



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

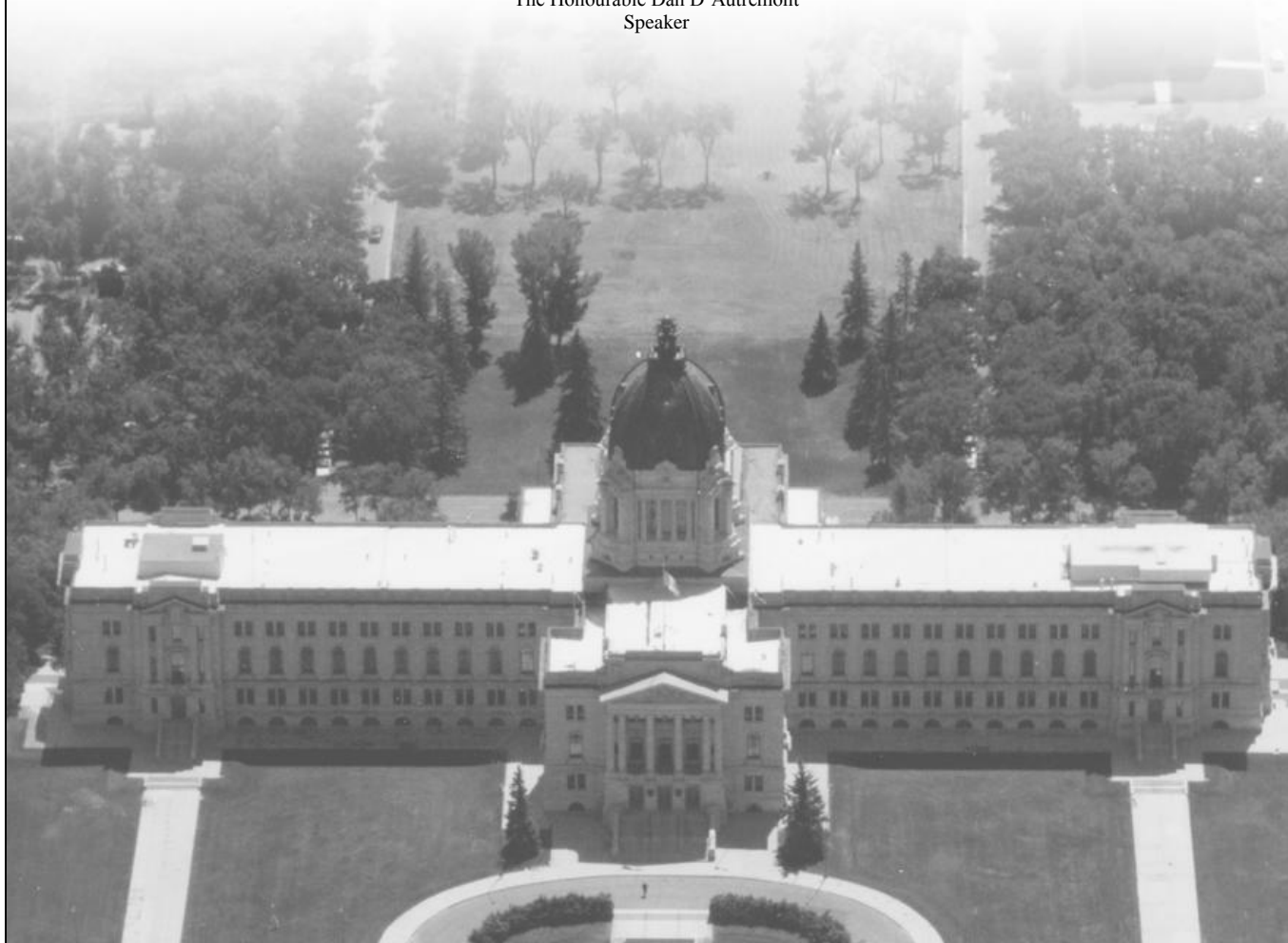
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Dan D'Autremont  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont  
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall  
 Leader of the Opposition — John Nilson

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
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
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D’Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Hon. Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House, 25 grade 5 and grade 6 students from Canada's hot spot, all the way from Yellow Grass, Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, these 25 students are here with their teachers, Jane Peters and Johanna Tiefenbach, and their bus driver is Brian Pederson and I believe he's joined them as well.

Mr. Speaker, I'll have the opportunity after question period to meet with these students and maybe have a few minutes with them before they continue on with the rest of the day in the capital city, Mr. Speaker. But I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming these 25 students from Yellow Grass.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the House, I'd like to take a moment to introduce my legislative intern for 2012. It's Jason Kiefer, up in the gallery — Jason, can you give a wave — from rural Saskatchewan and born and lived in Drake.

He attended Lanigan Central High, where he's done all sorts of things. In fact, he was the valedictorian of his class. So I'm sure he's getting pointers from us on how to give a dynamite speech. But he's travelled the world; he's done a lot of different things. He's convoked with a Bachelor of Arts degree, double majoring in political science and philosophy, and like so many of us, a diehard Riders fan. I'd like to ask all members here to give him a warm welcome to his legislature. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the legislature, I'd like to introduce today Kaleb Weinheimer, and his mom, Terri, is up in your gallery with him this afternoon. Terri is also our executive manager of the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation in Melville, and a large part of their family actually comes from my constituency in the Langenburg area. So good to see Kaleb here today, and I also want to thank Terri for all the good work she does for us. So I ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their legislature today.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce Dr. Zisis Papandreou and Dr. George Lolos, both

esteemed physicists from the University of Regina. Both of these individuals, as well as the university, are playing a key role in a major international subatomic physics project known as GlueX, which seeks to uncover how matter is held together in the universe.

GlueX is run by the Jefferson Labs out of Virginia. It has a number of US [United States] and Canadian partners, including Illinois university, Carnegie Mellon University as well as NSERC [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada] and the Canadian Foundation for Innovation. And it's been classified by the United States Department of Energy as a discovery potential experiment, meaning that it has Nobel Prize winning potential.

As a result of their work, these two esteemed physicists are not simply helping to unveil and discover fundamental truths of our universe, but they're also working on key aspects of applied research in areas like medical imaging, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these two esteemed physicists to their legislature.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for protection for late-night retail workers by passing Jimmy's law. And we know in the early morning hours of June 20th, 2011, Jimmy Ray Wiebe was shot two times and died from his injuries. He was working at a gas station in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, alone and unprotected from intruders.

But we know that positive stats show that convenience store and gas station robberies are down by one-third since 1999, largely due to increased safety practices, including two people working together on late-night shifts. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately enact Bill 601, Jimmy's law, to ensure greater safety for retail workers who work late-night hours.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Regina. I do so present. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the trappers of Saskatchewan, the industry that founded our country, and the current regulations being enforced that are creating huge challenges that are a concern for all our traditional trappers. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize that the experience gained through practical experience has value, the trappers'

experience has value; and in so doing to cause the government to review the current legislation and regulations with respect to the trapping regulations and firearm use in consultation with the traditional resource users.

And as in duty bound, [Mr. Speaker] your petitioners will ever pray.

And the people that signed this petition, when I talk about the historical value of the trapping industry, are from the oldest community in Western Canada, and that is the beautiful community of Cumberland House. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the management of our finances and the accounting of our finances. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the Sask Party government to provide Saskatchewan people with a fair, true state of our finances by providing appropriate summary financial accounting and reporting that is in line with the rest of Canada in compliance with public sector accounting standards and following the independent Provincial Auditor's recommendations; and also to begin to provide responsible, sustainable, and trustworthy financial management as deserved by Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Saskatoon and Prince Albert. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today concerning the issue of a new school in Hampton Village, and this is on behalf of my constituents who live in the neighbourhood of Hampton Village as well as Dundonald. And the prayer, the petition reads:

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 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, I so present.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to present a petition on behalf of people who are concerned about this government's decision to cut the film employment tax credit. I'd like to note that in just a few hours yesterday that there were more than 400 signatures on this petition, and it complements very nicely an online petition that has seen more than 5,000 people sign it since it's been up on late Friday afternoon. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan continue to provide a tax incentive for film, video, and television employment to leverage investment, employment, and growth in the province's film, video, and television sector.

This petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by people in Saskatoon and Regina. I so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Health Budget

**Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the strong and sustainable health budget presented this year. This year's health budget totalled \$4.67 billion, an increase of over 4.9 per cent over the last year.

There are several positives in this year's health budget: for instance, \$138.8 million for the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, an increase of \$16.9 million over the last year. The work the Cancer Agency does is vitally important to Saskatchewan and we have invested substantially in the agency, increasing their funding by 76 per cent since 2007. These investments had paid off, Mr. Speaker. There are currently no patients waiting more than eight weeks for their first appointment, down from over 150 waiting more than eight weeks in April of 2010. The increase in funding is improving funding to cancer screening, cancer drugs, and specialists such as hematologists and oncologists.

Rosalee Longmoore, president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, concurs with the direction of our government, stating the safety of our patients and their families is of paramount importance to registered nurses in Saskatchewan. SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] supports the government's attention to this issue.

Like the provincial budget as a whole, the 2012-13 health budget focuses on ensuring that the health system is sustainable in the future, while ensuring valuable agencies and programs like the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and colorectal screening

program gets the funding they require. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Spring Free From Racism

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring attention to a proud tradition in Regina, Spring Free From Racism. Held yesterday, it brought thousands of people together in our community. I was pleased to attend, along with other members of this Assembly.

This event supports the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and does so by celebrating and sharing our cultural diversity. It is a day filled with cultural dance, festivities, food, and kinship. I look forward to it every year.

Our province is built on a rich and proud history of thousands of years of First Nations people. Our modern story of immigration and multiculturalism builds on this foundation. Each of us have a story of how our family arrived to Saskatchewan and where we came from. My family from Scotland homesteaded near Melville in 1903. Just like the diverse weave of my Scottish tartan or the Métis sash, this is what makes us stronger. As our motto states, “from many peoples, strength.”

Waves of immigration from all over the world continue to this day, enriching our province, evolving who we are, and making us stronger. We have more work to do. There’s more that we can be and it is through knowledge, sharing, learning, and celebration provided through events such as Spring Free that will enable this important progress.

I ask all members to join with me in thanking the determined organizers and recognizing the importance of Spring Free From Racism. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

### Physicists Participate in International Project

**Mr. Marchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Friday I, along with the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration, the Minister for Government Services, and the member from Regina Walsh Acres, had the pleasure of celebrating a major milestone with our guest physicists today, Dr. Lolos and Papandreou from the University of Regina working on the GlueX project.

As you heard, Mr. Speaker, GlueX is an international project with collaborators from the University of Regina, Indiana University, Carnegie Mellon University, and the Jefferson Lab in Virginia, researching how matter is held together at a subatomic level. Mr. Speaker, this truly is nuclear physics at the highest level.

Here at the University of Regina, the construction of the barrel calorimeter has helped our physicists learn more about protons and neutrons and significantly contribute to the discussion of how matter is held together. Our government recognizes the value and importance of research and innovation and its impact

on our province, Canada, and the world. The leading-edge work being done on the GlueX project supports our government’s vision for a research- and innovation-driven knowledge economy. This milestone for the University of Regina will build upon its reputation as a leading institution in research and innovation in Canada and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, I’d like all members to join me again in commending the research team at the University of Regina for their work on the GlueX project that will set new milestones in the area of international physics. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Tourism Saskatchewan Awards of Excellence

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan’s tourism sector honoured businesses and individuals at the 23rd annual Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala on March 22nd right here in Regina.

As Lynda Haverstock, president and CEO [chief executive officer] of Tourism Saskatchewan said, all of the nominees, finalists, and award recipients are exceptional ambassadors and deserve recognition of their accomplishments. The nominees represented all corners of the province — rural, urban, northern, southern — and all areas of the tourism industry: a playhouse, a large agricultural trade show, a rodeo, a fireworks festival, GPS [Global Positioning System] and QR [quick response] code technology, a resort lodge, an interpretive centre, an eco-adventure experience, western-themed farm experience, and a local hotel operated by the same family for over 60 years.

Winners included tourism operators from Saskatoon, Regina, Consul, Yorkton, North Battleford, Herschel, Cypress Hills, Limerick, St. Denis, and Elbow. The passion and pride these entrepreneurs demonstrated when giving their acceptance speech tells a Saskatchewan story we can all be proud of.

Tourism Saskatchewan was a public-private partnership that put industry people, not politicians, in charge of developing and marketing their industry. Now that this government is taking control of Tourism Saskatchewan without any consultation with the industry, this member-driven agency with its own elected board will be forced to take on an entirely different agenda — the government’s agenda — as indicated by the Minister of Finance when he said to the media that there will be greater influence by government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

### Education and Employment Task Force for First Nations and Métis People

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning the ministers of Education; Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration; and First Nations and Métis Relations had the privilege of joining the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and Vice-chief Simon Bird to

introduce the panel members of the joint task force on improving education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan.

The members of the task force have a keen understanding of the power of education as they've lived and worked in communities all across this province. The members include panel Chair, Gary Merasty, vice-president corporate social responsibility of Cameco; Don Hoium, executive director, League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents of Saskatchewan; and Rita Bouvier, researcher, writer, and community learning facilitator. These esteemed panel members will soon begin a dialogue with people across Saskatchewan about what it'll take to improve education and employment incomes for First Nations and Métis people.

This task force will give First Nations and Métis people the opportunity to bring forward their own ideas and their experience of what success looks like and what the barriers to success are.

Mr. Speaker, this government understands and takes seriously the shared responsibility we have to find innovative ways to improve outcomes, which represents a unique partnership for Saskatchewan, reflective of our willingness to come together to find solutions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **St. Isidore-de-Bellevue Team Wins Provincial Title**

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to congratulate St. Isidore-de-Bellevue senior boys' volleyball team on their SHSAA [Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association] provincial 1A title. Les Predateurs unveiled the provincial title banner at the school's gymnasium with students, teachers, parents, and friends in attendance. Everyone was on hand to congratulate the team on a job well done.

Each team member was presented with a personalized jersey to commemorate their achievement. A video was played for the assembly of the team winning the title. Predateurs' coach, Terry Gaudet, spoke about each team member, explaining each player's contribution to the team. The team members were then given an opportunity to recount their personal experiences on the road to the championship. One theme rang out consistently. The championship was won on account of each person giving 100 per cent and always working as a team.

Coach Gaudet quoted Babe Ruth by saying, "The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime."

In business, sports, and life, the path to success is a lonely road to walk on your own. These young champions walk the road to success together, and we are proud of their achievement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Spring Free From Racism**

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak about the Spring Free From Racism family day celebration that I was able to attend this Sunday along with my colleagues from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley and Regina Dewdney. This year marked the 13th annual celebration of this event, developed to bring cultures together and celebrate the positive aspects of a diverse city. Mr. Speaker, this celebration brings attention to racial issues surrounding First Nations people, immigrants, and visible minorities. Today we continue to meet and develop respect for each other while recognizing the importance that each person brings to the growing cultural mosaic right here in our Queen City.

The 2012 edition of Spring Free From Racism was the biggest family day program in its history. Attendees were treated to amazing food and over 40 different performances by groups representing Ireland, Chile, India, the Philippines, Scotland, Ethiopia, Greece, Germany, Ukraine, First Nations, African, Latino, and Caribbean people. This event is very important to our city. It recognizes that apartheid, slavery, and the Holocaust took place, but it also shines a light on racial gang-related crime; hate activities; government policies in education, justice, and immigration; the media; and our employment systems right here in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all Saskatchewan residents and the members of this Assembly to continue to shine that light on racism year-round. The Saskatchewan of our future is a province in which all people are treated equally and freely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Support for Film Industry**

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems like everyone except the Premier and his minister know tax credit support for the film and television industry costs nothing until a film crew brings a production here. For every dollar the government invests, the industry brings in \$6 in return. It pays for itself many times over and just makes sense.

This tax incentive is present in every province in the country. In fact when New Brunswick eliminated their tax credit, they witnessed an immediate downturn in the film industry and quickly reversed their decision. Even Hollywood has a tax credit, Mr. Speaker. My question to the minister: will he follow New Brunswick's lead and reinstate this film and television incentive?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We welcome questions about our balanced budget.

No one is denying the fact that the film industry creates economic activity. Every industry does that. And no one is

denying the fact that the film industry creates employment either, because every industry does that too, Mr. Speaker. You know, the real question is how much public money should be invested in an industry in which economic activity has dropped almost 70 per cent and employment is down almost 55 per cent in the last five years.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we have to say this: the sad but stark reality is that the sound stage has no productions booked for the coming year. None at all. Do we continue to put more dollars into this industry and subsidize it at an even higher rate when we are also being asked to address real issues like affordable housing, like child care spaces, autism funding, cancer treatment, surgical wait times, and building schools and hospitals and highways? Mr. Speaker, we determined that we just couldn't do all of that within a balanced budget, and that's why we're winding the program down.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Real issues, Mr. Speaker? You tell that to the families who will be leaving the province because they can no longer make a living here.

In 2010 the industry worked with the minister on a task force to come up with ways to ensure the film and television industry could thrive. For example, the task force came up with innovative ways to repackage the tax credit so it works better for both the industry and the province. Today in a news release, the Premier says the industry is simply asking for more money. That's not the case. It's asking for money to be spent more effectively. For over 18 months this government took no action on a report with important recommendations. It just doesn't make sense.

