



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

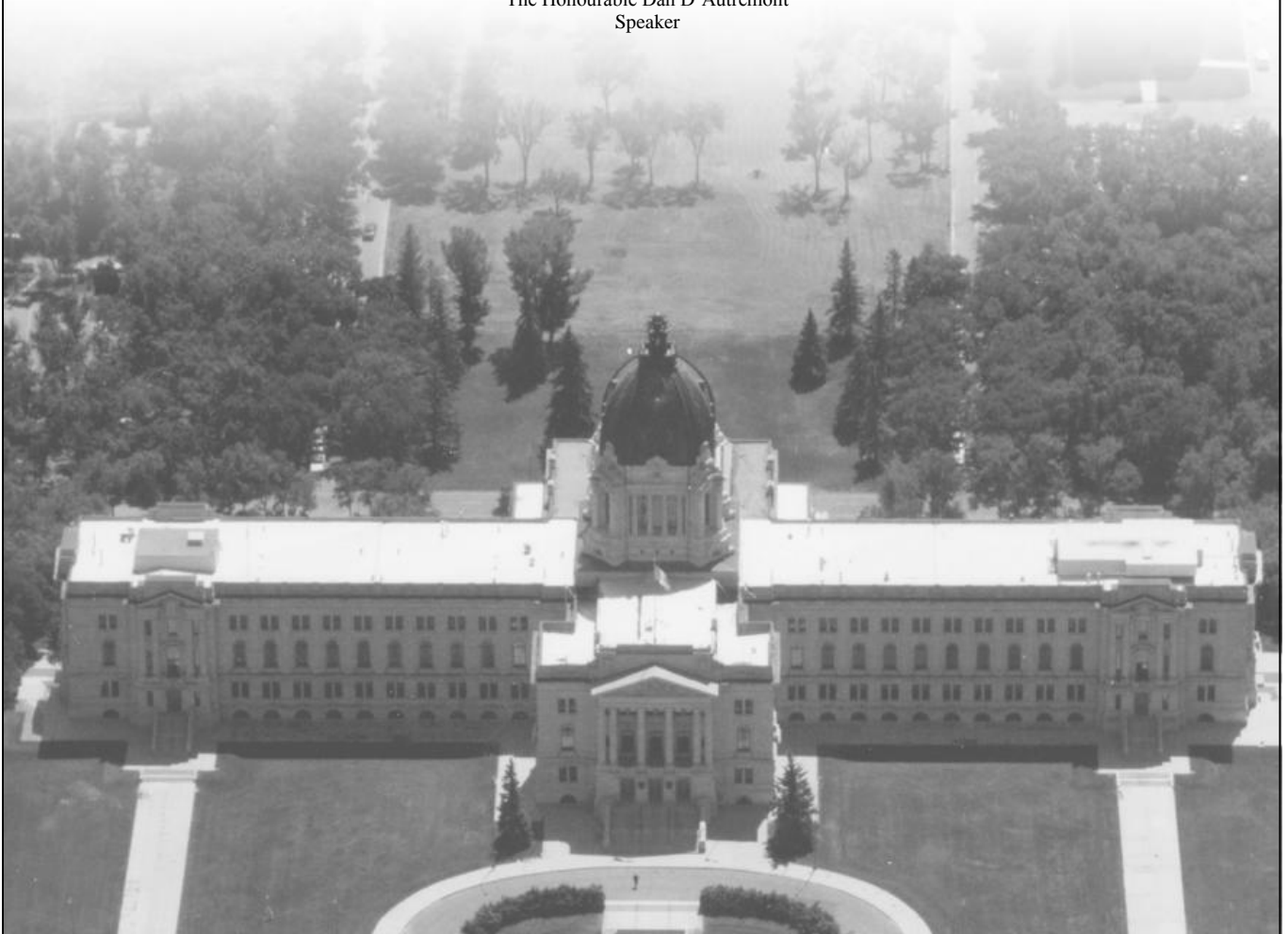
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
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 member for Cypress Hills.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, I seek leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The member from Cypress Hills has requested extended leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the legislature today, I am pleased to introduce Dr. Daniel Fox in your gallery, the recipient of the Saskatchewan Distinguished Service Award, and accompanying him today, his spouse, Ms. Kathleen Andersen.

