They pretend to be something that they're not. They know they inherited a gift, every single one of them, and that gift was a booming economy, a great financial position on paper, and some really, really good savings. And that came as the result of a solid NDP government that took over a mess in 1991 and built this province up over the last 16 years.

But this budget still forgets the North. It still forgets elders. It still forgets to address suicide. It still forgets to address housing. It forgets to address the fact that the Aboriginal employment rate is going up instead of down as they contend. And all the stuff that they say to the media or to the newspapers or to the radio station, Mr. Speaker, it's all pretend.

And that includes their highways budget. The minister going and saying \$50 million for highways, 99 per cent of that is maintenance budget, Mr. Speaker. Very little for new construction in northern Saskatchewan. We'll continue driving those soggy, beaten roads, Mr. Speaker.

And at the end of the day, at the end of the day the people of Saskatchewan are going to stand up, they're going to send somebody to fight for them here, not somebody to come and kneel in Regina and say, please give us a little bit of things for our people. We're going to stand and we're going to fight together, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why I tell people of the North that I will not be supporting this budget that ignores their needs and that totally disregards them as people, Mr. Speaker, that I will not sit here

and support any of the pretending that they do to try and solve our problems. We've seen what they've done, Mr. Speaker, they'll never do anything for the North. They never have and they never will. And that's why I stand here today. I'm going to be supporting the amendment and voting against this careless, uncaring budget, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak and to enter into the debate on the budget, the last budget of this government before the next election. And I wanted to first of all go back to the budget address from the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, which I have to say I think was a well-written speech and it was a well-delivered speech. A trifle long as these things go, Mr. Speaker, but I would say well written and well delivered by the Minister of Finance.

And it's very important with a budget like this because packaging is extremely important when the substance is not quite there, Mr. Speaker, and this was a very well-packaged and, as I said, well-delivered budget. But as I said, you rely a great deal on packaging in a circumstance like that, Mr. Speaker.

The budget is packaged under the title of *The Saskatchewan Advantage*, and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, and I've made this reference before, the Saskatchewan advantage, and the Saskatchewan disadvantage — it's a two-edged sword — is truly geography. And I think every thoughtful resident of Saskatchewan knows that. The disadvantage of course is geography. It would be very nice to have a seaport, but that's not going to be the case.

But the advantage far outweighs the disadvantage these days, Mr. Speaker. This is a very commodities-driven global economy, and it is the western part of Canada that has those commodities — potash, uranium, oil, natural gas. And in a growing and increasingly hungry world, although we may not be the breadbasket of that world, Mr. Speaker, still a very important supplier of food to the tables of the globe.

And we know that nationally that the West is flowering because of these commodities, somewhat maybe to the detriment of the rest of the country. Mr. Speaker, you'll be well aware — and I don't know how the Dutch got caught with this — but the Dutch disease, where one part of the country has commodities like oil, and that drives up the currency of the country, and another part of the country that relies on exports of manufactured goods suffers as a result. And so there's a little bit of the Dutch disease in Canada. It makes Saskatchewan in particular show up very well in economic indicators because what's lifting us up is helping, unfortunately, push down some of our neighbours to the east.

The fact that we have the second highest oil production in the country, the third highest natural gas production in the country, that we have uranium, that we have 50 per cent of the world's potash reserves, and potash reserves that are very accessible, relatively easy to mine, and as I said we are seeing now in the last few months, particularly, a rising cost of food across the globe. It probably set off the tinderbox in Tunisia, which set off

Egypt and which has now set off Libya. It started off as a protest about the rising cost of bread.

And in all of these commodities that are in increasing demand, but not necessarily increasing supply, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is blessed to be able to export them, provide them to the world. And that is truly, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think anybody would argue that it wasn't, that is truly the Saskatchewan advantage.