To the minister: instead on budget day, the government kicked the feet out from underneath an entire industry. Why has the government refused to implement a single recommendation of this task force report?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We welcome another question about our balanced budget that we were proud to deliver to the people of Saskatchewan just a few short days ago.

You know, regarding working with the industry, Mr. Speaker, we were the group that decided that in order to try to address the challenges, the very significant challenges facing the film industry, we ought to get together with them. And we created the film industry task force. We worked collaboratively with that group to find ways to stabilize the industry and to increase its competitiveness.

Now, Mr. Speaker, despite the efforts of these very hard-working people, the industry was not able to come forward with a plan that doesn't require significant additional public resources. We need to be plain: they're asking for \$3.5 million in further subsidies this year alone.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the other recommendations of the task force, we took cost-effective measures to support the industry. But other jurisdictions, we understand, have significantly increased their support. They're not tabling balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker. They're tabling deficit budgets, and that's something that they'll have to answer their people for.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — I think, Mr. Speaker, the minister actually needs to read the report. There are many not just low-cost but no-cost items in this report, Mr. Speaker.

Instead of agreeing to meet last week with the industry, the Premier went on Twitter to respond negatively to the outpouring of support for the film and television industry. He said, "If an industry cannot survive at all without a permanent taxpayer subsidy, should the taxpayers subsidize indefinitely?" We provide tax incentives to job creators and province builders. The film industry creates jobs with over 600 million in investment over the life of this tax credit. This doesn't even cover all the spinoff benefits, Mr. Speaker.

To the Premier: can he explain his obvious contradiction where he questioned on Twitter the value of taxpayer incentives with the fact that his own government has been providing these very incentives to so many sectors? How can it be good for some job creators but not the film and television industry?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two quick points: first of all, the meeting requested with the Premier by the film industry is scheduled for 3:15 this afternoon right here in the Legislative Assembly building. Second of all, there has indeed been a lot of discussion about ROI, or return on investment, in the last few days. Mr. Speaker, this is an important point. In fact the film industry has mentioned calculations suggesting their ROI on public funding is about 6 to 1.

Through my ministry, the Government of Saskatchewan is in the business of attracting events in a very big way. We invest public funding each and every year to bring signature events to our province because of the economic activity they generate. The big difference between our investments in film and our investments in those events is return on investment. Here's a few examples: 2010, the World Junior Hockey Championship, the net ROI, 30 to 1; 2009 Ford world curling for men, 40 to 1; 2008 Scotties Tournament of Hearts for women, 50 to 1; and finally, Mr. Speaker, the 2011 Ford World Men's Curling, 60 to 1. And, Mr. Speaker, the last time we had a Grey Cup was in 2003, and the return on investment was 100 to 1. If we're talking return on investments, Mr. Speaker, these are the facts that we need to keep in mind.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased the

Premier has finally announced today that he will meet with representatives of the industry, but it should not have come to this. The film and television industry thought they were working with this government. They invested time and effort into this task force, and its report sat on the shelf since October 2010.

To the Premier: those involved with the task force feel like they wasted their time. Is the Premier's meeting today going to be yet another waste of time for those concerned about the film and video industry, or is he open to reversing his government's decision to axe the tax incentive?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Mr. Speaker, part of the reason we're having this meeting this afternoon, and we're delighted to be able to do it, is to share information and talk about facts and figures.

You've already mentioned for example the fact that \$100 million of public money has been provided to the film industry through the film employment tax credit program since its establishment in 1998. But we're also going to mention that another \$110 million has been provided in other subsidies, including a grant for the sound stage, a grant for SaskFilm, and grants for programs provided on the industry's behalf by the Saskatchewan Arts Board and Saskatchewan Culture. Mr. Speaker, that's a total of \$210 million. And those facts will be discussed at today's meeting.

And as I've said, despite the very best interests of, the very best efforts of the industry, they haven't been able to turn the industry around. And the only way to keep current values to production alive, they're saying, is an immediate injection of three and a half million dollars of extra funding on top of the funding to date, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Tourism Saskatchewan

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, just before the budget was released, Tourism Saskatchewan learned it was being turned into a Crown corporation. The industry was taken completely off guard. The CEO and president of Tourism Saskatchewan said, "We felt quite blindsided." There was no notice given to the agency and no mention of changes in the Finance minister's budget speech.

This is just another example of secrecy and surprise from a government that doesn't feel it needs to consult Saskatchewan people. My question to the minister: how can he make a decision that will dramatically impact the tourism agency without consulting the CEO, staff, and board members?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We welcome the member's question. And first of all, who knew that the NDP [New Democratic Party] would be criticizing the

creation of a Crown corporation in the province of Saskatchewan? Mr. Speaker, the fact is there was very, very extensive consultation with stakeholders and industry representatives through the tourism review.

The review's consultation summary is on the Tourism, Parks, Culture website. In fact, it's been there for more than a year. It very plainly shows the number and the range of organizations which were involved in the consultation process. It even reveals the many comments that were gathered. This consultation was conducted by independent firms and it included amongst the following: key stakeholder interviews; meetings with Tourism Saskatchewan's senior management team, all five regional tourism associations and TPCS [Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport] senior management; four focus group sessions in Regina and Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, along with input from Tourism Saskatchewan's president, task teams, and from the Tourism Saskatchewan board itself. Further information was also gathered from a web survey. Mr. Speaker, that's a lot of consultation.

[14:00]

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, Tourism Saskatchewan is a stand-alone, arm's-length agency. For more than a decade, it has successfully promoted our province, and the industry has generated millions of dollars and thousands of jobs for Saskatchewan people. A 2009 review made it clear that Tourism Saskatchewan should remain an arm's-length agency. According to the CEO, every dollar invested returns between 19 and 35 times what is spent.

My question to the minister: Tourism Saskatchewan has been so successful over the past 10 years. Why is he trying to fix something that isn't broke?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We welcome the member's question. We are indeed bringing Tourism Saskatchewan into the provincial government as a Crown corporation. Now, Mr. Speaker, we already fund close to 100 per cent of its annual costs. So from a financial perspective, it almost already is a government entity.

Tourism is a big industry in Saskatchewan and it plays a major role in our government's growth agenda for this great province. The tourism review challenged us to take a greater leadership role — that's very clear — to better position the industry for growth. The new Crown corporation will help us achieve that goal.

We also see a need to better align all of our provincial marketing efforts, marketing to attract more business, more investment, and more tourism, so we can be more consistent with our message and more effective in marketing our province, both at home and around the world. The new Crown corporation will achieve that goal too, Mr. Speaker.

And finally, we need to consider Tourism Saskatchewan's



structure. Our tourism agency is a membership-driven organization that already does a great job of looking after the interests of its members. It's time to get to the next level and make sure that it's looking after the interests of the whole province. As pointed out in the review, virtually every other province in the Dominion of Canada has achieved this goal by creating an agency of the Crown for tourism. We're doing it too.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister doesn't have a good answer why he is cutting the film tax credit. He can't explain why he has taken over a successful tourism agency. The Finance minister says, "There will be greater influence by government in terms of ensuring that they co-ordinate everything that is going on in the province."

Mr. Speaker, this message management is extreme. My question to the minister: is this the way the Sask Party is trying to play politics with tourism industry?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. We have been very carefully studying the tourism review and working with its recommendations since it was completed in 2010. The new corporation is a direct result of this good work.

First and foremost, the review asks, is government in or out of the tourism industry? Well, Mr. Speaker, we are most assuredly in. Already we're paying for 99 or so per cent of the revenues to the corporation. Out of a \$12 million budget, they receive only \$50,000 from memberships. We're already in, this high.

Mr. Speaker, we want to take the challenge that is offered by the review to assume a greater leadership role by creating the new Crown corporation. The review also encourages, Mr. Speaker, to establish a single point of entry — something the members opposite should take note of — for tourism within government to develop a long-range strategy, to more closely align tourism initiatives with other economic development initiatives in government ministries, and to create a strategy for major events, something that we do very well in this province. Mr. Speaker, those are the compelling reasons.

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

### Go Green Program

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Go green is a program that has given everyday Saskatchewan people and communities a chance to reduce energy usage and to be more environmentally friendly. However last week, the Sask Party government announced it is chopping \$10.8 million out of the go green program, down to just 4.5 million left.

And why is the government axing the vast majority of these funds, Mr. Speaker? The minister himself told the media it was because the program was very popular and there have been a lot of applicants. A lot of people wanting to be more

environmentally friendly should be a good thing, Mr. Speaker. It should be a good thing, but not for this government. My question to the Minister of the Environment: why are you gutting this successful program that helps the environment because it's popular?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member should know that the large part of the reduction in this year's budget for go green was because of a campaign commitment that was fulfilled in the last term of government. We said as a government we would put an additional \$40 million over the last term of government, and we completed that commitment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I did indicate to the media, we have in the neighbourhood, in any given year, we will have 80 to 100 to 120 applications, Mr. Speaker. Many of them, the vast majority of them will meet the criteria that we set out. But the fact is, is that through the grant program, we typically only have enough grant dollars for a handful, maybe up to 10 or 12 of the projects.

So over the course of this year, Mr. Speaker, while maintaining the money that we do need in the grant program for existing commitments from previous years like the Aquistore, which I had the pleasure of announcing additional funding with the federal Minister of Natural Resources just last week, we'll be exploring different options over this year while maintaining our commitments.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before the election, it was go green. After the election, green's gone.

Mr. Speaker, during an interview last week, the Premier had another reason to slash the Go Green Fund. He said that the government was shifting its focus onto research into coal energy. Why is this government gutting go green to concentrate on coal energy, something everyday Saskatchewan people want to reduce our dependency on? Can the minister answer that question, Mr. Speaker?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I am quite surprised that the member would raise the issue of the substantial investment that this government is making in the largest reduction of greenhouse gas emissions project not only in this province, Mr. Speaker, but in this country, Mr. Speaker. It is a leading development all across the world to do the project at Boundary dam 3. Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that under their watch, on this very important issue, emissions rose by 70 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I'm just very surprised that the member would raise this considering that on their own website today, Mr. Speaker, they take credit on their website for a project, a clean coal project, Mr. Speaker, that they actually cancelled, Mr. Speaker. They take credit for projects that they actually don't fulfill.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, in a time when more people of Saskatchewan want to do their share to protect the environment because it makes perfect sense to them, it makes none whatsoever, Mr. Speaker, for a government that makes it harder for the people to do their share. This government believes that more politicians and more statues are far more important for Saskatchewan than ensuring individuals and organizations can indeed go green. Why is this government putting all its anti-environment ideology ahead of the common sense of Saskatchewan people who believe that we should be doing much more to protect our environment, Mr. Speaker?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, would that be the three new members of this Legislative Assembly that that member actually supported in this House, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, we are moving ahead on a number of initiatives that were neglected by the NDP government, Mr. Speaker, whether that be the boreal water project, Mr. Speaker, testing of our northern lakes to determine what effect the northern industrial development like the oil sands is having, Mr. Speaker, something that the members opposite, in terms of Lake Athabasca, stopped testing after 1997, Mr. Speaker.

Whether we look at, Mr. Speaker, work that we're doing through the environmental code that is going to look at a results-based regulatory system for industry and municipalities, individuals, Mr. Speaker, based on a risk assessment to environmental concerns, Mr. Speaker, something that is not done by any other province in this country. Mr. Speaker, groundbreaking work that we're doing here right in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and work that we're doing, Mr. Speaker, as it comes to the work that the federal government is doing on coal-fired regulations in ensuring that our industries are up to standard and that we still support the people that work in the coal industry in this province while making sure that we are . . .

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Go green has become a casualty of this budget, and there's no good reasons for its decimation. But the budget has not been passed yet. There's still a chance for this minister to do the right thing for future generations by helping everyday Saskatchewan people protect the environment. There is still time, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister admit his mistake and immediately work with the Finance minister to completely restore the go green funding which the people of Saskatchewan want?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we are certainly fulfilling, have fulfilled our commitment on the Go Green Fund in the last term of government. We increased it by \$40 million over that four-year term, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are also fulfilling our commitment on go green when it comes to the previous year's budget announcement in

terms of go green, those multi-year agreements, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to fulfill, Mr. Speaker — like the Aquistore project that is going to take place near Estevan which the national government has seen fit to invest an additional \$14 million on top of the \$5 million that this government is investing, will invest over a five-year period.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are going to work with the Ministry of Finance to determine, is there a better way to deliver a program like the go green? And that work will happen over this year.

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

### Seniors' Drug Plan

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Five months ago I can't recall, Mr. Speaker, the Premier or the Minister of Health saying to seniors in Saskatchewan that if they are re-elected they were going to increase the cost of prescription drugs for seniors, they were going to charge more for seniors to have access to ambulance trips, Mr. Speaker, and they're going to increase expenses for seniors in long-term care facilities for hygienic supplies. They didn't say that in the election, Mr. Speaker, but that's exactly what they rolled out in last week's budget.

My question to the minister: why is he making life less affordable for Saskatchewan seniors?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we saw on last Wednesday when the Minister of Finance rose to deliver the budget, a record amount of spending in health care, Mr. Speaker, \$4.68 billion. That works out to just under \$13 million a day each and every day of the year, Mr. Speaker, just on health care.

There are some tough decisions that have to be made, Mr. Speaker, and I will say that the issue around the senior drug plan, raising it from \$15 to \$20 was a very, very difficult decision. But I will say that we made that decision so that we could sustain that program well into the future. We know it is a very well-utilized program, Mr. Speaker, much appreciated, and in order to make sure that that program was sustainable into years into the future, Mr. Speaker, adjustments had to have been made.

That program had not seen an adjustment in the price for five years, Mr. Speaker. This year's budget is about \$97 million for that program alone. It's a difficult decision, Mr. Speaker, but it's a decision this government had to make.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister's attempt to minimize these increases to Saskatchewan people simply doesn't fly. Mr. Speaker, he's making seniors in this province pay 33 per cent more per prescription. I know seniors, Mr. Speaker, who are on three, four, five prescriptions per month.

An important article in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* last month said that 10 per cent of Canadians already are not having access to the prescriptions that they need because of cost. Increased costs per prescriptions, Mr. Speaker, affects the health of seniors and it can cause more expenses down the road as time progresses, Mr. Speaker.

It's baffling. It's baffling why, Mr. Speaker, members opposite would ask seniors to pay millions more for drugs that at an exact same time they're happy to spend millions more for politicians in this province. It's mixed-up priorities that does not fly with Saskatchewan people. To the minister: why are his priorities so mixed-up?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I will stand every day in this House and say that the sustainability of the drug plan is not mixed-up priorities, Mr. Speaker. Mixed-up priorities would be the opposite members that promised everything under the sun during the last general election: \$550 million over four years, unsustainable, Mr. Speaker. If they ever would've formed government, which we knew that wasn't going to happen, but if they ever would've formed government, programs after that amount of spending would've been cut and slashed, kind of like some hospitals that were cut and slashed in this province. I think there were some 52 of them under that government.

Mr. Speaker, this government has increased money in seniors' pockets through the senior income plan, Mr. Speaker, by doubling it in the first four years and now tripling it as we move forward. A senior, Mr. Speaker — get this — a senior in 2007 making \$25,000 was paying over \$1,000 of income tax. Under our government in 2012, only \$363, Mr. Speaker. That's a savings, money in seniors' pockets, of over \$700 annually, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

##### Expansion of Screening Program for Colorectal Cancer

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It certainly is a privilege to rise today, Mr. Speaker, and talk in the Assembly today about another step forward for Saskatchewan being proactive approach for cancer services. Today our government is providing \$4 million to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency for the provincial-wide expansion of the colorectal screening program, Mr. Speaker.

The screening program for colorectal cancer supports early detection to potential colorectal cancer through the use of a simple at-home test called the FIT [fecal immunochemical test] test, Mr. Speaker. This patient-first initiative will be offered in the Kelsey Trail, Regina Qu'Appelle, and north regions — Athabasca, Keewatin Yatthé, and Mamawetan Churchill. That's where it's already offered. The additional \$4 million will see it expand to all the other health regions throughout the province. The additional \$4 million in the 2012-13 budget for the screening program will immediately begin providing the FIT to

residents in Prairie North, Cypress, and Heartland's health regions. The remaining regions will come on board by the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, participants between the ages of 50 — which seems to be a magic number, I know — and 74 have the opportunity to take a simple at-home test that could make a world of difference to their health into the future. Colorectal cancer is the second most common diagnosed cancer and is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in both men and women. Unfortunately hundreds of Saskatchewan people are diagnosed each year and about 270 of them do not survive. That's why our government has strongly supported the proactive screening tool.

I am pleased to note that more than 52,000 people have been invited to take the FIT test so far. The results show that the program is effective in offering early diagnosis and more prompt treatment for Saskatchewan people. Caught early, colorectal cancer is very treatable. Early diagnosis and treatment means patients are able to avoid the stress and disruption in their lives caused by this disease. They can recover more quickly, avoid invasive cancer treatment in the future, and live better, longer lives.