Mr. Speaker, in 1997 the Distinguished Service Award was established to recognize those people from outside of our province who have nevertheless made contributions that have benefited our province and contributed to the quality of life that we experience here today. Dr. Fox, Mr. Speaker, has undoubtedly made such a contribution as the international board member for the Saskatchewan Health Quality Council.

His leadership and dedication on the board since it was created in 2002 has led to better health care in our province. His work has led us to the creation of the first nationally recognized effort to measure and learn from the experiences that patients have in our health care system. Throughout Canada the council's work has been identified as significant. They have identified areas where improvement was needed to provide positive experiences through what can often be a difficult and challenging time in a person's life. Dr. Fox's knowledge and experience has greatly impacted these efforts, ensuring that it is the patients that remain the top priority for the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, I would like to express how grateful we are for Dr. Fox's commitment to the quality of health care, and more importantly to the quality of patients' experiences in our health care system. His dedication to the health of our citizens continues to inspire us to strive for a better health care system and a better patient experience.

Accompanying Dr. Fox and Ms. Andersen today are members of the Health Quality Council who will be introduced by the minister shortly. In the meantime, would all members please offer our appreciation to our honoured guests today.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege also to welcome Dr. Fox and Ms. Kathleen Andersen, or Dan and Kathleen, who have become my friends over the 10 years that has been mentioned here.

I can recall the morning phoning Dan to be our international expert on the Health Quality Council, and he said yes immediately. And I'm not sure if it was mentioned here, but he's only missed one meeting in these 10 years and that was because of weather.

So he has provided a perspective on all of the policy work that was done in our government and then now in the present government and has assisted the other people who will be interested shortly at the Health Quality Council, but I think also assisted many legislators who have participated in the Reforming States Group.

Kathleen Andersen is the vice-president of the Milbank Memorial Fund which is a supporter of the Reforming States Group which includes Saskatchewan and all Canadian provinces and territories, but also all US [United States] states, Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, and England. And in that health-policy world, they have provided invaluable service for 20 years. So I say on behalf of the opposition, thank you very much to you, Dan Fox, for being a true Saskatchewan citizen. You read our poetry, you read our books, but you tell people all around the world about what a great place Saskatchewan is from your vantage point in Manhattan, and we thank you for that.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, as was mentioned earlier, I want to introduce some members seated in your gallery, members from the Health Quality Council board. First of all is . . . and you can just give a wave, you don't have to stand through this whole introduction.

So, Dr. Susan Shaw who is the board Chair. Seated to her right would be Cecile Hunt. Dennis Kendel is there. Yvonne Shevchuk and Steven Lewis is there. As well as Quality Council staff members, the CEO [chief executive officer] is Bonnie Brossart, as well as Greg Basky and Gary Teare. These, not only board members which set the direction, I guess, for the Health Quality Council, but also the council staff do an amazing job and have done an amazing job over the past ten years in finding best practices, really quite frankly, around the world and introducing those to us in decision-making positions, I guess, to move the health system forward to make it the best that we can have in our province. So I want all members to join me in welcoming, not only the board members but the members from staff for the Health Quality Council to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with

the members who have already spoken and welcome all these individuals who are here today, individuals who do a great amount of work to promote evidence-based approaches in health care here in the province. So thank you for the work you've done over the years and thank you for the work that you will do in the future as well. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I have the real pleasure of introducing two ladies who are in your gallery that are making a real difference for people with intellectual disabilities. Iris Miller-Dennis and Bev Duncan are joining us today. Iris is the president and Bev is the treasurer of Saskatchewan Approved Private Homes Inc.