[16:30]

And in respect to that geographical advantage, and particularly that advantage in geology, there is an ongoing debate now in Saskatchewan that was initiated by the BHP Billiton takeover attempt, but continues to carry on amongst the people of Saskatchewan, not just amongst political parties, Mr. Speaker, about the development of the potash resource in particular. And the Minister of Energy and Resources was kind enough during the debate in the fall on potash to summarize the NDP position for us. And he did so as follows. Mr. Speaker, he says, the position of the members opposite, the NDP, that the maximum amount of value possible for the people of Saskatchewan should be extracted from the resource . . . And I think that was a fair summation, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Energy and Resources seemed to think it was a bad thing, but I think it's a fair description of where we stand.

And so I will return the favour today, Mr. Speaker, and sort of summarize what I understand to be the government's position on potash royalties and probably on uranium royalties as well, Mr. Speaker, and that would be, don't rock the boat. That's the position of the government. And they were concerned that if there was any change, despite the sea change in potash prices and potash profits, that if there was any change to the amount that's recovered by the people of Saskatchewan for the use of their resource that that would be in some way devastating, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to come back to this idea of exchanging jobs for royalties because I think it's a false trade-off, Mr. Speaker. But the opposition, the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan, has a vision of recovering more from our resources — and in particular from potash, which has seen an enormous rise in price — and putting some of that money aside for the day when perhaps we don't have as much easily recoverable oil, as much easily recoverable natural gas, as we do today, Mr. Speaker, so that there's something for future generations arising from what is a non-renewable resource. Although in the case of potash it will be a long time before it runs out, when we won't be so fortunate with some of our other resources, Mr. Speaker. That's the vision of the opposition. That's the vision of the New Democratic Party.

The vision of the Premier seems to be that he will maintain a nice relationship with CEOs of the potash companies, and some day the Premier and the chief executive officer of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan can share a box seat in a domed stadium to watch a football game, Mr. Speaker. That, I don't think, is standing up for Saskatchewan. It simply is not.

And the suggestion from the governing party that if we even dare review potash royalties in light of recent developments that

this would result in losses of thousands of jobs, I think shows a misunderstanding — perhaps deliberate perhaps not, depending on which member of the government you're thinking of — as to what the potash policy of potash companies in Saskatchewan has been. Because it has not been a policy of creating jobs, and it's just been the opposite of that, Mr. Speaker. The position of potash companies in Saskatchewan, particularly the leader of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, is not to increase production.

As a matter of fact, when the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Energy and Resources made their \$2 billion error on what revenues would become available from potash a budget or two ago, and the issue of cutting back production on the part of PCS [Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan] and potash companies in Saskatchewan was raised as evidence that perhaps all things weren't right in the global market for potash, the response of the Minister of Energy back to us was production is not sales, and it's all based on sales.

Well eventually you cut production, you cut the amount you can sell. But it did make it very clear that the strategy of potash companies in Saskatchewan in face of, in face of a reduced demand for potash was to lay off potash workers, cut production, try to keep the price up. If that had worked, as I said at the time, Mr. Speaker, if that had worked then yes, profits would have stayed up. Royalties would have stayed up, and there wouldn't have been a \$2 billion mistake. But it didn't work.

But there's no question that it is not the response of the potash companies of Saskatchewan on their own to increase production. That's not their response. And that's why the carrot was made by an NDP government to encourage an increase of production, Mr. Speaker, because they needed a carrot. In fact if the potash companies that are working in Saskatchewan wanted to increase production on their own and in a significant way, the three pages of potash mines that the minister holds up that we're competing with across the globe, well it'd be reduced to one page real quickly, Mr. Speaker.

If potash was increased, production was increased in the province of Saskatchewan — and that would drop the price of potash — but if that happened, a lot of those countries, a lot of those mines could not compete because of the accessibility of the potash, because of the quality of the potash, or because of the state of governance, if I can use that phrase, in a lot of the countries that we're supposedly competing with in this potash market.

And that would be . . . An increase in production would be the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker. A lot of people in the world, millions and millions and millions of people in the world rely on potash to eat. And the energy strategy in Brazil, based on ethanol, is based on obtaining potash as well. There is nothing particularly moral, just the opposite, about cutting production in Saskatchewan so that you can increase, so that you can increase the price but increase also the price of food and the price of energy around the world. There's nothing particularly moral about that.