Mr. Speaker, cancer care is a high priority for our government, and we have demonstrated our commitment to the Cancer Agency and to cancer patients across the province through a 76 per cent increase in funding to the Cancer Agency over the past five years. Making state-of-the-art equipment, new cancer drugs, and new screening tools available to the people across Saskatchewan is another example of how we are putting patients first.

Dedicated health professionals in physician offices and the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and in health regions across the province work very hard to ensure top quality care for cancer patients and improved quality of life for those diagnosed. Our government extends its sincere thanks to all those involved in this program for their leadership in advancing colorectal cancer screening across the province.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to expand this program, and I urge Saskatchewan people between the ages of 50 and 74 years of age to watch in their mailboxes and to participate in the program when the kit arrives. Prevention really is the best medicine. With your participation, this screening program will prevent cancer and save lives. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the chance to respond to the ministerial statement by the Minister of Health. Most certainly screening is absolutely important and vital to the province of Saskatchewan for the well-being of individuals. And any time that cancer can be detected early and steps can be taken, that's a positive thing. So I most certainly welcome this news today that the minister has made.

Treatment is definitely important, Mr. Speaker. That's shared by people in Saskatchewan. And so too are the individuals, the health professionals, that deliver treatment, and we know that needs to be a top priority as well. I know we have a situation at

the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency where health care professionals have been without a contract for well over two years. And they've requested binding arbitration in order to address some of the issues around recruitment and retention, as the prolonged absence of a contract is affecting morale. And so I hope, Mr. Speaker, while we've seen some movement here with early detection and screening, that we would also see some steps from members opposite that could assist with the settlement of a contract through binding arbitration perhaps, as the health professionals have suggested.

So I thank the minister for the remarks he made today, and I hope that we as a province can do everything when it comes to treatment, as well as . . . treatment part of screening and then also treatment as part of the delivery of care, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 225 through 248.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has tabled written questions no. 225 to 248.

### 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.]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to weigh back in to debate as it relates to the budget that was tabled last Wednesday. Of course, I provided remarks that day as it related to this budget and, as we've had more time in the days to come and days to follow since the budget and through the weekend, we've had individuals and contacts from all across Saskatchewan and all regions of Saskatchewan, from Canora to North Battleford to Meadow Lake to Estevan, to share what's been described as great disappointment with the budget that was brought down, great disappointment that we're hearing from all across Saskatchewan as it relates to this budget.

What's the crux of that concern is the concern over a government that's choosing to spend millions of dollars on politicians, Mr. Speaker, to increase the number of politicians here in Saskatchewan, and to do so at the same very time that they ask seniors in this province to dig deeper into their pockets to pay significant increases as it relates to their health care costs, specifically prescription drugs. And this is something I'm hearing from all across the province from seniors, from

everyday families that are impacted by this budget — which are the people that are impacted, everyday families across Saskatchewan — that they're greatly disappointed by a government that's choosing to spend millions of dollars to increase the number of politicians, to build extravagant statues at the legislature, to keep a well-staffed Premier's office, but asks Saskatchewan families to pay more and to get less, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a matter of misplaced priorities. On most of the items that we look at, it can't be anything more than ideology trumping common sense, and the impacts are hard and real across the province.

When we look at many of the reductions — and we'll see many as we move forward here this year — reductions and cuts in health and in education and in post-secondary institutions, there's a significant uneasy feeling by Saskatchewan people. The reason being that if they look at the allocation, the budgetary number which they have that the Sask Party's bringing forward for health care and in education and in post-secondary, what they realize is that it doesn't cover inflation and population growth, so inflationary pressures — which means cuts and reductions all across Saskatchewan that will be rolled out, Mr. Speaker, and sadly all throughout the next year.

So it's with a nervousness and with anxiety that we receive phone calls right now from people in the southeast corner of the province or people up in Nipawin or seniors up in Prince Albert that are looking across their neighbourhood and their community, wondering what the impacts will be. Because this is a government that's cut the budgets for health delivery and for education in the classroom and for post-secondary right across the province, but they've punted those decisions to another level of government. And sadly those decisions are going to be made public in the days, weeks, and months to follow, leaving Saskatchewan people feeling vulnerable, feeling exposed, and certainly concerned about the programs and services that they value in their own community.

When we think of what this means when we're getting these phone calls, people are phoning and asking what does this mean for the school in their own community, schools that may be at risk of closure either this year or in years forward. They're asking, what does this mean as it relates to supports in the classroom for their student or for their grandchildren's education? They're phoning and asking what this means for class size, Mr. Speaker, when you're cutting education budgets for many across Saskatchewan. What does it mean for class size, Mr. Speaker? And certainly, as I've said, creates this challenge of school closure that far too many communities are stressed about as we speak, and so many more are going to be stressed about as we move forward as a result of this sort of management and this sort of budget.

So it's fair to say that from what I've heard throughout the weekend from literally hundreds if not thousands of messages that have been sent in from all across this province, is great disappointment with the budget that was put forward — a budget with misplaced priorities; a government that is choosing to spend millions of dollars on politicians and do so on the backs of seniors. And one of the members heckles across the floor here. It's those misplaced priorities that are the concern, Mr. Speaker, by Saskatchewan people. Spending millions of

dollars to increase the number of politicians, to build extravagant statues at the legislature, to make sure the Premier's office and Executive Council offices are fully topped up while Saskatchewan people are asked to pay more and get less.

We see it on so many levels. We see it, of course, where seniors, who have been hit so significantly in this budget, impacted so significantly, and they're impacted by way of their pocketbooks, having to dig deeper, having to . . . In many cases when we're thinking of who these seniors are — the pioneers of our province, Mr. Speaker — many on fixed incomes that are simply not in a position to be asked to pay for the misplaced priorities of this government. It's wrong. Doesn't make sense. It's not fair. And we're going to work hard, Mr. Speaker, to bring the rightful attention to these misplaced priorities and certainly be urging changes as it relates to those priorities.

I know we had seniors that were contacting us from all across the province. Actually I was thinking of the one couple from Fort Qu'Appelle that had done the tally, and they had done the numbers on the prescription drug increases — hundreds and hundreds of dollars a year. In fact the better part of \$1,000 a year is what that increase will cost this one senior couple in Fort Qu'Appelle, stating quite frankly that they simply don't know where they're going to get the money. And I think all of us, and I'd actually urge all of us sitting in this Assembly, to think of either family members or constituents that are in that similar position, or to think possibly of what that might mean if that was your mother or father or yourself, at some point in time, in that position. To be thinking about what's being asked of Saskatchewan seniors in this budget, and everyday families, while this government proceeds with extravagance at the legislature, in the Premier's office, and with funding — with the cost of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker — the increase of the number of politicians in this province.

The seniors I spoke with in Fort Qu'Appelle that were so disappointed had been talking with many of the individuals, their neighbours, that live in a condo unit. They're in a newer building in Fort Qu'Appelle. They talked about their quality of life and how it's going to be compromised. What they weren't aware of, Mr. Speaker, was some of the other impacts that are in this budget for seniors as well. It's not just through prescription drugs that seniors are going to be paying more in this province. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, the hits just keep coming in this budget.

And we look at a circumstance where special care homes all across this province, in many cases, will be seeing a significant increase to their fees. If you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, the explanation offered up by the members opposite and government opposite is that they have to start charging them for hygiene fees, Mr. Speaker — well over \$200 a year, Mr. Speaker, that seniors are going to be dinged with that item alone. And the seniors, the seniors that were calling into our office and making contact with us weren't aware of that aspect, and that's the unfortunate circumstance.

[14:30]

We see as well the Minister of Health is heckling across the Assembly here today, Mr. Speaker. And of course, he's there as signator to changes that are increasing the cost for seniors here

in this province. And he's signator to bringing hundreds of dollars of extra costs onto the backs of seniors that simply aren't in a position to do so. And I'm talking about a single senior that will be incurring in many cases hundreds of dollars a year. When you look at many of the senior couples, Mr. Speaker, many in his constituency, Mr. Speaker, whether in Fort Qu'Appelle or whether in Indian Head, Mr. Speaker, or in Milestone, seniors that I suspect, Mr. Speaker, deserve to be treated better. And they deserve better than a Minister of Health than to heckle across the floor when the real impacts are being described here in this Assembly — the real impacts.

And this government is choosing to spend millions of dollars to increase the number of politicians, and they're doing it on the backs of seniors — seniors in Milestone, seniors in Indian Head, seniors in Fort Qu'Appelle, seniors in Regina, seniors in Nipawin, seniors in Regina Northeast, Mr. Speaker. All across this province, the impact will be hard and heavy for Saskatchewan seniors.

And we have to put this into a different context. Aren't we doing well as a province, Mr. Speaker? Aren't we prospering? Don't we have significant economic growth for which we can be proud of? Don't we have population growth for which we can be proud of, and identify some of the challenges and pressures?

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are asking that if it's a time of economic growth and prosperity in Saskatchewan, shouldn't their position be supported? Shouldn't their position be improved? And at the very least, Mr. Speaker, hardship should not be brought upon the Saskatchewan families and seniors all across this province as we're seeing with this budget and its misplaced priorities.

Unfortunately the impacts are felt all across Saskatchewan and by families and seniors alike. I think of the young, the young students that are looking to possibly move to the city to try to study and to improve their circumstance by way of post-secondary. What does this government do, Mr. Speaker, at a time of prosperity and economic growth and a labour shortage in this province, Mr. Speaker? Well they send a terrible message to all those young students that are aspiring to study and be part of a vibrant economy. They hike up the fees, Mr. Speaker — 4 to 9 per cent, Mr. Speaker — for tuition in our universities all across Saskatchewan. Major increases, Mr. Speaker, in our apprentice and our trades programs all across Saskatchewan. And significant increases for students to contend with.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if maybe the side opposite just doesn't get it. Do they just not understand what a student in Kelvington is going through in grade 11 and 12, and that family, looking at how they're going to allocate the dollars, acquire the student loans that they're going to need to be able to study? Because when you look at the massive increases that are being handed to them by this government as it relates to tuition and costs of post-secondary and trades and apprenticeship programs, Mr. Speaker, and then you couple that on top of a government that's been completely inactive on the housing file, it makes for significant, real, and hard barriers to pursue post-secondary education in Saskatchewan.

And I see one of the members in the back, Mr. Speaker, shaking their head and saying, well that's not, that's not right, Mr. Speaker. I think that's the, you know, that's the kind of approach that speaks to the lack of understanding that the members opposite in this, you know, a tad arrogant, Mr. Speaker, government that we're seeing here with a large, large majority that seems to become, that seems to have become disconnected with Saskatchewan people. And to be shaking their heads saying, this is no big deal — the tuition increases, the increases to post-secondary or apprenticeship costs or trades programming costs, along with the massive increases to the cost of housing — for those members not to get it, to not realize that that's a real and hard challenge for their constituents and for constituents all across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, for residents all across Saskatchewan, that's unfortunate.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, again it speaks to priorities. This is a government that's spending extravagantly to fly to Ireland and to attract workers. Well this may be part of the solution. We welcome all the new Canadians that are choosing to build their lives here in Saskatchewan, but it speaks to misplaced priorities when you have a government back at home that's preaching of prosperity, spending millions on politicians and statues and on the Premier's office, but then hiking the cost of post-secondary for students all across Saskatchewan. This is hard for families. It's hard for young people. It's the wrong direction to go . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member from Moose Jaw North shouts out across the floor. If you can believe, Mr. Speaker, he states, "What are you talking about?"

Mr. Speaker, what am I talking about? I'm talking about all those young students, young families in Moose Jaw North and in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, that are planning for post-secondary education and are looking at the ever growing barriers before them — the stress of figuring out how they're going to have the financial resources to pay for a tuition that's continually being hiked or for the apprenticeship costs that are being hiked by this government, or for the cost of their trades program that's being hiked by this government. And you set that against the cost, Mr. Speaker, of affordability of rent, or the lack of affordability of rent. That simply becomes such a challenge for so many in this province. It's a real and hard challenge for members, as I say, and constituents in Moose Jaw and all across this province.

So it's simply a budget that misses the mark and really reflects a lack of understanding of the realities facing Saskatchewan people. It's a budget that's hard on everyday families across this province and a budget that fails to advance priorities.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I think, you know, we have the opportunity to do something different here. We have an economy that we can be proud of. We have a population that's growing. This brings great pride, but it also brings resources. It brings challenges, and it brings opportunities. And we should be doing all we can from this Assembly as a government to be advancing and addressing those opportunities, making the meaningful improvements in the lives of Saskatchewan people, and certainly we should be reversing the priorities of this government.

We see a budget that has impacts all across so many sectors, and questions remain as to what that will be in health care and

in health services. But it's a sad reality that so many people right now all across this province are left wondering, what does this mean for their health services. They're left wondering in Canora what this means for doctor retention or recruitment, a problem that's grown significantly under this government. They're left thinking in La Ronge, what does this mean for access to long-term care that's dignified, that's the kind of space that you'd be proud to put your own mom or dad in, or to reside in yourself? They're left in Nipawin trying to understand what this means for the great pressures that we see in emergency rooms all across Saskatchewan as it relates to overcrowding and pressure.

What they know, Mr. Speaker, is that a budgetary cut that's been handed down in health care all across Saskatchewan will have impacts. And it's unfair, Mr. Speaker, that we leave individuals across this province with that sense of uneasiness. Whether you're in Cupar wondering what those impacts are in your health services or whether you're in Kelvington or whether you're in Meadow Lake, the concerns are real. We sympathize with those concerns, and they're a sad reality and a consequence of a government with its priorities misplaced, choosing to spend millions of dollars on politicians and yet cut health services for Saskatchewan people.

We recognize that there's other impacts in this budget as well. We see significantly many, many measures that challenge the affordability of life, the quality of life here in Saskatchewan. We see a significant increase, and actually have had many, many phone calls on this front as it relates to ending the early payment discount on property tax here in the province. Many individuals planning in their own prudent, responsible way, the way Saskatchewan people are — I always think it's almost part of our DNA [deoxyribonucleic acid], Mr. Speaker, here in this province — but many people that plan to make sure they've made that payment for early payment of property tax and save some real dollars that fits into their budget. And they've taken that away, adding costs to Saskatchewan seniors, to Saskatchewan families all across the province. And, you know, it's kind of interesting that the Minister of Finance would start to chime in and heckle. Obviously he supports adding these costs to residents all across Saskatchewan, taking away that early bird discount, adding costs to people all across this province, and in fact probably creating some challenges — I'm hearing from administrators and from councils — as it relates to the collection of those property tax dollars.

This is a government that acts without any consultation and acts without reflecting the needs of Saskatchewan people and the real challenges that they're facing, and it's disappointing. In some households, they're going to be doing the math. They're going to be doing the math and looking at the increases to prescription drug costs. They're going to be adding that on top of the increased costs to their property taxes under this government, and they're going to be doing the math. And many are going to be saying, this puts them in a hard-pressed position, a hard-pressed position — these, many of them being seniors, the pioneers of our province who simply deserve better, Mr. Speaker.

And it's a time of prosperity that they hear about. They hear it touted by the Premier. They hear about population growth and economic growth, and they expected different. And none of

these things were in the Sask Party platform, Mr. Speaker. So at some level, it comes down to integrity and about being straight with Saskatchewan people. In this case, it's about a lack of integrity and not being straight with Saskatchewan people, sadly, Mr. Speaker.

This is not the budget that Saskatchewan people voted for in the fall. It doesn't reflect the priorities, needs, and challenges of Saskatchewan people, and it brings real hardship into the lives of many. And the members opposite can heckle and shout and say what they will, Mr. Speaker, but we'll . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — And laugh.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — And laugh. The Minister of Finance offers up that, and they'll also laugh.

Well what we won't be laughing at, Mr. Speaker, are the increases that Saskatchewan families across this province will be facing out of this budget, the undue hardship that they're going to be facing. We're not going to be laughing at the increases to seniors that we're going to champion in this Assembly. We should be making life more affordable for seniors and everyday families, not walking it backwards, not asking them to dig deeper into their pockets, Mr. Speaker. And it reflects misplaced priorities, as I've highlighted.

We have many different areas . . . I think what I wouldn't mind touching on are just some of the constituency-specific concerns from this budget and some of the pieces that I'm hearing from our constituency. Certainly of all the pieces I've highlighted right now around the concern around cuts in health and in the classroom and in education, those are all real, and there's certainly anxiety on that front.

As it relates to affordability of life, certainly the extra burden on the backs of Saskatchewan people put on them by this government, that's something that's not helpful. It's not welcomed. It's not what they were . . . You know, they were sold a different bill of goods by this government, and they're asking questions about that.

So many constituents that are young, young constituents that are planning out the ability to purchase that first home, make sure that it's not simply a dream but a reality, nothing in this budget goes any distance to address that challenge. Nothing in this budget goes any distance to address the affordability of rental circumstance for so many families within my constituency.

This budget has certainly inadequate response to the pressures young families are facing as it relates to child care in this province. And certainly that's been part of the concern, and nothing in this budget addresses that.

And as I say, something that, something that individuals simply aren't welcoming of are the major, major increases to post-secondary education in this province. Whether you're in to take some skills training programs or planning for university or whether you're going through some apprentice programs, Mr. Speaker, what we see are broad-based and real and significant increases that are all across this province that will impact certainly my constituents, but people all across this province.