This morning I had the opportunity to go to Bev's beautiful home and announce an 11.6 per cent increase in funding for approved private service homes and mental health approved homes. And I can't tell you how gracious they were and what wonderful hostesses they were. And more importantly, we see that those homes are not just four walls, they're the homes for a family.

So on behalf of the people of the province, we thank you very much for the work that you do for people who are intellectually disabled, and I also welcome you to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, I join the minister in welcoming these people to the legislature today. We certainly agree that the work that they do in the voluntary sector means so much to those who are in vulnerable circumstances. So we'd like to welcome you as well to the House. Thank you.

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

Mr. Makowsky: — To you and through you, I'd like to introduce four very important people in your gallery today, Mr. Speaker. They're all constituency assistants working for a few Regina members here. We have Kristen Reves; she's my CA [constituency assistant]. We have Becky Mason working for the people of Douglas Park here in Regina; Ron Naidu and Delsey Roske working for the people of Regina Northeast.

I think all members will agree how valuable CAs are to the people of the province and all the hard work they do. So please join me in welcoming them to the Assembly today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House . . . the Opposition House Leader, sorry.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks for the promotion, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, some individuals seated in the Speaker's gallery. I'm speaking of Amy Huziak with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour's young workers committee. I'm speaking of Donna Smith, also with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, but on the CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] national pink triangle committee, as well as the executive of the Canadian

Labour Congress; and Mikayla Schultz, who's the director with the TransSask Services. They're here today to witness some of the proceedings and that will become much more clear very soon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming these people to the House. I met with Mikayla in my office a few weeks ago and we had some interesting and productive discussions. Mr. Speaker, the work that is done by these groups is something that forms part of the fabric of our province. We value and respect the contributions that are made by these citizens and want to thank them and would like all members to welcome them to their Assembly today. Thank you.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members in the legislature, I'm pleased to introduce, provide a general introduction to some of the faces of the film and television industry, both who currently work in the industry and students here in Regina who are hoping to find a career here in Saskatchewan.

So I see Crystal in the gallery who I had the pleasure of meeting yesterday. Crystal is a recruit actually from Toronto who moved to Saskatchewan three years ago specifically to work here and make a life in the film and television industry. She's got quite a story to tell. Well anyway I would like to welcome you to your Legislative Assembly and ask all members in joining me.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This isn't an oversight. I'd wanted to do this one in particular separate from my earlier introductions, but in your gallery is Ms. Norma Morrow who has joined our honoured guest today. She's the most recent addition to the protocol office. I think this might be one of her first forays into the arena of distinguished guest hosting, and she's done a great job as well as the colleagues that she works with at the protocol office. So I want to recognize her and her associates in that office who do such good work on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

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 that 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 alone and unprotected from intruders. But we also know that armed robberies late at night are not isolated events in Saskatchewan. We saw it just two weeks ago in Saskatoon in my riding and also in Regina on January 23rd and 24th. So we need Jimmy's law. We know

British Columbia and other provinces have brought several safety precautions through law, including a requirement that workers cannot be alone during late night, early morning hours. 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.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition today are from the city of Regina. I do so present. Thank you.

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 and accounting of our provincial finances.

The petition reads as follows, and 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 citizens of Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

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

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 am pleased to rise today to present a petition in support of the film and television industry, in particular in support of ensuring that we maintain our competitive advantage by keeping the film employment tax credit. The petition references the fact that the Film Employment Tax Credit is "money in" rather than money out for Saskatchewan.

[13:45]

Just a note here, Mr. Speaker, this petition complements an online petition which as of two hours ago had more than 7,000 signatures on it. It was just begun on Friday. So with that, I would 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 is signed by residents in Saskatoon and Regina. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We're currently in the middle of Transgender Awareness Week, and Saturday will be the International Transgender Day Of Visibility.