But that's been the position of, and it's a business position of the companies that have been mining potash in the province of

Saskatchewan. This is not a strategy to create jobs. It is just the opposite, Mr. Speaker. And these companies are quite willing to lay off people, as they were doing a year or two ago to cut production, because that is their response to a dampening of price, a dampening of demand for potash.

So we're not dealing, and I don't think anybody believes we are dealing with altruistic organizations that come into Saskatchewan to create jobs. That's not what they're here for. That's a collateral benefit to the people of Saskatchewan, but that's not what they're here for, Mr. Speaker. They're here to make the greatest profit possible. And that should also be the approach of our government, to increase the return to the extent possible for the people of Saskatchewan from the resource that they own. And that, Mr. Speaker, is not the position of this government. That is the position of the New Democratic Party. It is not the position of this government, and that is wrong for a government that is supposed to represent the people of Saskatchewan.

Now that's the resource, the revenue side, I suppose, a little bit on this budget, Mr. Speaker. On the expenditure side, on the expenditure side, the government talks a little bit and the Finance minister did — and what I did say, it was a well-delivered speech — about this balanced budget. The budget document itself states otherwise to the contrary. But even if you accept that the budget is balanced and ignore the parts of the budget document that point to the rising debt, the budget once again does not include any settlement at all for people who work in the health services occupations within our province. So assuming that they don't get zero from this government, Mr. Speaker, there's increased expenditures not budgeted for.

This budget has nothing for a settlement for teachers. Last year the government said, oh no, no, no, we'll find the money. We'll find the money. Now it becomes quite apparent that the government had no intention of settling with the teachers last year, so they weren't worried about that. And now once again, there's no money for teachers in the budget except, except, Mr. Speaker, they can put off a settlement with the teachers until after the election. But when they do settle with the teachers and if they give them more than zero — this is the first year of the contract, a new contract, Mr. Speaker — and that would alone drive this budget in deficit, if this budget was not in fact in deficit, if this budget was not in fact in deficit already, Mr. Speaker.

So it's not a balanced budget. It can't be a balanced budget. If you look at all the health workers that have not received settlement yet, and all the teachers who have not received a settlement yet, it's not possibly a balanced budget. And nobody, I think, credibly could argue that it is.

Because I want to talk a little bit about the effect of the national law and order agenda on the finances of the province of Saskatchewan, again on how transparent this budget actually is, and how much it actually corresponds with reality.

I can't help but comment on one of the many, many remarkable things that the member from Saskatoon Sutherland said. At one point in her speech she said some people don't believe in police officers. I don't know who those people would be, Mr. Speaker.

Perhaps a few anarchists. I hope she wasn't thinking that there's anybody in this Assembly or very many people in Saskatchewan who . . . [inaudible] . . . police officers. It was one of the remarkable things that she said. And the only reason I comment on that is that one of the expenses going forward for the Government of Saskatchewan, every government in the country, is the cost of the national Conservative law and order agenda, as it is called.

There's been a lot of talk leading up to the contempt motion, Mr. Speaker, in Ottawa. A lot of talk about how nobody knew what the costs were of this agenda. And there were some estimates made of those costs, and eventually the government was found in contempt. The national government was found in contempt. First time that a government was found in contempt by parliament in the Commonwealth, not just in Canadian history, but in the history of the Commonwealth. First time a government was found in contempt of parliament.

And part of that contempt ruling was respecting the cost of the law and order agenda. What wasn't much discussed about is that most of that agenda doesn't fall on the national government. Most of that agenda, Mr. Speaker, falls on provincial governments. The restriction of conditional sentences almost entirely will be paid for by provincial governments. And there's no indication from this government as to what the costs of that are going to be, what cost is this province going to bear as a result of an agenda being set in Ottawa by Conservatives and not being challenged on fiscal grounds, on fiscal grounds by this government, by this government.