And this doesn't help our economy, Mr. Speaker. What we should be doing is, we should be making it more accessible for young people to pursue the studies that they're interested in and be able to pursue the quality of life and be involved in the economy in the ways that they choose. Instead we're creating barriers and limitations to far too many in this province.

When I look at some very specific pieces, sadly, Mr. Speaker, we have a school closing within my constituency, Dieppe School. A government that's actually choosing to divert money out of the publicly funded education system, Mr. Speaker, away from the public systems, the associate schools, away from the historical schools, away from the Catholic system, away from the public systems — to inconsistently fund schools that, Mr. Speaker, if you can believe, may only have a handful of students in their classroom. At the same time, this is the same government that's putting enrolment thresholds in place as to what constitutes a viable school. It's hypocritical. It's unfair. And they're asking Saskatchewan people to accept that they should divert money to these new private, independent schools with possibly a handful of students, in locations throughout the city and all across the province, instead of properly resourcing the publicly funded education system that includes the Catholic school boards, the public boards, the associates, and the historical schools.

[14:45]

So now you've got a consequence where Dieppe School, in my constituency, and the constituents of Dieppe are left to ask, how is that fair? The frank answer is, it's not. It's not fair, Mr. Speaker. And it's not right that this government is asking them to somehow accept that their school, with close to 100 students in it, Mr. Speaker, and some real opportunities for that community to grow, should close the doors to that school that's a real pillar to a community. A community that's in many ways rather isolated by way of geography within the city and also right on the doorstep of the Global Transportation Hub. Just think of that language — Global Transportation Hub. That's pretty rich language for an important project, one that should be bringing real employment and economic opportunities certainly, as well, changing some of the demographics of that neighbourhood with young families choosing to reside there, but certainly raising some concerns if the school's going to be closed. So it's a very short-sighted decision of this government.

I've been calling for the review of that decision by the provincial government, specifically in mind with the fact of how inconsistent and hypocritical it is for this government to divert millions of dollars to private, independent schools with possibly just a handful of students in their school as a whole, and then to close the doors to schools with 100 students, as in the case of Dieppe or more than that as is the case in Haultain or what we're looking down in Pangman where we're seeing grade discontinuance in a school that actually just had \$1 million of renovations done by here this fall, Mr. Speaker. And then of course we see the same in Nokomis and Bjorkdale, and the list goes on.

So the closure of Dieppe School, the inaction of this government and the decisions of this government to not support the publicly funded education systems, not believe in the economic development that's going on as it relates to the

Global Transportation Hub and the importance of that school to a community, is disappointing and disheartening.

Another item that we saw no mention of — and I've had many conversations this weekend as it related to this budget — was alleviation of heavy-haul traffic on Dewdney Avenue in Regina. Not a mention, not a program, and no support, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to this heavy-haul traffic that's coming through a main and crucial artery here in Regina and causing significant damage to the infrastructure, but arguably more importantly, Mr. Speaker, and certainly more importantly, the risk to safety. Where we have children at play, activities, and sports, and students being transported to school and to daycare and to child care, where we have these heavy-haul trucks that have inundated Dewdney Avenue. So it is a real safety concern, big human risk that's associated here. Further to that, we talk about the wear and tear on the infrastructure. We talk about the safety that's there. It's a matter of peace of mind.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've been in literally hundreds of the homes along Dewdney Avenue to have shared with me the intervention or the attack on peace of mind that this heavy-haul truck traffic brings — houses shake, plates rattle, trying to have sit down to the dining room table, people can barely conduct a conversation. And quite simply, we can do better than this, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people deserve better than this.

We're proud of the activity that we're working towards out at the Global Transportation Hub and the economic development that we need to make real with real growth and jobs and opportunities, but we need to make sure that it's not done in a manner that's inundating and straining the quality of life of Saskatchewan people. Moreover we certainly need to make sure that undue risk and safety concerns aren't brought on. This is a concern that the constituents of, my constituents, constituents that are of other members in this Assembly as well, have been incredibly patient on this matter. And we need to seek resolution on this. We need to see some improvements. We need to see some mitigation.

And we know some of these plans and some of the mitigation are longer term strategies around bypasses and traffic flow, and we need to make sure we're committed by way of resources and strategies to see that come to be. But in the short time — and that hasn't been announced in this budget either, so we're concerned with the long game, the long-term strategy to eliminate that undue hardship — but in the short term, in the meantime we need to have some strategies and some plans to mitigate and reduce and bring a level of safety and piece of mind that all Saskatchewan people deserve. It's not in this budget, Mr. Speaker. I'm disappointed to say that.

When I look at another aspect of this provincial budget that truly fails constituents of not only Regina Rosemont but of all of this province is, there's not a dollar in it to improve Pioneer Village, and Pioneer Village special care home in my constituency is home to at many times over 500 seniors. I believe they have almost 400 special long-term care beds, and then they have 143 subsidized long-term care apartments, Mr. Speaker. And they provide incredibly important services to not only my constituents but to all of Saskatchewan. When I say that of course, if they're there, they're my constituents, but these constituents are coming from all over the province. Their

families exist down in Eastend or in Indian Head or in Moosomin or in Nipawin. And they're moving for the high level of care that they need, many of them at the latest stages of their life.

And the kinds of specialized programming that are provided at Pioneer Village by an exceptional staff, staff that enrich and boost the lives of seniors . . . It's really a special complement of staff that work over at the building, Mr. Speaker. But they're providing some of the most sensitive and vulnerable care all across the province: specialized dementia care, adult day programming, respite services, supports for those with acquired brain injury, Mr. Speaker, support to those with mental illness and behavioural challenges that are preventing them from living a successful life in other parts of the province. Now if we can't be supporting some of the most vulnerable from all of our constituencies . . . Because I know that many of the members in this Assembly will have constituents who they have family or it's their mother or it's their spouse that's living in my constituency in Pioneer Village.

What I can say and what I urge the Health minister to do is to please come for a tour. We need to go through this facility. We need to take a look at it because what we know, what we know, Mr. Speaker, is that the complement of care and the staff that are there are exceptional. They add to the lives of the seniors and the people that live at Pioneer Village. But the building itself, Mr. Speaker, quite simply, has seen a, has seen a better day, and we need to be making those kinds of improvements.

And that's what it's about being a prosperous province, Mr. Speaker. Our economy's growing. Our population's growing. It's about making those investments back into what impacts Saskatchewan people's lives in a positive way. It's time to advance some of those priorities.

Instead we see a government that's pushing forward, spending millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, if you can imagine, to increase the number of politicians in this province, to build grandiose statues here at the legislature, to make sure there's a full complement in the Premier's executive offices. But then to do it on the backs of Saskatchewan everyday families and Saskatchewan seniors, that's wrong, Mr. Speaker. It reflects a government that's lost their way. It's certainly reflective of a government that hasn't been straight with Saskatchewan people. It reflects a weakness of integrity of this government, when you look in the platform of this government and the Throne Speech, that not a mention of these hardships were in there, Mr. Speaker. Yet the first thing we see in the first budget after the election, we see a budget brought down that barely resembles what this government ran on, what this party ran on, and now what they're delivering to Saskatchewan people.

My good friend, the member from Cumberland, is highlighting that he's hearing from people all throughout his constituency that none of them heard this through the brochures, the glossy brochures, the fancy brochures that we saw through the election, Mr. Speaker, from the Sask Party, the slick brochures, Mr. Speaker, slick brochures that we saw from this PR [public relations] machine opposite, Mr. Speaker. But what we, what the member from Cumberland points out is that those slick brochures from this PR machine of a government, Mr. Speaker, doesn't match the reality that they're facing. What they didn't



talk about was spending millions of dollars on politicians and extravagant statues, Mr. Speaker.

And the member from Moose Jaw North is shouting out from his seat, Mr. Speaker, again, obviously . . . shouting something about millions of dollars on politicians. I can't hear him exactly, Mr. Speaker. I don't exactly know what he's talking about, Mr. Speaker. But what I do know, Mr. Speaker, is that the member from Moose Jaw North, if he went and talked to his constituents and asked them, do you want us to be spending millions of dollars on increasing the number of politicians and putting fancy statues at the legislature or do you want us to invest in the priorities that make your life a little bit better, Mr. Speaker? I think I know what the answer to that is. So I'd urge the member from Moose Jaw, who maybe isn't maybe spending enough time tapping himself into the conversations with his constituents, Mr. Speaker . . . Because I think those constituents will tell him what I'm talking about, Mr. Speaker. I suspect that would be the case.

We've highlighted some of the different concerns out of this budget, and many of them are this concept of choosing politicians over people, Mr. Speaker. That's the crux of this whole thing. This is the hypocrisy or the misplaced priorities, choosing politicians over people. I don't know . . . I mean I think that we're maybe liked by our constituents — I hope to some extent — but I've just never heard from my constituents or from those anywhere else in the province that what they were looking for was more politicians and to spend millions of dollars on more politicians. So it's disappointing, Mr. Speaker.

This is done at the same time, Mr. Speaker, that we see cuts to an industry in Saskatchewan, and to our economy, that is important to our economy. And it's interesting, Mr. Speaker. Over the course of the weekend, I have heard from every region of this province that have been concerned with the cuts to the film industry and as it relates to our economy and to the futures of workers here in Saskatchewan. And I don't know if members opposite understand this, but the film industry in fact is something in that the benefits of that economy are something that are cherished and held with pride by Saskatchewan people all across this province.

I don't know if the members opposite think that this is just cutting some NDP program in Regina that no one cares about. Because it's certainly not the case, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a circumstance of ideology trumping common sense. And it sends a terrible message, a terrible message to the people of this province, to the young, creative people working in the industry, to the young film students that are studying as we speak, Mr. Speaker, at the University of Regina's film program or to all those students in high schools, Mr. Speaker, that study film and that are looking at building their lives.

This is a government that's in fact sending packing workers — meaning jobs, Mr. Speaker. They're sending packing investment in this province, and they're sending packing entrepreneurs in this province, Mr. Speaker. They're saying, we don't welcome your investment here. What it represents is an economic loss, Mr. Speaker, for the province as a whole.

The industry drove significant economic activity whether you're . . . The member from Moose Jaw North should care

about it. I know that at many times those hotels and restaurants were jam-packed by members of the film industry. And this is the same kind of activity that we see generated in this province by way of the film industry in all parts of the province. This is why Saskatchewan people care about the film industry. This is a major economic hit to the province. It sends a terrible message to workers, to investment, and to entrepreneurs. Further to that, Mr. Speaker, it represents a significant cultural loss here in our city and in our province. What makes a province vibrant are some of these aspects within our community. When we look at the enriching aspects of culture and activity and the vibrancy that it brings, this is what makes a city and a province so liveable as well and brings about a quality of life.

And this cut that just doesn't make any sense, and when I call it a cut it's not even, I mean it's a . . . The fact is this program wasn't costing the province anything. It shows an incredible understanding of the economic policy and fiscal policy of this province, has a direct impact on retailers all across this province, and it has a . . . actually loses revenues to the province by way of taxes paid back to the province out of that activity that's generated. So it's a major cut that hurts us economically but also culturally. And it prevents us from being more on some different fronts — to be stronger, to be more vibrant, and to provide the kind of quality of life that Saskatchewan people deserve.

[15:00]

In many ways, when I also think of the film industry, I think of its ability to create a sense of pride, a sense of identity in our province, sharing that story back with the world as well, Mr. Speaker. And all of that's being lost by these decisions — a sense of pride, a sense of place, a sense of identity, a loss of cultural vibrancy in the communities, and certainly an economic loss sending workers packing, investment packing, and entrepreneurs packing. This is the wrong decision, Mr. Speaker, and we call for it to be reversed. We will continue that call for it to be reversed, and we will stand with Saskatchewan people in communities all across Saskatchewan in doing so.

When we look as well, we have to be . . . You know, a budget is only as strong as its foundation. And when we look at the fiscal framework of this budget, we are concerned certainly on the front as this government chooses rather optimistic revenue projections as it relates to potash. And we would urge caution and prudence and responsibility on this front. And this is what Saskatchewan people desire. It very much reflects, as I say, the management of Saskatchewan people as it relates to their own household or their own business or their own farm. And when we look at volatility in resource revenues and specifically potash, this government seems to be forging ahead with a projection that's far too optimistic. And again, a budget's only as solid as its foundation, and we urge prudence on this front.

We recognize in this budget, as a part of the fiscal framework analysis, that debt in fact is increasing this year by over \$1 billion — \$1 billion of total debt increase in this province. Now that's not consistent with the shiny, glossy, slick billboards that this government opposite runs, but it's the fair and true story, the fair and true picture of our finances, Mr. Speaker. And we see pension debt that is skyrocketing in this province, not a mention of this.

What I do note, Mr. Speaker, is that I noticed in the platform of the Sask Party they suggested they were going to pay down a little bit of debt. And this is what Saskatchewan people certainly expect a government to do when it's experiencing prosperity and revenue opportunities, Mr. Speaker, to turn economic good fortune into a better position for Saskatchewan as a whole and for Saskatchewan people's lives.

On this front again we see failure. And I don't know if this is just . . . Maybe this government forgot that they told the people of the province that they were going to reduce some debt, Mr. Speaker. Maybe they just forgot it, Mr. Speaker. But of course they're doing something differently — increasing the provincial debt by over \$1 billion in this budget alone. And when I look at the four-year charts that this government's put out in their own budget documents, Mr. Speaker, we see that this government has not . . . is actually, as it stands, not going to be paying down a single cent of debt in this term, but in fact continuing to increase it.

Now that's me reading their budget documents, Mr. Speaker. That's what they're telling Saskatchewan people, but certainly that's not what people voted for in the fall. Mr. Speaker, it's about being straight with Saskatchewan people. So when you go to the doorsteps describing yourself as a Saskatchewan Party candidate, Mr. Speaker, as I'm sure these guys did in the fall, and they suggested they were going to pay down debt, Mr. Speaker, I think Saskatchewan people expect them, expect them to deliver on that, not to go the opposite direction.

So here we have, Mr. Speaker, a time in Saskatchewan of arguably unprecedented economic activity and economic good fortune. What we need to do, Mr. Speaker, when we have a chance to, is to improve the financial position of Saskatchewan people.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I'm having trouble, I'm having trouble speaking because the member from Lyle . . . the member from . . . I almost named the member, Mr. Speaker, and of course that would . . . The member from Thunder Creek is shouting from his seat. And it's awfully interesting, you know, Mr. Speaker. Here's the member from Thunder Creek who's pushing big government in Saskatchewan — spend millions to increase the number of politicians in Saskatchewan — and doing so, Mr. Speaker, at the same time as he's turning away investment in this province.

That's the record of not only that member, but all members now in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Pushing for expanse at the level of politicians — three more MLAs [Members of the Legislative Assembly]. The member from Thunder Creek and all of his colleagues pushing for big government as it relates to the number of politicians and the millions spent on them. Prosperity for politicians is what the member from Thunder Creek is pushing for, at the same very time as he's driving away investment in the province, at the same very time as he's telling Saskatchewan entrepreneurs they can go packing. They can take their film investment somewhere else, is what he's telling them, Mr. Speaker. And that's a disappointing set of misplaced priorities, Mr. Speaker.

But getting back to the analysis of the fiscal framework that we see and the fiscal record of this government, as I've said, they

suggested they were going to pay down debt. We haven't see any. In fact what we've seen here is continued increase to debt to the tune of over \$1 billion this year, Mr. Speaker, alone. And now it's not unlike what we've heard in years past, Mr. Speaker. You know, every year we hear this government come forward on budget day, and on budget day they sing a song of budgetary balance, Mr. Speaker. And then their record has been something else, Mr. Speaker, of course. So each year, Mr. Speaker, when the Finance critic and the Premier get up and they talk about budgetary balance and they sing the song and it's put out their slick brochures, Mr. Speaker, the record, of course, and the reality has been something different.

And here we are at a time, Mr. Speaker, if you can imagine, of this great good fortune as it relates to the economy of Saskatchewan, but a government that sadly has tabled or run, I should say, run three consecutive deficit budgets. And this government's suggesting singing their song again with their slick PR machine, Mr. Speaker, that again this year they're going to somehow balance the budget. Well, Mr. Speaker, their record suggests something different, and unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it's sad to report that at a time of unprecedented financial and economic opportunity in this province, this government has failed to improve the financial position of Saskatchewan people. Instead of delivering what they said they would deliver, which was to decrease debt, they're increasing debt, Mr. Speaker. Instead of addressing some of the other priorities that they mention, Mr. Speaker, they're pushing ahead with spending millions on politicians and doing so on the backs of seniors and everyday families in this province, Mr. Speaker.

But it doesn't just stop there, Mr. Speaker. Every year we see some budgetary tricks of this government, and we see it again in this budget. We see a government that's redefining and making changes as it relates to the accounting of how they're doing their books simply for the convenient purpose of manufacturing on-paper outcomes, Mr. Speaker. We see this on a couple of different fronts. We see this where this government's actually in the eleventh hour of budget considerations forced over \$100 million onto the books of the universities in Saskatchewan simply to sort of cheat the balance sheet, Mr. Speaker, if you will, and to present a picture that's less than fair, less than accurate, Mr. Speaker. And so we've seen this cheating of the balance sheet with shoving this \$100 million onto the books, in excess of \$100 million onto the books of universities in this province to just sort of manufacture this phoney story we hear from government opposite, Mr. Speaker.