I'm presenting a petition that calls for the enhancement and the protection of the rights of transgendered people in the Human Rights Code. The prayer in this petition reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan provide protection under the law to trans-identified and gender variant residents of Saskatchewan through the inclusion within *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* of the terms gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds for discrimination.

This petition is signed by individuals from St-Denis, Prince Albert, Regina, North Battleford, Fort Qu'Appelle, Milestone, Dundurn, Richard, Cochin, Martensville, Craven, Saskatoon, Delisle, Warman, Qu'Appelle, Humboldt, and Duck Lake. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of the trappers of Saskatchewan. The current regulations being enforced are creating challenges that are of concern for

our traditional trappers. The prayer reads:

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 be valued; and in so doing to cause the government to review the current legislation and regulations with respect to trapping regulations and firearms use in consultation with the traditional resource users.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

The Speaker: — I would like to remind our guests before we start that they are not to participate in events on the floor, and that includes applause.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Transgender Awareness Week

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. March 25th through the 31st is Transgender Awareness Week. This week is aimed at building understanding and of course awareness of the issues facing transgendered people. Events have been taking place throughout the province to mark the week, and the proceedings will be capped off at the Rally for Visibility on Saturday, March 31st, which serves as the third International Transgender Day of Visibility. The Day of Visibility and Transgender Awareness Week have been proclaimed by 10 municipalities throughout the province, including Lloydminster, Melville, Melfort, Melville — or pardon me, there we go, two times the Melville, Mr. Speaker — Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw. And it is my understanding that the provincial government will be proclaiming March 31st as the Day of Transgender Visibility.

This effort has been supported by a number of elected officials, and I want to commend them for that. To quote Mayor Jeff Mulligan of Lloydminster from an article in the *Meridian-Booster*: “Anything that creates awareness and inclusion makes you a better, more understanding society.”

Mr. Speaker, we in the official opposition certainly agree. The numerous proclamations and events marking Transgender Awareness Week are a direct result of the hard work and determination of the good folk at TransSask Support Services, especially those of Mikayla Schultz. She knows first-hand the struggles involved in being a transgendered person in Saskatchewan and, among other admirable work, she spearheaded the petition that I tabled in this Assembly earlier today calling for the inclusion of gender identity in *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*.

Mikayla Schultz has said the following: “You don’t see us . . . we don’t show ourselves out of fear of oppression, further oppression, marginalization, and harassment.” It’s this sad fact that has spurred on the efforts of Mikayla in promoting

Transgender Awareness Week, and I think she should be congratulated for it. May oppression and harassment and hate be replaced by understanding and awareness.

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

Investment in Saskatchewan’s Highways

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the recently tabled 2012-13 provincial budget confirms our government’s commitment to improving highways and infrastructure throughout Saskatchewan. A highways budget of 581.5 million, the second largest highway budget in our province’s history, puts us on track to fulfill our government’s campaign promise to spend 2.2 billion over four years on highways and transportation infrastructure.

For too long our province’s highways have been neglected. To help address this, our government has invested 275.3 million for new capital projects for 2012-13 including, among many other projects, a 3 million investment in a new passing initiative for Highway 10 from Balgonie to Fort Qu’Appelle. To quote Al Rosseker of the Saskatchewan Trucking Association:

During the last five years this government has used highways and infrastructure as a road to economic prosperity. Today’s budget expenditure of 581.5 million clearly indicates the Wall government’s steadfast commitment to building, improving, and maintaining Saskatchewan’s roadways. This vision will benefit generations to come.

An estimated 1200 kilometres of road will be improved this year including the completion of twinning Highway 11 from Saskatoon to P.A. [Prince Albert] ahead of schedule.

I believe Shantel Lipp, president of the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association, sums up the thoughts of the province the best:

Since 2007 this government has demonstrated commitment to dealing with years of neglect of our highways and infrastructure while at the same time ensuring new infrastructure is in place to accommodate our growing economy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Shift Work Recognition Day

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, March 20th has been proclaimed Shift Work Recognition Day, and many communities, including Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina, Yorkton, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, officially mark the day.