Now I want to put aside any debate about whether anything in that law and order agenda actually reduces crime. Let's assume that it does. And I want to put aside whether that really matters. Let's assume that if a consensus of Canadians believe that some crimes should be punished greater than they currently are, whether or not that reduces crime, then let's say that's a good enough reason to bear these costs.

But in fact you can only spend a dollar once, Mr. Speaker, and a dollar spent on a correctional space in Saskatchewan can't be spent on a schoolroom, can't be spent on low-income housing, and it can't be spent on a hospital room, Mr. Speaker. So if the people of Saskatchewan want to trade schoolrooms or housing or hospital rooms for jail cells, well that's a public policy decision, and I don't know if there's a right answer to that, Mr. Speaker. But the people of Saskatchewan deserve to know that they're making the trade-off. They deserve to know what we're going to spend money on, and what we're not going to spend money on.

[16:45]

Corrections has today announced that we are going to spend \$12 million more on corrections, more on jail cells, to build more jail cells. And maybe that's a good thing, Mr. Speaker, because we do have an issue with overcrowding in the province in any case. But the full cost, the full cost of this agenda should be made known to the people of Saskatchewan because it is the Saskatchewan taxpayer that's going to be paying for it, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, although it was a well-delivered budget speech by the Minister of Finance on the issue of resources and standing up for Saskatchewan, I can't support the budget motion. On the issue of transparency and whether the budget is balanced or not, I can't support the budget motion, Mr. Speaker. And on the issue of disclosure to the people of Saskatchewan of the costs of government programs going forward and the costs of government contracts going forward, again the government has not been forthright. It has not been transparent. And I can't support the motion, Mr. Speaker.

And so I advise, and I guess it'll be no surprise to the members opposite, that I will not be supporting the motion. I will be supporting the amendment.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina South, the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. Well our colleagues in opposition have left me with only a very few minutes for my remarks so I'll abbreviate them and I'll get started right away.

It's a great honour to participate in this year's budget debate, Mr. Speaker, and a great pleasure to take this opportunity to explain some of the budget details for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, the great ministry that I serve, all part of the Saskatchewan Party government's comprehensive plan for moving Saskatchewan forward.

Now I'd like to begin with some well-deserved thank yous, starting with the residents of Regina South whom I have the great privilege of serving. I thoroughly enjoy listening and learning about their opinions on important issues along with their thoughts on how to address the challenges and opportunities in our great province. And I'm deeply grateful for the time that they take to share their insight with me.

Thanks also to Kyle Leonard, the extremely capable young man who runs the Regina South constituency office on my behalf. A very special hello to Michelle, his wonderful fiancée as well, and congratulations to them both on their upcoming wedding which is going to take place in the beautifully restored train station in Ogema, Saskatchewan. Ogema, a great town.

Next is the incredibly dedicated team in room 345, our office here at the Legislative Building, including Heather, Kim, Bob, Marg, and Darin. You do a fantastic job, folks, every single day. Thank you very much. Sincere thanks as well to the highly skilled professionals at the ministry led by our very capable deputy minister, Ms. Wynne Young.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my thank yous by acknowledging my incredible wife, Jocelyn, whose love and constant support makes my involvement in public life possible. Thanks, darling; you're the best.

I also want to mention the youngsters that we have at home because I said that I would. There's Meko who is 16 and getting a little long in the tooth. There's Bear who's in great shape for a 12-year-old, and then there are the girls, Krissy and Katja, who are just 11 months and a real handful. Mr. Speaker, part of the reason I want to include them in today's remarks is that I think

they're watching on TV. In addition, this just might be the first and only time in the history of Saskatchewan that dogs are going to be mentioned by name in *Hansard*, the official record of our legislature's proceedings. So girls, I want you to be on your best behaviour, no fighting, and no peeing on the rug.

Mindful of the time, Mr. Speaker, I'll proceed to my comments about the budget and I'll confine them to a response to our critic from Saskatoon Riversdale's comments about the budget yesterday. It's time to consider her remarks.