But we also have to be aware that there's consequences to doing so. And it's not just the manipulation that we should be embarrassed of, of what's being presented to Saskatchewan people, but further to that, they're pushing it off onto institutions that have to borrow at a higher interest rate, Mr. Speaker. And that costs programs and that costs students, Mr. Speaker. Choosing to stick \$100 million onto the books of universities at a higher interest cost than what government can source financing at, comes at the cost of students because it's either program cuts or it's hikes in tuitions or a bit of both, Mr. Speaker. And that's on top of what this government's already doing.

Further to the budgetary tricks that we see of this government

trying to manufacture and manipulate the financial tools available to them, we see a government that's in fact making changes to how they're financing and accounting for health and education capital. So making accounting changes on the fly that serve one purpose — the ability for them to manufacture a desired outcome, Mr. Speaker, to try to tell a story, Mr. Speaker. And that's disappointing.

So in fact what we see is sort of a switch to amortizing health and education capital in a different manner, sort of mortgaging that process out, Mr. Speaker. And they're sort of conveniently grabbing aspects of what's allowable in accounting from the summary financial perspective and then trying to place it into this GRF [General Revenue Fund] picture, Mr. Speaker. It's convoluted. It's complex. It's improper. And Saskatchewan people deserve the fair and true state of their finances, and we're going to continue to stand in calling for that.

As we talk about proper reporting, or improper reporting as we see with the government opposite, inappropriate reporting as we see from this government opposite, Mr. Speaker, what we know is that this government is out of line with the rest of Canada. The rest of Canada, all other provinces, and the federal government report their finances in a proper, appropriate fashion. Saskatchewan, this government, chooses a different course. And that's disappointing, denying Saskatchewan people the transparency and accountability that they deserve, Mr. Speaker.

And this is a government that rejects not just my recommendations and my calls, Mr. Speaker, but rejecting that of the Provincial Auditor, the independent Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan, and the calls for compliance with public sector accounting standards. And you know, Mr. Speaker, I pointed out on budget day when this room was filled with business and community leaders, Mr. Speaker, filled with business and community leaders across Saskatchewan, that not a single one of those businesses or organizations get to choose their own accounting policy. They comply with accounting standards. Why should this government be able to do something different? Why should this government be able to continue to be out of sync with the rest of Canada? Well it's not fair to Saskatchewan people, and we call for changes on that front.

The member from Wood River shouts out into the . . . Mr. Speaker, what I wonder about that member and . . . That member who, you know, has run on a platform that he never delivered. It's about being straight with Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. And we didn't see that from the member from Wood River because he had those glossy, expensive brochures that went out to his constituents. And when he sent that out there, he told them that he was going to pay down debt. What he didn't tell them, that he was actually going to increase debt by over a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker. He didn't tell them that part. What he also didn't tell them, Mr. Speaker, the member from Wood River, on those glossy, slick brochures, Mr. Speaker, is he didn't tell them that he was going to start spending millions of dollars more to increase the number of politicians, if you can imagine. More for politicians, Mr. Speaker.

And now the member from Wood River, you know . . . Of course, he ran on something different. But now he sits in this

Assembly and supports prosperity for politicians, but more costs on the backs of seniors in his constituency and everyday families all across his constituency. It's not fair, Mr. Speaker. It's about being straight with Saskatchewan people and it's about integrity, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order. I would like to remind the member to choose his words carefully, and not to impugn the honour of any member in the House.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My pleasure to enter back into debate.

It's a difficult budget to analyze because, of course, it's got misplaced priorities, Mr. Speaker. And it's not consistent with what that party opposite ran on in the election. It's doing things differently, Mr. Speaker, and it's doing things that certainly aren't in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. And it's important that that be highlighted, Mr. Speaker.

When I look at other aspects of this budget, we're certainly concerned about, as I've said, the cuts and reductions in health care. And unfortunately that anxiety exists all across this province, wondering what those impacts will be, what the impact will be on health services in respective communities all across this province. And we hear that from people that have phoned all throughout this weekend. Now the sad reality on this is that anxiety, that concern, that vulnerability is going to exist throughout the year because we see a government that's made these reductions, made these cuts, but now the introduction of what those impacts are in respective communities and neighbourhoods will continue throughout the year, Mr. Speaker. So that's too bad.

[15:15]

In this budget, we saw absolutely nothing in this budget, as I highlighted on Wednesday, to address the Aboriginal employment gap, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely nothing to close the gap in educational outcomes in this province, something that provides us a generational opportunity, something transformational to our economy and to the lives of Saskatchewan people, and something that we should be much more strident on.

Getting warm here, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at this budget further, I think that it's fair to say that if we look at anything that mentions First Nations or Métis in it seem to be reduced or cut, Mr. Speaker. Significantly impacts all through the North, Mr. Speaker, instead of addressing important priorities to all of Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan. And whether we see the Métis Development Fund that was cut by 5 per cent, Mr. Speaker, whether we see the cuts to conservation field offices in Moosomin, Mr. Speaker, but then also through the North, through Pelican Narrows and Cumberland House, and of course we have highlighted the concern over the reduction to northern fire crews. And what we see here is a concern over what's purported as a very small savings but brings a very big human risk, Mr. Speaker, and something that we're concerned about.

And you know, this kind of highlights that contrast again, Mr.

Speaker, a government that wants to spend all sorts of money for extravagant trips to Ireland but then isn't willing to put the dollars into our own backyard here in Saskatchewan. And it should be a balanced approach, Mr. Speaker. It should be about addressing the opportunities and pressures and opportunities that exist in northern Saskatchewan with, in many ways, a resource, a human resource that's waiting for the opportunities that we can provide out of this economy.

I've highlighted all the impacts as we've gone through post-secondary education. Of course those are real. They're significant and they're hard on Saskatchewan people. They certainly, again, represent a government that's choosing politicians over people and choosing impacts on the lives of Saskatchewan everyday families that aren't acceptable and that are hard.

We see changes that were highlighted very well here today by my good friend, the member from Cumberland, as it related to Enterprise Saskatchewan. A change that was taken over, that where we see a government choosing to take over something that's been working, working very well, that's been led and driven by industry, and taking complete control of this structure. And it's sort of message management to the extreme, Mr. Speaker. We see a government that needs to have its hand on every single communications dollar that exists. And it's not right that tourism be treated that way. Enterprise Saskatchewan had been functioning very well. It was something of pride, and it's disappointing to see another decision of ideology trumping common sense and certainly not in the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

And you know, I think at the end of the day, when we think of the incredible entrepreneurs that make up our tourism industry and the incredible natural assets that we have in this province, let that, Mr. Speaker, be the face of tourism in Saskatchewan. Why does this government have to take over control of that message? Why do we need to see more incorporation of the government's agenda to be interspersed in something that we can be so proud of, Mr. Speaker, and something that's been so effective in attracting investment, Mr. Speaker?

So we should be letting the spa in Moose Jaw and we should be letting the Cypress Hills Winery and we should be letting the Churchill River, Mr. Speaker, and all the entrepreneurs who congregate and work around these special natural assets, Mr. Speaker — and bring these to people of our province but also people all around the world — we should let them stand independently and tell that story, serving the industry's best interests and certainly the best interests of Saskatchewan. So disappointing to see a government that controls all aspects of communications and needs to include itself into something that's been working so well.

Another aspect of this change that is representative of this government on so many other levels is no consultation. Here we have an organization that's been hugely successful, that's been driven by hard-working entrepreneurs from all across the province, and changes that have been made with not an ounce of consultation with the people that they impact or the organization that they impact. And there's big questions, Mr. Speaker, big questions for the government opposite about the decisions that they're making on this front, and we're going to

be expecting answers to those questions. Certainly we never heard that today when the member from Cumberland got up and asked the questions, the important questions of the minister.

We see aspects where the government opposite, in the eleventh hour of the last fiscal year, went and stripped again more money from our Crown corporations. We saw them take a last-minute raid on SaskPower dividends, and this all comes at a consequence to Saskatchewan people. And we see the borrowing rates going up again in this Crown corporation and in many others. And the consequence will be felt by Saskatchewan people. So we see an eleventh-hour raid on one of our proud Crown corporations, SaskPower, and the impact is going to be felt by Saskatchewan people where we see increased borrowing right away and significant impacts on the pocketbooks of Saskatchewan people.

And what's disappointing as well in that very Crown corporation is that we see no long-term plan to provide safe, reliable, affordable, environmentally responsible and sustainable power, and instead simply serving this government as a cash cow and of course the consequences being felt by Saskatchewan people. And over the last few years, Mr. Speaker, with this government that can't balance off its books or the responsibility that Saskatchewan people expect, we've seen over \$2 billion stripped from our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, to balance off budgets that this government can't balance. And of course that consequence is felt by Saskatchewan people.

You see it directly through Crown borrowing, and it's not good management, Mr. Speaker. What we . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . When I hear members heckling but I can't hear what they're saying exactly. But what I'd hope they're talking about is recognizing the error in their ways on these fronts.

What I hope they're recognizing is that when they go to SaskPower at the eleventh hour, cap in hand begging for another or just simply taking another dividend from that corporation and then increasing borrowing immediately, two weeks later, in the budget, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people know what the impact of that is — reduced service, higher costs, Mr. Speaker. And it's a disappointment, Mr. Speaker.

The member from Prince Albert keeps heckling from his seat, Mr. Speaker. And I don't know how thrilled his constituents were with this budget, Mr. Speaker, but those we heard from Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, were quite disappointed. They were disappointed with the increase to their cost of living, increased with significant increases to drug costs on the backs of seniors. And they're disappointed with the priorities of that member and this government, spending millions on politicians instead of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

The member from Prince Albert is shouting an awful lot about a bridge right now, Mr. Speaker. And I think that that's an area that Prince Albert residents care about. It may be an area he's feeling vulnerable, Mr. Speaker, but you have the first bridge that Saskatchewan people certainly deserve to have in appropriate condition, Mr. Speaker. And I know that there's been discussion around a second bridge, Mr. Speaker. Not only does this budget not provide the resources to repair that first bridge, Mr. Speaker, but it certainly doesn't put forward any

sort of a plan towards achieving a second bridge for the region, Mr. Speaker.

I've highlighted the concern around the film industry, Mr. Speaker. Just to recap on that, it's a major economic and cultural loss. We're sending packing investment. We're sending packing workers and entrepreneurs from this province, Mr. Speaker. That's a sad story of itself. Something that generated significant activity, economic activity back into this province, very disappointing from an economic perspective. But as I've highlighted as well, this is a major cultural loss to this province, something that adds community vibrancy and enriches our communities and brings around a larger quality of life.

Now the strength in this argument, Mr. Speaker, is that came along as a bonus just with the activity of that industry. It didn't cost us anything, Mr. Speaker. In fact what we got from the tax credit structure was a six time, sixfold return on that investment, Mr. Speaker. And we're incredibly disappointed with those changes. We're going to continue to fight on this front for the economy of our province, for the film industry, for the workers and families that are impacted, Mr. Speaker. We don't need to accept what's been put forward.

We've seen significant changes, Mr. Speaker, in reductions in funding for our environment in Saskatchewan. Nothing in that budget to support the beautiful, natural environment that we have here in Saskatchewan, our beautiful assets that we have. And we see significant cuts as it relates to a program that was quite popular, Mr. Speaker, being the go green program. And this program, Mr. Speaker, allowed us to conserve power in Saskatchewan and for households and for families to have a bit of a savings or incentive to do so, Mr. Speaker.

And of course we know that when we're saving power and conserving power, this is power that we don't need to be generating at the high cost of new power consumption in the province or new power generation. So conservation should be a vital part of a long-term strategy. And it's disappointing to see the cuts that we've seen in this budget to the go green program, something that's important to Saskatchewan people, that's popular with Saskatchewan people, and something that's certainly in the best interest of both our Crown corporations but also the province as a whole, Mr. Speaker.

We see a government that's stepped away from support for climate change initiatives in this budget, Mr. Speaker. We see in fact the Green Initiatives Fund has been cut 67 per cent. We see that the green initiatives of Sarcan have been cut completely, \$1.8 million, Mr. Speaker, if you can believe it. The climate change program has been decreased by \$96,000, and staff are taking an 18 per cent cut to salaries and positions.

Other areas that we've also seen impacts and cuts are in fact the fish and wildlife program funding. Mr. Speaker, these are important programs to Saskatchewan people. Environmental protection at the municipal level, we see \$67,000 being cut there, Mr. Speaker, and we see \$8,000 less money to help protect the environment, Mr. Speaker. So we have concerns on this front.

And again there's the forest fire operations cut of \$3 million, and then the other cut that was the reduction of boots on the

ground in northern Saskatchewan to be bringing about community safety. And if you think about what's going on here, Mr. Speaker, this represents a small savings but a big human risk, Mr. Speaker, not only for the boots that are going on the ground and the lives of those firefighters but the communities that they're protecting, Mr. Speaker. So we're disappointed on that front as well.

Mr. Speaker, I've done a little bit of, summarized some of my concerns. I've done so from the constituency-specific perspective. But the crux of the concern is this, Mr. Speaker, that this is a government that's choosing politicians over people, that's spending millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, to increase the number of politicians at a time where we should be advancing the position of Saskatchewan people. Instead this is a government that's putting significant costs onto the backs of Saskatchewan's seniors and everyday families, asking the pioneers of our province, Mr. Speaker, many on fixed incomes, to dig deeper and in many cases where those resources just simply aren't there. And that's wrong, Mr. Speaker.

And quite simply, it doesn't need to be this way. We have an opportunity, as a province with economic activity and population growth, to be able to balance our financial position and improve our financial position but also to address the needs and priorities, challenges, and opportunities that are real and important in the lives of Saskatchewan families all across Saskatchewan. This government has failed to do this. And for those reasons, Mr. Speaker, and others, we won't be supporting the budget.

At this point in time, Mr. Speaker, I move:

That all of the words after "that the Assembly" be deleted and the following be added:

I quote, or this is my motion:

disagrees with the budgetary policy of the Government of Saskatchewan because it fails to appropriately address the common sense priorities of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I so move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Centre. Thank you.

[15:30]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — We are waiting for a copy of the motion. I would ask that the members, they all will have an opportunity to debate both the main motion and the amended motion, and I would ask that they reserve their comments for that time. Also I would like to remind members when they are intending to move a motion that they have it in the proper format so that the House can deal with it in a timely manner.

Order. The member from Regina Rosemont has moved the following motion:

That all words after "the Assembly" be deleted and the following added:

this Assembly agrees with the budgetary . . .

Oh, disagrees. Sorry. It's handwritten, so I'm having a bit of trouble here.

. . . and the following added:

disagrees with the budgetary policy of the Government of Saskatchewan because it fails to appropriately address the common sense priorities of the people of Saskatchewan.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**An Hon. Member:** — [Inaudible] . . . I second it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Well okay. I'll recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to stand and speak to the budget and to the amendment because I think it's a very appropriate amendment that we do disagree with, we do disagree with the budgetary policy of the Government of Saskatchewan because it does fail to appropriately address the common sense priorities of the people of Saskatchewan.

You know, we see a government over there that's much better fitted, much better suited to be in opposition. They know the workings of opposition very well, and that's how they tend to run things. And we have some real, real concerns with this budget, and I want to speak a few minutes on some of the concerns that are related to my city, to the people I represent for the people of Saskatchewan.

And I do want to say a thank you to the member from Rosemont for putting forward that resolution. He has a very well-thought-out analysis of the budget that was brought forward last week, and I have to tell you that he captured really essentially the points that this budget fails people in Saskatchewan on. And primarily what it is, it's missing the priorities of the people of Saskatchewan.

The people of Saskatchewan did not vote last fall for more politicians. Nobody campaigned on that. Nobody brought that up. And yet we're seeing a government that's bringing forward in this session a call for three more politicians.

And what people want are services, services they can afford, services that are the right things. And what we're seeing is we're seeing in fact seniors paying more than ever for health care, a 33 per cent increase on their drug charges. I think this is completely unfair. Nobody campaigned on that, and that's completely out of line.

And I think that in terms of accountability, this government goes a long way to say, we will deliver on the promises that we made; we do that. And then they also do things like on other things that they never have talked about. They didn't campaign on the fact that seniors will be paying \$5 more for their drugs or 33 per cent more. Nobody campaigned on that, and here they are and they're talking about it and they're heckling and defending it, and that's completely outrageous, completely outrageous.

And I think that when we talk about a province that's growing

and we're doing well and it's an exciting time to be here in Saskatchewan for many, many people, we want to make sure everybody is included in the advantage here in Saskatchewan. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think it's only incumbent that in this debate we really talk about the things that are important for people. And so here we have an attack on seniors, attack on young people, on families that are trying to make things better for themselves here in Saskatchewan. And this government has really missed the mark.

There are some things that I want to raise in this budget debate in the next few minutes, and I will raise them. But you know, often the members across the way will heckle and say, you know, you guys are just talking about things that you always talk about. But I think if we take a look at what the newspapers have been saying over the last few days, we really have to listen to them, because they do give us the common sense answers that many people on the street are raising. They get the letters to the newspapers. And their editorial boards really I think have an awful lot to offer.