Sandy Weyland, Chair of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour shift work committee said, and I quote:

People that do shift work provide our communities with valuable services but often at the expense of their own

health. I'm extremely pleased that a number of communities in our province have agreed to recognize individuals that do shift work by proclaiming a day in their honour.

Mr. Speaker, almost one-third of Canadian workers are involved in some kind of shift work. Unfortunately, studies like the 2010 study at the University of British Columbia found that people that do shift work are almost twice as likely to be injured on the job and that women in particular are susceptible to problems related to shift work, including sleep deprivation and depression.

Mr. Speaker, the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] shift work committee works to achieve a healthier lifestyle and workplace through research, education, contract language, legislation, and heightened awareness of workers along with their respective employers. They have hosted a number of conferences focusing on the stresses of shift work and offer many tools needed to deal with shift work and societal issues.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in recognizing Shift Work Recognition Day in appreciation, and a big thank you to all the shift workers here in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

National Biathlon Competition

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a young athlete from my constituency. Flight Corporal Jason Reimer of the No. 43 The Battlefords Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron is a biathlon athlete who has proudly represented his squadron and this province. Corporal Reimer competed at the local level, then the zone, then provincial levels to earn the right to represent our province at a national competition.

Biathlon, for those who are unfamiliar with the sport, is the combination of skiing and shooting. The competitors ski a circuit and then shoot targets and repeat the process until the course is finished. Corporal Reimer is a 15-year-old cadet who has participated in this sport for several years and has worked hard to earn the right to represent his province at the Canadian National Biathlon Competition which was held this year in Martock, Nova Scotia.

This was Jason's second time to represent our province at the national level, and he proudly joined a team of 12 cadet athletes from the air, army, and sea cadet corps from around this province. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to report that Jason placed sixth out of 20 in the mass start competition and seventh out of 20 in the pursuit competition. And in the relay, the composite team finished eighth out of 25. Three top-half finishes is a remarkable record for this young athlete and for his team.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleagues to extend congratulations to Jason, and indeed to the entire cadet corps team who represented this province so well at the national competition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Services.

Hoopla 2012

Hon. Ms. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This weekend I had the honour of attending the 33rd Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association Hoopla 2012 basketball provincial championship. The Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association basketball season culminates with the road to Hoopla, from conference playoffs the second of week of March and advancing to the regionals the following weekend where the winners then advance to a 48-team provincial championship.

Hoopla has become one of the biggest championships on the Saskatchewan high school athletic calendar. Housing the tournament at the University of Regina with its three gymnasiums adds to the intensity. Spectators from across the province are able to enjoy all levels of the game in a single facility. The Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association is fortunate to have partnered with the University of Regina to showcase the best basketball in the province and to introduce students and parents to the next level of education at the U of R [University of Regina].

A special congratulations goes out to the teams in my constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley. Riffel Royals 5A boy team, they brought home the gold. The Lumsden 3A girls teams won the gold. And Winston Knoll Wolverines 5A, those girls won the bronze.

I would ask all members to join in congratulations to all the athletes who participated in this week's . . . Thank you very much to the Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association for making this tournament such a great success. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

2011 Citizens of the Year

Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on March the 22nd, I had the honour to bring greetings at the CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] Citizen of the Year luncheon. The Citizens of the Year for 2011 was given to not one but two constituents of Regina Wascana Plains — Rory and Lorie Allen.

Mr. Speaker, Rory and Lorie are known worldwide as professional entertainers. But it's their charitable performances and their incredible dedication to our community that separates them from others.