I'd like to thank her in advance for acknowledging the incredible 75 per cent increase in funding that we've provided to the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation. Unfortunately she's completely missed its importance to the heritage community that works so hard on behalf of all of us in our province.

Interviewed in the *Leader-Post* on March 29, Heritage Saskatchewan CEO described the additional funding support as "very critical," she said, "because it provides funding to the grassroots agencies, to small communities and larger communities. It was great to see funding channelled in that direction . . ." How could the member from Saskatoon Riversdale possibly not see the transformational nature of our budget commitment? I just don't understand it.

The member for Saskatoon Riversdale also talked about the film industry and noted that it's facing serious challenges. Now on that point, Mr. Speaker, we couldn't agree more. Then she said that the recommendations contained in the recently tabled film industry task report aren't being addressed. On this point, Mr. Speaker, we couldn't agree less. The number one priority in the report's recommendations was speeding up the approval process for payment of film employment tax credits to film production companies. Well we just did that. Increased funding for marketing Saskatchewan-made films was another key priority. We just did that too. How could the member from Saskatoon Riversdale not have been aware of all of this? Again I don't know. You'll have to ask her.

Let's consider what SMPPIA, the Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association, had to say about the budget. And here's a direct quote, Mr. Speaker:

SMPPIA is pleased to announce that our advocacy efforts and work on the Film Industry Task Force have had some success. In today's budget announcement we learned that our industry will benefit from an increase of \$116,000 to SaskFilm's allocation. This represents an increase of over 9% to the money they receive to support the film and television industry in Saskatchewan . . . it is positive news [they concluded] to see that funding for our industry has not only been maintained but increased.

The member expressed great disappointment, Mr. Speaker, over the winding down of SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network]. Now this is very understandable. But she doesn't appear to understand at all that with the sale of SCN to Bluepoint, the distance education service continues, access to the existing film library continues, and there will be millions and millions of additional dollars in the future that will be invested directly in support of Saskatchewan-based film production. How could she possibly not know about these

important and exciting new developments for our province's film industry? Again, Mr. Speaker, I don't know. You'll have to ask her.

Mr. Speaker, in commenting about the arts and culture sector, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale said, and I quote, "All these organizations are getting squeezed." Squeezed, Mr. Speaker. That was the word that she used. Our Sask Party government has invested 35 per cent more in this key sector in its first four years than the NDP did in its last four years. That's an increase of \$21 million, Mr. Speaker. How could that fact have escaped the member's attention? I don't know. You'll have to ask her.

And if you get past page 1 of the TPCS [Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport] budget — and I recommend that she do that some day, Mr. Speaker — you will find that part of this investment is nearly \$1 million in brand new funding for new programs she hasn't even found yet.

And, Mr. Speaker, there was little if any acknowledgement of the historic investment in our province's beautiful provincial parks and unprecedented funding and support of our regional park system — priorities that were sadly ignored by the NDP government in former days.

An Hon. Member: — For 16 years.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — For 16 years. Yes, indeed. Mr. Speaker, finally we come to tourism, a critically important part of our ministry's budget as demonstrated by the dramatic increases in funding to Tourism Saskatchewan since the election in the fall of 2007 — a full 50 per cent — but which again unfortunately does not seem to have captured the member from Saskatoon Riversdale's attention.

At this point I will simply add the following quote from Tourism Saskatchewan about our government's new budget: "The significance of tourism to the province's economic growth and employment has been recognized through commitments made in today's provincial budget," they said. And they continued on to say: "Targeted support to highway infrastructure and provincial and regional parks demonstrates the government's understanding that tourism is a growing, viable sector and that investment will pay dividends." Again, Mr. Speaker, we couldn't agree more with that quote.

Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of minutes, I gather, just to review some of the more interesting other features of the budget, but we're going to have to be brief. Five and a half minutes.