And so here I want to take a minute and share with the House today the editorial from the *Leader-Post* on March 22nd, the day after the budget. The headline read, and I quote, "Editorial: Budget managerial, not visionary." And I will quote, and I will provide this for *Hansard*. "For a government . . ." and I quote:

For a government sitting pretty with a huge majority and the hottest economy in the nation, Wednesday's budget showed more signs of being crafted by accountants than visionaries.

And I think that's so true. Here we see that if there was anything that epitomizes this spirit of meanness is really the tax cut that the . . . for the film industry and what that means, and what that means for us. And here we take so much pride in Saskatchewan for *Corner Gas* and the different films that have been made here, and I think that this is a bit of pettiness. And I will talk more about this. But I think this budget really sets the stage. It's more about crafted by accountants than visionaries. And I want to quote. I want to read this part. I quote:

Parts of yesterday's budget will leave a sour taste for some. For example, the government can expect a backlash over the new \$20-per-item cap for prescription drugs (up by \$5) for seniors and children, and a \$25 increase per trip . . . [that's \$275] for the Senior Citizen's Ambulance Assistance Plan.

We also believe [and I'm quoting here] Krawetz missed an opportunity to sweeten the pot by providing some modest tax relief, particularly to those on lower incomes who [are] increasingly complain they see no personal benefit from the "boom" given rising rent and other cost of living increases.

On the cost-cutting side, the elimination of the \$8-million-a-year film employment tax credit will have a negative impact. Other provinces use similar credits to compete for film and TV projects and if that work is lost, the viability of the provincial film industry in general — and the Canada Saskatchewan Production Studios in Regina in particular — will be in doubt.

So we see what the spirit of this budget is and what this will mean to people, and yet this government is insisting that we have three more politicians, where children and seniors will have to pay more for their drugs. But we see this kind of thing.

I want to end up this quote, this part, by reading the end of the editorial:

But government is more than a matter of simply balancing books.

This time of explosive growth in our province is accompanied by issues that require a government whose plan extends farther than the end of the next fiscal year.

Those seeking signals about how the Wall government intends to chart a course that takes full advantage of our current strong economic tailwinds will page through the budget in vain.

The numbers all add up.

But the hidden deficit in this document is its troubling lack of vision.

And I couldn't agree more. I couldn't agree more that there's not the spirit to motivate. There's nothing visionary. There's no common sense, no responsible planning here. It's just a matter of cutting, all in this interesting . . . You know, our government has balanced budgets — many, many budgets — but this government here, in its quest . . . And it repeats the word over and over again, but hasn't taken into account some of the challenges we know, particularly coming from the federal government around the prisons, for example, and this quest for this. But they've cut some programs and increased costs that I think are going to be really hard on people, and they should've taken another look at this budget. And that's why I'm supporting the amendment.

I want to talk about this column that came out on Saturday. It was entitled "Penny wise, pound foolish" by Bruce Johnstone. I'm going to quote a bit from that because I think it's really indicative of the mean-spiritedness of this government. I quote:

There's a troubling trend in the recent budget that should concern anyone who cares about how this province is governed.

What I'm talking about is the systemic dismantling and destruction of any program or policy of the former NDP government by the Saskatchewan Party government.

Of course, every government will put its own stamp on the jurisdiction it governs and quite rightly will change, reform or revoke policies and programs that do not conform with its political philosophy or objectives.

[But what he's] . . . talking about is destroying perfectly good programs like the Film Employment Tax Credit, regional economic development authorities, or Tourism Saskatchewan, because the NDP, not the Sask. Party, came up with the idea.

Now that's not how we're supposed to govern — that's the end of the quote there — that's not how we're supposed to govern. That's not how we're supposed to do things. When there's a good idea, you keep it going. You keep it going, and you consult and you try to improve on those things. If there's issues with it, then you take the time to improve it. But to cut them is just not, not the way to do it. I want to continue. I'll read. I quote:

Axing the program will save the government \$3 million this year and \$8 million [next year] a year after that.

But the industry says the . . . [government] has generated \$623 million in production work since 1998 — a more than six-fold return on the government's investment . . .

So why can't we be more responsible to this? Why we can't take a responsible, a common sense look at this? This is really something we should be taking a deeper look at.

But you know, last week the Premier sent out a tweet. And he said, and I quote: "If an industry cannot survive at all without a permanent taxpayer subsidy, should the taxpayers subsidize indefinitely?" And this is what Bruce Johnstone wrote in response, and I think this is a fair question. It's not a winner or a loser. We know in this economy, in this worldwide competitive times we have to have support. But this is what Bruce Johnstone wrote. I quote:

The premier might well put the same question to his agriculture minister whose ministry received \$430 million in this year's budget. This is not a knock on farmers or agricultural subsidies. The fact of the matter is the agriculture subsidies are necessary because every other jurisdiction has them. [And] the same is true of the film and video industry.

[15:45]

It's just — end of quote — just the same. It's just a fact of life. And so this is something that we need to take into account when we're trying to develop a whole range of sectors to make our Saskatchewan the special place that it is. And you can't be doing this or picking in winners and losers. And we heard this when this government was in opposition about picking winners and losers, and clearly they are here. And they're telling the film industry their time is over. This time is over. And this is wrong.

I want to continue when he talks about the enterprise zone. And I quote:

Similarly, the Sask. Party government doesn't want regional economic development authorities to control how economic development happens in the regions.

After failing miserably with its wasteful Enterprise Regions, which overlaid and duplicated the existing network of economic development authorities formed by the — you guessed it — previous NDP government, the Saskies have decided to scrap the whole thing, saving \$4 million a year, plus another \$2 million a year by closing parallel regional offices.

[But] where does this leave the regional economic development authorities? Well, if you're the Regina Regional Opportunities Commission, you're scrambling to find \$400,000 or a third of your budget. [And] if you're the Saskatchewan East Enterprise Region in Melville, you're looking for a new job because your core funding of \$258,000 have been pulled out from you.

Here's another thing. Whatever happened to consultation or full disclosure, or is that another obsolete NDP idea too? So we ask some very legitimate questions, I think.

And these are columnists. This isn't the opposition raising this. These are newspaper columnists whose job is to reflect society and say, so what are they talking about there on the street? And I think he has some very legitimate questions about . . . We have to be the best government possible, and I think the government over there has missed its mark.

Now I want to talk about a couple of specific points to the critic roles that I have. And I think that . . . We'll of course be raising these over the next weeks in estimates, but I'll put these out, and I hope the minister's listening right now because I think that . . . Well we'll talk more about it.

But I think that in terms of housing, I find the initiatives very interesting. And I find particularly . . . I just want to talk about the corporate tax exemptions. I think that's very interesting. I have two questions. One relates to the fact when it talks about the rebate eligibility period — and I'm quoting from page 68 of the budget summary — that it talks about the fact that . . . And I'll read it:

Property owners will be permitted to register titles during the development phase or at any time during the rebate period, enabling them to convert to condominium units at a later date. Conversion will result in the housing unit no longer being considered eligible rental housing for the purposes of the tax rebate.

So in effect, you're an apartment for 10 years or less. You can be a condo registered at any time. And I can understand the need for this to draw the investment, and that's not a bad thing. But the question is, at the end of 10 years, how many of these 10,000 units will remain rental properties and how many will become condos? I have some questions about that because we know what was happening four, five, six years ago. The challenge was that all of a sudden we had all these apartment blocks being converted to condos.

Now what's going to happen to the cities is they're going to have a challenging time, because usually what happens is somebody builds an apartment block. We all know it's an apartment block. That's what they are. They're apartments. And then the City Planning will plan accordingly. And then what happens now is it looks like an apartment block. It's being treated like an apartment block. But it's actually a set of condos that are being rented out to get the tax exemption. I think this is going to be a challenge for planning and I will want to know, how does this work?

I'm totally for more rental properties — that's good. But the other question I have, and I'll be asking the minister about it, is

that none of these, when we have and especially when this government is so fixated on cutting costs, i.e., the film tax credit program and all of that, here we see a new program being introduced, but it's not focused on the issue at hand which is affordable rent.

Now I know what this government's stand is on rent control or any kind of meaningful regulations to control the high cost to rent. But here you have an opportunity through tax incentives to say, we want a certain portion of these 10,000 units to be made affordable because the rent is geared to income. But there is no rent geared to income. They could be, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all luxury apartments. Now the argument may be, well even if you had 10,000 luxury apartments, it increases the marketplace with new apartments and therefore the rent's going to be driven down. That's fair enough, and I hope that's what happens. But, you know, many tenants these days are feeling they need more than just hope. They need something in black and white. And so when you have this hope of 10,000 new apartments and not a word that any of them are going to be affordable rent, I think that's a real shortcoming.

So we have a problem: only 10 years, are they going to be condos? We don't know. How does it affect planning, community planning? That's a real issue. And of course, Mr. Speaker, I think it's a noteworthy ambition to use the corporate tax planning because we did hear that too, that people were hoping that that would help create more apartments. But the question is, they have to be affordable, and this misses the mark completely on that. And so, Mr. Speaker, we'll have many questions about that.

And the second question I have about that for the minister is not anywhere in the budget. Was there anything about Housing First? And we know this government's very good at doing one-off announcements and announcing one housing project here or one housing project there, but no comprehensive plan, no comprehensive plan. And we're obviously supportive of anything that can be done is better than nothing, but really at some point after five years, you'd think you would get together a plan. You'd get a plan together around Housing First for those who are vulnerable, for all those who are vulnerable. And I think this is really critical that this government takes some time to do this.

I want to also talk about there are . . . I see my time is running quickly. And I have to say, with the former, my colleague, he gave such a great analysis that I was hoping I might do, I have to say, and I'll just draw attention to another editorial, I think, around municipal affairs. I think this government as well misses the point. And *The StarPhoenix* had an editorial, and I'll quote the headline: "Hickie ignores big city needs."

But I just want to read the first line, and I quote, "One suspects Municipal Affairs Minister Darryl Hickie didn't get the memo [this year] that this year's provincial budget was about keeping the Saskatchewan advantage." It goes on to talk about how we have to make sure that municipal funding is fair, is fair. Now we know the minister always trots out his stats about how increased funding, and you know, we started that; we had challenges left from the government in the '80s. Had to deal with that.



But we need to support our cities and our communities, and they all have to be treated fairly. But right now our two largest cities have some real challenges. All cities actually have challenges in terms of their infrastructure. In fact we know that the minister himself, in his own city, people are calling for a second bridge and this government's turned that down, has turned it down. And that's completely missing the point of, if you're going to keep an advantage in Saskatchewan, particularly with the Northern Gateway, we need that second bridge. And in Saskatoon, we need more support. Our cities, our two big cities are growing, the population is expanding and we need that support, and it should have been in this budget. So I am deeply, deeply concerned.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know, I read with interest the Moose Jaw *Times-Herald* the day after the budget and the headline here, "Budget 2012" but the big headline was . . . And I hope the members from Moose Jaw, hope they saw the headline on the Thursday paper. It said, "Say goodbye to south central enterprise region" and, you know, went on quite a long . . . This is pretty meaningful to our medium-sized cities like Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Melville, Yorkton. These regional economic areas are the real drivers for economic development.

And you know, as the mayor of Moose Jaw, I'll just quote him. He said, "Moose Jaw is not a city on an island." They depend on the communities around. And they have developed these zones and these regions in good faith, and then you have this government cutting the legs out from under them. And so it really was a hit in Moose Jaw. It's a hit all around. And not a good hit, not a good hit, but a bad hit because people don't know, and they're saying, well we'd like to . . . And one of the members from Moose Jaw said, well we hope the municipality steps up and funds the rest of it.

Well you know, they have their challenges. And I've just talked about whether it's the roads, the sidewalks. And every day people in those cities and those communities are saying, we need our infrastructure fixed. And this government's saying, no, you need to make sure you fund something that we did. So here you have this downloading, and nobody asked the cities. The enterprise zones did not ask for that to be shifted down to them.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I could go on about some of the challenges here, but I really have to say that I am very disappointed in this budget. I think they missed the mark. And, you know, we see people are meeting today in the Legislative Building. The filmmakers have come here to meet with the Premier to say, give this another think. And we hope that they do give it another think, because I think that we need things like the Enterprise Zone, Tourism Saskatchewan, people who are involved on the ground with those industries making the decisions and making things go forward.

And we need a re-think on this housing so that, if we have money targeted at apartments, that it is meeting the needs of families and seniors here in Saskatchewan. We know we need more apartments. And as the minister said, it may impact on the vacancy rate, but it won't, probably won't impact on the affordability. And that's a real, a real shame that the minister has given up so easily on this challenge.

And so, Mr. Speaker, with that I'll take my seat, but I will say

that I am proud to second the amendment to the motion that we do disagree with the budgetary policy of the government of Saskatchewan because it does fail to appropriately address the common sense priorities of the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena and the Social Services minister.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise in my place today to second the motion of the Minister of Finance for the budget that we know is going to keep the Saskatchewan advantage.

Before I get into the debate, I'd like to mention people that are important to me. And I'm going to start by talking to my family, about my family. I'd like to thank them for their support and their patience and their sense of humour and, most importantly, for the love as we work through this to work here in the legislature.

I'd like to thank my constituency assistants, Linda and Rhonda, who work very hard and do their job caring about the people that we represent. The staff here in the legislature — Shelley and Sherry and Theo, Amanda, Kirsten, Kim — I know that they work with dedication. And they work with the most vulnerable citizens that we have in the province that phone the office and ask for help, and I know that they care, and they're very considerate and patient and I can't thank them enough.

And the people from Kelvington-Wadena, Mr. Speaker, they are hospitable and they're warm and they're very frank. And I'm very pleased to say that this weekend when I had a chance to meet with some of them on coffee row, they had lots to say about the budget. And nothing that they said about the budget had anything to do with what the members opposite said today in the House. They talked about the \$581 million or the 4.5 per cent increase in Highways. They talked about the investment in agricultural research. They talked about the agricultural budget, the second largest budget that was ever announced for Agriculture. They talked about doubling their crop insurance levels that was offered in 2007, and they talked about record revenue sharing with municipalities.

And you know what else they talked about in Kelvington-Wadena was our commitment to the long-term care facilities in both of those towns, something that had been ignored by the members opposite.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a cabinet minister and a member of Treasury Board, I am very pleased with the package that we brought together. I want to thank the Minister of Finance for his long hours in the development of this budget. I want to thank him for his attention to details and his patience and more patience and more patience as we reviewed and we discussed and we collaborated over the money that's entrusted to us by the people of the province to spend on the people of the province.

I'd also like to thank the Premier for his leadership and his vision for our province. I believe that the Saskatchewan people know that they are fortunate to have a Premier who can put a global perspective on the work that we're doing here in the

province and that he also has a perspective on the most vulnerable people in our province.

[16:00]

Mr. Speaker, as I second this budget brought forward by the Minister of Finance, I believe it's an honour, because this budget will keep Saskatchewan moving forward and will be building on the advantage of living in our beautiful province.

Putting the budget together could have been a challenge, but we did it by thinking outside the box. We managed to balance the priorities in a way that provides better government to the people of this province. Through this budget, we're going to have better access to health care by investing in hospitals in Moose Jaw and North Battleford. We're going to be improving the quality life for people with disabilities and for seniors, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We're making life more affordable by investing over \$344 million into 12,600 new housing units by 2012, and we're doing this while still lowering the debt and providing historic tax reductions.

This leadership from this side of the House is in stark contrast to the budget that I witnessed when I was on the other side of the House. It's not just numbers that are different; it's the priorities that are different. Mr. Speaker, our government and our priorities reflect a different mentality than the members opposite. We prize leadership and we prize growth and fiscal responsibility, and we put results before ideology.

Unlike the opposition, our expectation is Saskatchewan can and should be a leader. For too many years I listened to the members opposite talking about managing decline. We're not declining in this province, Mr. Speaker. We're a leader and we're proud to be so. We're leading the nation in GDP [gross domestic product] growth. We had the lowest unemployment in Canada. We had the second lowest GDP ratio. And in 2011 we had the biggest single-year population increase since 1953. And these figures, Mr. Speaker, aren't an accident. They're a product of working together for the people of the province. Mr. Speaker, as I said, we did this by thinking outside the box.

One of the issues that hasn't been mentioned, and I think is important, is the commitment that we made to reducing our workforce by 15 per cent. That commitment was made three years ago. And five months ago our party ran on that part of our budget and people voted in historic numbers for our platform that included our adjustment target.

This budget is going to put us two-thirds of the way to our commitment and two-thirds of the way to keeping the promise to the people of the province. The majority of the FTE [full-time equivalent] reductions have been achieved through vacancy management. And by the fiscal year end, workforce adjustment will have yielded \$129 million in savings. Part of the work that we're doing, and part of the example of how we're actually achieving this, is things like the lean project.

Lean helped employees find ways to streamline work without having a negative effect on the people of the province. An example of that is farmers used to have to wait for up to a year

to have crop insurance claims be processed. Now it takes two to three weeks. Campers who wanted a campsite at one of our provincial parks could wait up to three weeks to get a spot. Now it takes seven days. Vendors and caregivers working with Social Services had to complete up to 45 forms to receive payments and we've reduced the number of forms to seven.

Saskatchewan is leading that lean process, and we've been getting calls from Alberta, the city of Oshawa, the city of Thunder Bay, even the state of Maine and the state of Minnesota to look at the initiative.

Mr. Speaker, a minute ago the member from Saskatoon Centre talked about what he was going to . . . He was talking about things that are important. And when he spoke for a few minutes, I noticed there were some things that he did not think was important. The most important thing for me is the whole idea of people with vulnerabilities. Never once did members opposite, in their speeches, talk about the people with disabilities. They didn't talk about our initiative, our commitment to people with disabilities, and that it was also part of our platform commitment. Twenty-five per cent of the platform commitment included spending on promises in the budget for people with disabilities.

We campaigned on the promise to make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for people to live with a disability. We've already taken a very significant step in that prior to the election by introducing SAID, the Saskatchewan assured income for disabilities. The previous government had ignored calls for this program. In fact in 2007, I'm sure the members opposite will remember that the Disability Income Support Coalition was so disgruntled with the lack of action from the NDP that they issued a news release. In the press release, they stated some of their members were going to boycott further discussions. Things have changed because on budget day this year, the same organization issued a news release that heralded our government's efforts for people with disabilities. They were celebrating the expansion and enhancement of the SAID program that was announced in the budget.

We promised in the election that we would expand SAID up to 10,000 people in 2012. With this budget, we are keeping the promise. The expansion will be completed by this summer. And we promised during the election that during the four years of our mandate we would increase payments to SAID recipients of up to \$400 a month. We are keeping that promise with an initial \$200 increase starting this summer and further increases in each of the next three years. And these aren't the only initiatives we're taking for people with disabilities. At the end of this fiscal year, we'll hit another milestone. Thanks to the investment in this budget, we will have completely eliminated the 440 wait-list for people with intellectual disabilities. This will allow us to finally close the chapter on the 16 years of NDP neglect that have caused this wait-list to happen.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to talk a minute about housing and how we, our government has been thinking outside the box when it comes to innovation in housing. By 2016 we're going to be adding 12,600 housing units. Mr. Speaker, under the old model of delivering housing, the NDP used to dribble out a handful of units every year at a very high cost to the taxpayers. But this government by leveraging partnerships with municipalities, the

private sector, and CBOs [community-based organizations], we've managed to drastically cut that cost.

In fact the plan in this budget, we can deliver 32 rental units for every one that could be delivered under the old NDP model. I know the members opposite don't want to hear that, and it never mattered to them because all they talked about was a declining population. But now with the population increasing, 65,000 people in the last year, we know that we need more units. Mr. Speaker, 32 rental units for every one that was developed under the NDP is quite a milestone.

Mr. Speaker, according to RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] reports, housing affordability was under most stress in the year 2007-2008. That was 16 years of NDP inaction. The NDP never thought to have policy tools in order to react to growth, and they never planned on it. Mr. Speaker, the average yearly housing starts under the Saskatchewan Party are double what they were during the NDP's 16 years in government. There are more multi-unit rental starts in 2011 alone than in the last seven years of NDP government combined. Vacancy rates are up province-wide from what they were under the NDP, and the RBC report shows housing affordability as slowly but surely improved since 2007 and 2008.

We know there's more work to do and we plan to do more. And that's why I'm proud of the income tax reduction on the new rental development that was announced in this budget. It reflects our desire to keep growing and keep innovating to foster that growth.

In combination with the rental construction incentive we announced last year, we expect to deliver 10,000 new rental units by the year 2016. That's a 29 per cent increase to the rental market in our province. The tax incentive was widely acclaimed right across the province. Mayor Dan Atchison called it wonderful. Moose Jaw Mayor Glenn Hagel celebrated the initiative as the biggest deterrent to building new rental units by removing this tax. Prince Albert mayor Jim Scarrow said the province is clearly listening to its stakeholders and taking action to lead the nation and provincial approaches to housing incentives. Bill Madder from the Association of Saskatchewan Realtors noted on budget day that it lowers the key barriers that have kept private dollars from flowing into the rental market.

Mr. Speaker, we also have a ... [inaudible] ... with our seniors, the people that grew our province, the people that are important to all of us as we move forward. The NDP help for disabilities or lack of help for disability wasn't the only area that they neglected in their 16 years. Mr. Speaker, for 16 years, the NDP failed to increase benefits under the seniors' income plan. For 16 years, seniors were left to cope with rising costs.

In our first term of government, we doubled the benefits and nearly doubled the number of seniors eligible for seniors' income plan. This initiative put \$1,200 per year into the pockets of low-income seniors and made thousands more eligible for extended health benefits like eye examinations, chiropractor services, and home care subsidies. With this budget, we're putting an additional \$600 per year into their pockets, and we've committed to increasing it further over the next four years.

When all is said and done, in the next four years, low-income seniors will be getting \$2,100 more per year than they did under the NDP. Benefits will have tripled from what they were under the NDP. That's a \$2,100 increase for every senior versus the NDP's increase of exactly zero dollars for 16 years. In fact because of tax changes, seniors have even more money in their pockets. For example, a single senior with a \$25,000 annual income saves over \$700 per year compared to 2007. This is in addition to the personal care home benefit. Starting July the 1st, about 1,500 low-income seniors will receive the new personal care home benefit. This initiative will give eligible seniors up to \$3,336 per year to assist with the costs of personal care homes. Over the next four years, that commitment will benefit further to 4,428. These initiatives are making life more affordable for our seniors.

And although we know seniors still have challenges, according to Stats Canada, Saskatchewan has the lowest percentage of seniors living in low income in Canada. We know we need to continue to enhance benefits for our seniors, but we know we've made progress.

Another area that we made progress in is the welfare of our children and youth. Since becoming government, we've invested heavily in the youngest people in our province. The latest budget funding for family services is up 133 per cent since we became government. Over the first two years, \$74 million has been invested across government in things like transforming the child welfare system, First Nations and Métis education and employment, FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder], and on. These investments are a result of a new way of looking at the welfare of our children.

The child and youth agenda put seven cabinet ministers in the same room to determine how to best serve children. We discussed what factors are having an impact on the welfare of our children and tried to put in place the initiatives necessary to address them. We are breaking down the silos of government to serve our children better, and we're getting better at it. Government has operated so long in its own silos, it takes time to overcome this way of looking at the world.

But one of the reasons you can count on change from this budget and the future one is the impressive records we've shown. Child welfare caseloads grew by 53 per cent between the years 2000 and 2007. The number of children in care now is down for the first time in a decade. There's been a 48 per cent reduction in children living in foster homes of more than four children. Forty new pre-kindergarten programs have been supported in 23 communities. There's a 750 per cent increase in direct client services for children with autism, and we've increased an FASD family support pilot program in Saskatoon that's drastically improved school attendance among the children of 26 participating families.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that we're working with the Hub, the Community Mobilization Prince Albert initiative, that we've seen some encouraging and very impressive results: 14 per cent reduction in crime and reported crime; 15 per cent reduction in crimes against persons; 10 per cent reduction in emergency room visits; 10 per cent reduction in public prosecutions; and 32 families diverted from social services.

Mr. Speaker, there is more work to do and I know that the members, that we will be doing it especially with things like our new tracking system for children in care. The NDP in 2004 talked about a new tracking system so they no longer had children that were on paper only, but they were not working on it. The member from Saskatoon Centre said many initiatives were started but unfortunately they weren't sustained. Clearly more needed to be done.

Mr. Speaker, we are moving ahead. And as I said, we are investing in CBOs [community-based organization] like SIGN [The Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours] in Yorkton, Fox Valley in Regina, the 601 Outreach in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, I talked earlier about the differences between our approach to the budget and the NDP's, and I want to conclude on that note. I believe, of course, that we have better leadership on this side of the House. I believe we have better priorities in putting together a budget — priorities that better reflect the people of Saskatchewan; priorities like a strong and growing economy; better, more innovative public services; effective and efficient use of taxpayers' dollars. But I think there's one thing that really sets us apart, and that's where the NDP or the members opposite prize ideology, and we look at results.

In 2001 the NDP promised to put lower income people in a better financial position. But what happened? Between the budget and the time the NDP left office in 2007, food bank usage rose in Saskatchewan by 94 per cent. What's happened since? Food bank usage has declined under our watch by 17 per cent. Personal disposable income has gone from 93 per cent of the national average under the NDP to 103 per cent under our government.

[16:15]

In 1990 the NDP developed an action plan for children. What happened? Between 2000 and 2007 under the NDP, child caseloads grew by 53 per cent. Under the NDP, foster homes had, there was foster homes with as many as 21 children staying in operation. And what's happened since? The number of children in foster homes with more than four children is down by 48 per cent. The number of children placed permanently with extended families has increased by 44 per cent.

These are just some examples of the results right across government. That's why we are celebrating record job growth. That's why we are celebrating this budget, its investments like this and things like the Saskatchewan surgical initiative — which also has been mentioned by the members opposite — and long-term care facilities. This budget is providing better health care, better services to the people of the province. Through efficiencies like the workforce adjustment strategy which has delivered \$129 million in savings, we're ensuring that the public service is fiscally sustainable for the next generation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is lots of work that was undertaken in this budget. There's lots of comments that have been made by the members opposite, but I think what the members opposite aren't seeing is the effect it has on the real lives of the people of the province. When I go back to Kelvington-Wadena and talk about the children that are in care, talk about what's happening in agriculture, talking about what's happening with

our health care system, they know that we're on the right track. They encourage us to continue to do our work. They encourage us to continue to be a model in Canada right across the nation and make sure that people know that Saskatchewan is the best place to live. And, Mr. Speaker, for that reason, I'll be, I'm pleased to second the motion brought forward by the Minister of Finance.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Wood River, the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

**Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well I'm very pleased to rise today and talk about the budget, enter the debate on the budget. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know, this budget is one that we're keeping balanced. This is a balanced budget on the general revenue and the summary financial side. We're keeping spending sustainable, and that's a key word. It's sustainable spending. We're keeping the economy growing, and we're keeping our election promises.

But before I get into the debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also would like to thank a few people. One is my family for being supportive and allowing me to be here. I know it's a great hardship on families sometimes when we travel the distance that a lot of us travel to be here, and one doesn't get an awful lot of time at home anymore.

I'd also like to thank my constituency assistants Sandy and Charlene because they do an awful lot of work at the home front when I'm spending my time up here. And I really could not get along if it wasn't for my office staff in the building here with Drew, Bonnie, Sarah, Tammy, and Wendy. But also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think a great big thank you goes out to all of my colleagues here in the legislature. We work very well together, and it's very noticeable when we can come up with a budget like this, a great budget for the people of the province of Saskatchewan, and that is a result of every one of us on this side of the House working very closely together.

In discussing the budget and what we've heard from the other side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's an awful lot of pathological inexactitudes that I hear from the other side, and I think I'd like to address just a few of those. The member from Rosemont actually talked about hardships. He talked about hardships, people's hardships with this budget. He's very short-sighted. Talk about hardships with out-migration that we experienced for 16 years, total out-migration. How about 52 hospitals closed in the rural area — 52. Is that hardships? What did the people do that worked there? This was a total, total move to damage rural Saskatchewan.

How about the roads in rural Saskatchewan? And I'm going to speak more of the roads when we come to the Minister of Highways's budget. But the highways were just totally neglected. And I said this before, and I'm glad to say it again: we have 16-year-old students in my constituency that have never seen a paving machine until we formed government — sixteen years of total and utter neglect for rural Saskatchewan.

Schools — and it makes sense if you're kicking people out of the province because you're not doing anything for them — schools were closed. We had a downward spiral for years of everything in this province. And it was a typical NDP move to

try and centralize everything and get rid of rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Rosemont also talked about cuts. Well the people of Saskatchewan had one of the best, saw one of the best cuts that this province has ever seen, and that was on November 7th last year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to talk to the budget. This budget is about keeping the Saskatchewan advantage — balanced budgets, growing economy, government services that are affordable and sustainable. We see the chaos that's going on around the world and in other jurisdictions in North America because they don't have balanced budgets or won't have balanced budgets. And here we are here, a balanced budget on the summary financial basis as well as GRF, and we're living within our means. This really gives us a Saskatchewan advantage.

We have overall spending will be 4.7 per cent increase, so when they talk about cuts from the other side, let's put that all into perspective. 3.9 per cent of that increase is in operating spending, and the remainder is in capital investments.

And I spoke a little bit about highways, but I want to also talk about capital investments. That was totally ignored for so many years. We talk about schools closed, but how about those that stayed open? There was very little infrastructure money. They totally ignored infrastructure for so many years. And it's taking us a long time, and it'll take us a long time further to address all of the problems that were left by them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with our budget, it allows us to meet our priorities and it allows us to keep our election promises. Yes, there's some spending choices and some of them are tough choices, but we're very happy to make those.

For an example, Mr. Speaker, for buying homes, first-time homebuyers, we're keeping our promise by introducing the new Saskatchewan first-time homebuyer's tax credit, a \$1,100 non-refundable tax credit. PST [provincial sales tax] exemption on children's clothing to age 17. Students, we're keeping our promise of a new Saskatchewan advantage scholarship which will provide all new high school graduates with up to \$2,000 over four years to be applied to tuition fees at any Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions. And my colleague talked about persons with disabilities. And we have done more for people with disabilities in our first four years and into this year than have probably ever been done in this province before.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd now like to talk a little bit about what this budget means for my constituency. When we look at what revenue sharing has done and the amount of money we put into revenue sharing, it was toyed with by the opposition — then government — for years, and we established a revenue-sharing program that is predictable. This year \$237 million will be going to revenue sharing, so that's helped every one of our municipalities, and they know what kind of money is coming and when they're going to get it.

With highways, we've got a budget of \$581 million this year for highways, one of the highest highway budgets we've seen, and that goes to our promise of \$2.2 billion over the four years of our mandate. And that's what we did in the last four years,

Mr. Deputy Speaker. We kept our promise of \$2.2 billion for highways. There's a lot more that needs to be done, but we can see the fruits of our investment already. In my constituency, we have a road now that we can travel on which for 16 years we didn't. And so we can see the fruits of that coming already, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In agriculture, agriculture that was ignored for all of that time frame under the NDP, and now we see agriculture getting some of the highest funding that they've ever seen. I remember having to wait till the end of year before we'd even know if crop insurance was going to be fully funded by the NDP. Now it's funded in advance. We're putting money into market development. We're putting money into irrigation. All of these things is having the province move forward. It's being proactive in the ag industry, and the people in the ag industry really respect and understand that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd also like to talk a little bit about my ministry and what this budget has done. This budget commits \$2.8 million, some of it's for, 1.2 for the implementation of high-risk violent offenders crime reduction.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that in 1991 the crime rate in Saskatchewan was about equal to the national crime rate. Under 16 years of socialist government, that crime rate rose and it rose exponentially. Now we're trying to get it back into order, so putting money into it is very much essential.

1.1 million in this for the completion of 120 additional police officers over our 4-year commitment. When I talk about police officers and how we've met our commitment, we have to again look back to what the socialists did, promised 200 — good public relations event — promised 200 police officers. That happened in 1999, again in 2003. And how did they make out? They never did complete that, so it's no wonder that the crime rate was going up during that time frame. We promised 120 police officers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and actually provided 162. We provided 111 new RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] positions and 51 municipal police positions. So we take crime very seriously.

Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have gone through a period of time from the mid-'80s until 2008 where there was not a single additional bed added to our corrections system. People on the other side will say, well we built a new facility. That was strictly a replacement facility replacing the 1913 jail. Since we have formed government, we have added a 90-bed facility in Saskatoon. Last year's budget we had a 30-cell, 60-bed facility at Pine Grove, the only women's correctional centre in the province. And in this year's budget, we've got money for a 72-cell, 144-bed facility in Prince Albert.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we were very much left with overcrowding that you, really, it's hard to believe how the overcrowding was building. And it sure didn't happen just since 2007. It's been building since the late-'80s and all through the '90s. There's a big deficit in corrections facilities still. But at least we're working toward fulfilling some of those deficiencies and adding some beds, which is greatly going to help in our facilities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've heard from members opposite in

some of their talks, some of their wording of the past week or so, about how this province is going forward and how they wish to lay claim to how they got started. They got it started. And we hear different members get up and say, oh, we started the population boom; we started the economic boom. And every time I hear that from the other side, I think it's only worthwhile to remind the people of the province what their ideology really is.

And I just happen to have dug out a copy of something called the *Regina Manifesto*. And I think it's very worthwhile for the people of the province to understand what their bible says. And this is their bible. This is what they actually believe in. And I want to use a few words out of this. I want to use a few words out of this. It says, you know, we want to replace the capitalist system. They talk about economic planning that will supersede private enterprise and competition. They talk about the evils of capitalism and even to the point where it says, make possible a much greater degree of leisure. Well, we see the leisure over there. Everything in this document leads to that magical word of socialism. And . . .

[16:30]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. I believe previous Speakers have ruled that that term is not appropriate for the Assembly, and I would advise the member to discontinue with that term. I recognize the member from Wood River.

**Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm quoting that they want to . . . It's quote, "socialization of finance." And throughout, I'm quoting, "banks must be socialized; insurance companies must be socialized." That's in their manifesto.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to just run through the end of this, because in the end of this is very key. And when they talk about they had the plan, and they were doing stuff to actually make this province grow, if you were a company from outside of the province and wanted to do due diligence, and you did your due diligence, and you saw one of the top items on their website was the *Regina Manifesto*, and along with a Bill that nationalized, had the ability for the government to nationalize a company, would you move into this province? But in the final chapter of this manifesto it says, will not rest content until it has eradicated capitalism and put into the full program of socialized planning. Now if you were a business and you wanted to move into this province, would you at all want to move here if you had a government with an ideology such as that? Not a chance.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was their view. That was their view of how to do business. Well let's have a look at how it worked. How about some of their business acumen when we start looking at dot-coms. And I'm going to tell you how their business acumen really worked: *tappedinto.com* lost 6.7 million; *Persona* lost 9.4 million. *Navigata* — who really knows? — probably up to \$100 million; *Retx*, 26 million; *Craig Wireless*, 10 million; *Clickabid*, 1.9. And it goes on with the dot-coms.

But now we get to the fun one. Here is a government at the time that wants to socialize even the potato industry with SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company]. Now this may be the first time I've mentioned SPUDCO this week,

but \$35 million for them to invest in potatoes, \$35 million because they thought they could do better than industry. How wrong could they be?

We look at some of the investments like Channel Lake in Guyana. They lost a paltry \$17 million. Now, now we get into the fun one. They wanted to take over bingo for the province of Saskatchewan. A loss of 8 million bucks to try and take over bingo because they thought they could do it better.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, and then there's the one where they invested in the pulp mill at Meadow Lake. Now they used it, they used it to prop up a seat possibly. But \$800 million to prop up a seat? Now members opposite will say, well it was started under the previous administration. And you've used my analogy before — like a horse race. Somebody buys a horse, and you bet on it and lose, so you keep betting on it and losing, but you blame the guy that bought the horse. It just doesn't make sense. Well that's what they did with the Meadow Lake pulp mill.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know there's an awful lot of our members that want to speak, so I'm going to close my remarks by saying I will be supporting this budget. It's probably the best budget that has been brought forward in . . . Well there's five of them that have been really, really good. But in closing I want to make a comment that I think is going to be appropriate for the almanac, and my closing comment is going to be, March comes in like a lion, goes out like a Lingenfelter. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Jurgens:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. From the joy of birth to the wisdom of seniors, from the job seekers to the job creators, from our first residents to our new residents, from north to south, from rural to urban, all of us want our provincial government to be fiscally responsible.

Last fall we went to the doorsteps of the people of Saskatchewan and we listened, listened as you shared your hopes and your fears, your concerns and your dreams, for a better tomorrow for our children and our children's children. The people of this province told us that fiscal prudence is top of mind, especially when looking at other economies in our country, on our continent, and around the world. We listened and we are delivering.

Last Wednesday, March 21st, the Finance minister presented our budget, our Saskatchewan advantage. Our Saskatchewan advantage budget is all about being fiscally responsible so that our Saskatchewan Party government can continue to support and sustain programs Saskatchewan people value, programs such as health, education, and support for those needing a hand up, all the while creating a strong, business-friendly climate so that entrepreneurs and corporations can create jobs, jobs that help people to enjoy life and to raise a family, jobs that provide an income so we can contribute to our communities.

We, as a Saskatchewan Party government, are committed to keeping the Saskatchewan advantage. This budget does that and it does more. It keeps the campaign promises we made in the 2011 election. Our government has delivered a balanced budget. It is balanced in the General Revenue Fund, and it is

balanced in the summary financial statement, plus the Growth and Financial Security Fund will maintain a balance of \$756 million. Mr. Deputy Speaker, please tell the people of this province that they are the reason we have a combo of balanced budgets, reduced debts, lower taxes, a growing economy, and a tremendous quality of life. Saskatchewan people have helped us to create the Saskatchewan advantage. Saskatchewan people share our vision that Saskatchewan is the best place in Canada to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family, and to build a life.

To do this, our Saskatchewan Party government identified four goals: (1) sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people, (2) improving the quality of life, (3) making life more affordable, and (4) delivering responsive and responsible government.

Sustaining growth and opportunities is supported when our municipalities are provided with a full percentage point of the PST as promised. This means that our municipality of Prince Albert is participating in revenue sharing to the tune of \$6,661,992 in this budget of 2012-13. This revenue sharing is a 122 per cent increase since '07, '08. This revenue sharing eliminates the guessing games of the past. P.A. [Prince Albert] can now plan for and support the needs, growth, and opportunities of our citizens. I support this, unlike the NDP. Obviously the NDP want us to go back to the guessing games of the past when municipalities never quite knew what their budget would be.

Education is another tenet for sustaining growth and opportunities. This budget introduces a new education funding formula and increases K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] funding to help with the transition to the new formula. As a result of the new funding formula and education funding increase, all school divisions will see a funding increase ranging anywhere from 1.7 to 14.4 per cent. School divisions will continue to have the autonomy to fund community schools, and existing community school designations will remain. Under our new formula, funding formula, the component that supports community schools has increased by over 4 per cent, and now stands at over \$258 million. This vulnerability portion of the funding formula will use the same kind of socio-economic indicators as before such as low-income, single parent families, and now immigration, to estimate the level of student vulnerability within each school division. The model provides this funding in an unconditional way.

My constituency of Prince Albert Northcote has an abundance of post-secondary institutions — from GDI [Gabriel Dumont Institute] to SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies] to SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], from U of R [University of Regina] classes to first and second years from U of S [University of Saskatchewan] to the northern campus of the First Nations University. Prince Albert Northcote welcomes this Saskatchewan advantage budget.

Our government is providing an increase of 2 per cent for a total of \$12 million on top of the '10-11 budget amount to support operating costs at post-secondary institutions across Saskatchewan. Sustaining growth and opportunities will continue via our graduate retention program that provides a

combination of non-refundable and refundable tax credits to post-secondary graduates up to \$20,000 in tuition rebates over seven years. There is a \$172.4 million of targeted funding for First Nations and Métis peoples. This is a 4.7 million increase from last year's budget. Our Saskatchewan advantage budget is committed to improving quality of life.

The patient-first initiative will continue. This budget provides \$98.2 million more to the regional health authorities. This is a 3.5 per cent increase over last year. Those that need to deal with cancer will be supported via a 138.8 million to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. This includes an increase of \$16.9 million in funding so that the Cancer Agency can continue to provide a high quality service that includes drugs, operational, and medical costs. In addition, \$4 million has been committed to expand the colorectal screening program province-wide.

Pineview Terrace, located in P.A. Northcote, is one of the seven previously announced long-term care facilities that will be built using a portion of the \$42.7 million for construction of these facilities. These long-term care facilities are using the new shared ownership model in which government pays 80 per cent, and the remaining 20 per cent is the local cost share.

Since last year, there are 5,900 more First Nations and Métis peoples with an increased quality of life because they are employed in family sustaining jobs. Quality of life has increased for 123 First Nations and Métis journeypersons. This is double the number of First Nations and Métis journeypersons that there were in '06-07. My friend Florence told me just yesterday that her son, a First Nations man, will be added to that growing list of journeypersons later this year.

The 2011 election platform resonated with Saskatchewan people. That platform identified one of our government's priorities, to improve the quality of life for residents with disabilities. This 2012-13 budget increased funding for disabilities programming by another \$26.4 million. This is part of the 308.8 million more dollars that this government has provided since taking office in '07. The Saskatchewan assured income for disability or SAID program will receive an increase of \$17.8 million so that up to 10,000 adults with disabilities will have an improved quality of life through access to this program. Many people have shared with me how this program has improved the dignity and quality of life for their loved ones.

[16:45]

Mr. Speaker, last fall, if I heard it once I heard it a thousand times — the people of Northcote want a safer community. Well, Mr. Speaker, we have the Community Mobilization Partnership, the first of its kind in Canada. This innovative, multi-agency partnership of community agencies, schools, health care and social service agencies, First Nations workers, and police is creating a new way to make our community safer. This Community Mobilization Partnership is getting at the root causes of crime and helping to prevent so many young people from going down that dangerous path. It is helping our youth to be part of the thriving, safe community we all so much want.

Our Saskatchewan Party government's 2011 election platform committed to supporting the expansion of this Community

Mobilization Partnership. Last week, Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, our Saskatchewan advantage budget fulfilled this commitment of \$450,000.

To advance the commitment to improving safety and security in Saskatchewan, secure correctional facilities, this budget provides funding for a number of capital construction projects: 24 million over three years to build a two-storey, 72-cell secure living unit on the grounds of the Prince Albert Provincial Correctional Centre; 9.6 million to complete the construction of a 30-cell living unit addition to the Pine Grove Correctional Centre for women. The Pine Grove women's correctional centre is the only women's correctional centre in the province and is located in my constituency of Prince Albert Northcote. Earlier this spring, I toured both of these facilities. I am very impressed at the progress on the Pine Grove expansion and how effectively the space is used in both facilities.

This government is delivering on its commitment to improve quality of life in Saskatchewan through significant increases in programs and services for the province's most vulnerable people. Making life more affordable is another goal that this Saskatchewan advantage budget addresses. With the tax changes from past budgets that the Saskatchewan Party government delivered, a family of four with 50,000 in annual income pays less than a quarter of the taxes that the NDP charged them. This means that family of four now has a tax savings of \$2,638 each year.

Child care spaces in Saskatchewan will increase in this next term of office. There are \$46 million for child care operating, which includes a \$2 million increase, a \$4 million child care capital to create 500 new child care spaces. Three hundred of these spaces will be located in schools or post-secondary institutions.

We are committed to make life more affordable for low-income seniors. To help seniors keep pace with the cost of living, this budget provides \$3.3 million, 24.2 million in total, to increase the senior income plan for singles and couples.

Let's compare the first four years of Saskatchewan Party government to the last 16 years of NDP. The seniors' income plan benefit was doubled in our first term of office. In 16 years under the NDP, there was no change to the \$90 per month seniors received. In 2012, under the Saskatchewan Party government, the senior income plan benefit will increase to \$240 per month. That's \$2,880 per year. It will triple by the end of this term to \$270 per month, compared to the \$90 per month the NDP provided to seniors.

In a growing economy and with the largest increase in population since 1956, there are 65,000 more people now than in '06. Rental housing continues to be in demand. The Saskatchewan Party recognizes this need and introduced the Saskatchewan advantage housing plan in the 2011-12 budget. This budget supports that plan with a further \$3.7 million for the rental construction incentive and affordable home ownership programs. With these programs and other initiatives, the province could add up to 10,000 rentals to the market, 2,200 new entry-level homes, and 650 student residences.

To help people with the cost of a new home, the Saskatchewan

advantage budget is introducing the first-time homebuyers tax credit, which will provide up to \$1,100 in non-refundable tax credits. In addition the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation will provide \$1 million to Habitat for Humanity to help an additional 20 low-income families achieve home ownership.

Mr. Speaker, this Saskatchewan advantage budget continues to deliver responsive and responsible government. At a time when many governments elsewhere are being forced to slash programs and funding, our government has worked hard to ensure this does not happen. Last year, our province earned for the first time ever, a AAA credit rating. This year, we see Saskatchewan's debt-to-GDP ratio steadily improving. Financial decisions were scrutinized to ensure they did not increase government debt. Overall spending will be \$11.2 billion, virtually identical to the spending level we promised in the election campaign.

Our government has delivered a balanced budget. Saskatchewan is the first province to table a balanced budget this year. It is balanced in the General Revenue Fund; it is balanced in the summary financial statements; plus the Growth and Financial Security Fund will maintain a balance of \$756 million. All of these factors show how this budget is all about keeping the Saskatchewan advantage, keeping our election promises, keeping our budget balanced, keeping our spending sustainable, and keeping our economy strong.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and privilege to support this budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Phillips:** — Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave for an introduction.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. I recognize the member for Melfort.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Phillips:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I introduced my intern last week or week and a half ago. Now his father, Lud Gieni, and his grandmother, Sophie Gieni, have joined us in the gallery. And they came down today to make sure that Cody is learning something, so I'm going to be interested in hearing his answer. And with that, I would like you to make them welcome please.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Dewdney.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

#### 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.]

**Mr. Makowsky:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour tonight to, or this afternoon to enter into the budget debate that was tabled by the Finance minister. It seems to be a tradition that you thank a few people that have got you here and supported you here, so I'd like to take the initiative to do that right now. Of course, right at the top of that is my lovely wife, Tami. And she is . . . Of course, we can't, we couldn't do this job without great support at home, and she does a great job being the CEO of the Makowsky family. So I certainly thank you very much for that.

I'm sure I'm like a lot of the members here, and certainly the rookie members, if you're in my boat, constituency assistants are very important; they're very nice to have. So I have one of the best certainly in Kristen. Thank you so much for all the work you're doing in the office while I'm away, and even when I'm there, and for all the people of Regina Dewdney. You're doing a great job, and thanks for coming to work for the people.

Thanks to the members of the Treasury Board. I know they put a lot of time in and they do a lot of hard work to put this excellent budget forward. I'm not sure they had a lot of choice in the matter, but they did a good job. And certainly the member from Canora-Pelly, I know he's put a lot of years in this government, in opposition, 17 years I believe. So that's certainly something to be proud of. And I think I have a bit of connection with him; we're both of Ukrainian heritage, Mr. Speaker, and he represents the constituency where the Makowsky homestead is, and they're proud to have him as their MLA. So thank you to that member.

I'd also like to thank all the people in the building. They've been a great help, especially to a rookie guy like myself. They've been very helpful. The only people that really haven't been too helpful, actually, are the people in the cafeteria, and they haven't helped me very much with my diet, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying to lose weight. They cook such good food down there, it's a problem. I guess that's a little bit of my fault. So thanks to people at the Legislative Assembly, the staff here.

Well, Mr. Speaker, with 48 MLAs to speak, I thought I'd talk just about the particulars as it pertains to Regina Dewdney, you know, and I guess my young family, some of the things that, the needs that those folks have. And you know, as I go on my journey as an MLA, as I listen to my constituents, one of the big issues in Dewdney and certainly probably across the province, but particularly in larger centres, is housing. And certainly it's a challenge, Mr. Speaker, when you have more people moving here, a growing economy. But as we said on this side of the aisle many times, Mr. Speaker, we'd much rather deal with the issues with growth, than . . . the challenges with growth, rather than managing decline as we saw too much in our past, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Social Services has done a great job and the Saskatchewan housing advantage plan — sorry, Sask advantage housing plan rather . . . And I see it right now happening in Regina Dewdney, Mr. Speaker, in the Parkview Village. It's

being rehabbed with a grant from our government, \$8 million, and that's going to bring 71 homes online. If it wasn't for that investment, Mr. Speaker, those homes would have been lost. They had problems with moisture. They had problems with their basements. And they're three-bedroom units too, Mr. Speaker, so that's going to be a lot of people off the Regina housing authority's wait-list. Since '07, Sask Housing Corp has partnered with the city and non-profits to develop or renovate over 1,300 units here in Regina, and much more to come, Mr. Speaker. We're making good progress.

Another sort of program that came in by this government is the first-time homebuyers tax credit. We know on this side of the aisle, Mr. Speaker, that increasing the supply is the answer. We're working on the supply side, Mr. Speaker. And moving people into their own homes with the first-time homebuyers tax credit from rentals, free up those rentals. And I've heard many times people in our community that they pay higher rents, but if they could get into a house, they could probably make those mortgage payments. So this might give them a little bit of help, and so that's some good work there.

Working with Habitat for Humanity, I was able to be at a key ceremony on Friday morning, Mr. Speaker. And they were able to hand over keys to folks that have their own home now, Mr. Speaker. And that's just a great program. We have \$1 million available for that program, which we've given several years now. So you know, that's really sort of an anchor now for that community. It's an older area, and to get a new home and a new family in there is certainly going to help that neighbourhood.

Another incentive we moved on, Mr. Speaker, was a 10 per cent tax rebate on multi-unit starts in this budget, Mr. Speaker. Stakeholders have been asking the feds to move on this tax. It's a tax on rental income, and it really does . . .

**The Speaker:** — It now being after the hour of 5 p.m., this House stands recessed to 7 p.m. this evening.

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



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Duncan .....	713
Forbes .....	713
Bjornerud .....	713
Norris .....	713
Phillips .....	742

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Forbes .....	713
Belanger .....	713
Wotherspoon .....	714
Broten .....	714
Chartier .....	714

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Health Budget	
Wyant .....	714
Spring Free From Racism	
Wotherspoon .....	715
Steinley .....	716
Physicists Participate in International Project	
Marchuk .....	715
Tourism Saskatchewan Awards of Excellence	
Sproule .....	715
Education and Employment Task Force for First Nations and Métis People	
Lawrence .....	715
St. Isidore-de-Bellevue Team Wins Provincial Title	
Kirsch .....	716

#### QUESTION PERIOD

Support for Film Industry	
Chartier .....	716
Hutchinson .....	716
Tourism Saskatchewan	
Vermette .....	718
Hutchinson .....	718
Go Green Program	
Belanger .....	719
Duncan .....	719
Seniors' Drug Plan	
Broten .....	720
McMorris .....	720

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Expansion of Screening Program for Colorectal Cancer	
McMorris .....	721
Broten .....	721

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Weekes .....	722
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#### SPECIAL ORDER

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY

#### (BUDGET DEBATE)

Wotherspoon .....	722
Forbes .....	732
Draude .....	735
Huyghebaert .....	738
Jurgens .....	740
Makowsky .....	743

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