An Hon. Member: — Five minutes and 25 seconds.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Okay, five minutes and 25 seconds. Well, Mr. Speaker, I just want to offer this, this following observation. During the Finance minister's speech, his budget address last Wednesday, I had the opportunity to watch the NDP members on the other side of the aisle, and here's what I saw. It was an amazing sight. Never have I seen them more disappointed. Never have I seen them more despondent, and never, Mr. Speaker, have I seen them more desperate. Every time the Finance minister outlined yet another key budget initiative, yet another component of the Saskatchewan

advantage, you could almost hear them muttering to themselves, we are so pooped.

No doubt it will disappoint our opposition colleagues even further — and I hate to do that, Mr. Speaker, because we like to be kind on this side of the aisle — I'm going to say right away that I like this particular budget. I like it a lot. All of us on the government side of the House do.

An Hon. Member: — Great things for agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Great things for agriculture, says the member. Great things for small businesses. Cutting business taxes. Absolutely. Raising exemption platforms for tax exemption for income taxes — all of these good things, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well we've just given you all the good news you can handle. You're looking more disappointed than ever, I'm sorry to say.

Mr. Speaker, it's probably time for me to wrap up. We only have about two minutes left. Now, Mr. Speaker . . .

An Hon. Member: — Keep going. Keep going. Keep going.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Keep going? They're urging me to keep going. Members are urging me to keep going, and I will for a minute or so.

Now traditionally, Mr. Speaker, as you may recall, this is the time when I invite members of the opposition to set aside party rhetoric. This is the time traditionally when I invite them to set aside petty jealousies and animosities. This is the time traditionally, Mr. Speaker, when in a bipartisan spirit of true partnership, I invite them to join us in supporting a budget — a budget that lowers taxes, a budget that reduces debt, and a budget that adds immeasurably to the quality of life of Saskatchewan people, their families, and their communities.

However as the member for Biggar always reminds me at about this time, he says, Hutch, they're not going to vote for the budget. I can almost hear him now. Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't see why the NDP feel compelled to vote against lower taxes. I don't see why they feel compelled to vote against paying down the debt, and I certainly don't understand why they feel compelled to vote against better quality of life, but I guess they will anyway.

So, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to simply say this at this point, I'm proud to support this government's *Saskatchewan Advantage* budget. I'm very proud and confident that it will maintain the momentum in our strong economy, and I'm certainly confident it's going to enhance our enviable quality of life and keep Saskatchewan moving forward as we grow the population.

We have the strongest economy in the country. Our job, Mr. Speaker, as I explained to a number of folks at the Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan meeting the other morning, is to keep it that way. And I remember in addressing recently a meeting of the Regina Engineering Society, I said, you know, people sometimes ask, what do governments do anyway? And I said, in order to answer that question, I need to ask you one. Here is the question, I said. Hands up, everybody who's busy in

their office today. All over the room, hands went up. Everybody is busy in their office today in the engineering society, Mr. Speaker. And I said, our job is to keep it that way.

That's what this budget will do, Mr. Speaker. It lowers debt. It reduces taxes. It increases quality of life for individuals and families all over the province, and it's certainly going to keep the momentum of Canada's strongest economy moving forward.

Apparently we have another minute left. I'll say at this point, Mr. Speaker, in the last few remaining seconds, that I've got to go home and feed and walk the girls. I thank them for their attention. I hope they've left the carpet the way that it was when we left this morning, and I certainly expect to have a very pleasant evening with them. They too are happy about reduced taxes. They too are happy about lower debt . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . That's right. We've retired \$3 billion of debt in the last little while, Mr. Speaker. That's about \$2 billion, and better highways, Mr. Speaker. There's just no question about it.

I wish that we had a critic from Saskatoon Riversdale who would take the time to read the budget . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . STARS ambulance — absolutely — a fantastic new initiative, Mr. Speaker. What else can we talk about? Let's talk about health care. Let's talk about infrastructure. And let's talk about unprecedented provincial revenue sharing in support of municipalities all over this province. Mr. Speaker, in Regina, my community, it's risen from \$13 million to 33.

The Speaker: — It now being 5 p.m., this Assembly will adjourn until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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