Rory and Lorie have given benefit concerts for numerous groups, including the Regina Food Bank and the You've Got a Friend telethon in support of the Regina Humane Society. Mr. Speaker, the Allens have also shown their incredible selflessness and kindness, donating their time through the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region to perform for palliative care patients and their families. Mr. Speaker, this speaks to the true spirit of these two wonderful people and what an amazing job they've done as citizens of our community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating

Rory and Lorie Allen for being selected as Regina's Citizens of the Year for 2011. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Expansion of Borden Care Home

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was pleased to accept the invitation recently to bring greetings at the grand opening of phase 2 of the Borden Care Home. The Borden Care Home is a true example of community co-operation, governed by the RMs [rural municipality] of Great Bend, Corman Park, and Mayfield as well as the towns of Borden, Radisson, Maymont, and Langham. This home has served these communities for 10 years and operated since 2001 as a non-profit charitable personal care home.

Originally started with 10 beds, phase 2 will allow this home to serve 20 residents and is a great local development in excess of \$1 million. One of our goals regarding seniors is to provide services that allow them to stay in their homes and their communities, independent, healthy, and active. Our government has focused efforts on providing a variety of great services to seniors.

Saskatchewan has the lowest per cent of seniors living in low-income situations; completed or is working on 405 new senior housing units; doubled the seniors' income plan benefits and the number of those eligible; 3.5 million for the new personal care home benefit, giving seniors and personal care homes up to \$278 more per month.

The contributions seniors have made to the development and advancement of this province have been enormous and we hope that you will continue to contribute and pass down your knowledge to the upcoming generations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Support for the Film Industry

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday there were over 100 people here from the film industry when the Premier confirmed that many of them would be getting their pink slips. Mr. Speaker, these people were devastated. We've heard many of them say that the type of work that they do and the jobs that they have are not replaceable. They can't go to the oil and gas industry or the potash industry to get another job. Many of them are left with no option but to sell their houses, uproot their children, and move to another province. My question to the Premier is: why didn't he have the courage to come out and face these people? What kind of leadership does that show?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I welcomed the opportunity, along with the minister, to meet with the association yesterday for some period of time.

We talked about a number of issues, Mr. Speaker.

I did make it clear that in terms of the bidding war that is this film tax grant that happens across the province, across the country . . . And, Mr. Speaker, it is a grant because it doesn't relate at all to taxes paid. It doesn't relate at all to whether or not the taxes are even paid in this province. It's just a large amount of government subsidy that goes to the production of a motion picture. So I indicated that we would not be changing our position with respect to that film tax grant, Mr. Speaker.

We also indicated that there were other things we might be able to work on, including making that tax credit a non-refundable tax credit. We did that in the budget and in other areas on the innovation side and even with the graduate retention program, Mr. Speaker. It's better policy. It means that taxpayers aren't then in a bidding war for any particular economic development.

Mr. Speaker, the industry asked for an extension of the deadline in terms of applications for the program, indicating that they're in the middle of an important season in the industry. I can tell this House, Mr. Speaker, that I talked to, I talked to the head of the association just moments before the legislature, and we've issued a press release indicating that the government's prepared to extend till June 30th, which was their request, the opportunities for applications, and then work for other measures, work on other measures to support the industry. But we are not in the bidding war any longer, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people like to be recognized on the national stage. We take great pride in our economy, our culture, and our province. The Premier's got millions of dollars for three more politicians, but he doesn't have money for an industry that returns millions of dollars to this province each year in jobs and economic spinoffs.

Mr. Speaker, once again Saskatchewan is on the national stage, but for the wrong reason. People around the country don't understand the Premier's decision to cut the legs out from under the film industry. He's made a little bit of a change today. But my question to the Premier is this, Mr. Speaker: is he proud of the national attention he has brought to Saskatchewan by this attack on the film industry?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, first of all — we hear members say this time and time again — there will not be millions of dollars. There will not be one additional dollar over and above the Legislative Assembly budget of this province for any new members of this legislature which may come as a result of the redrawing of the boundaries — something that the Deputy Leader of the NDP [New Democratic Party] supports, by the way. The Deputy Leader of the NDP supports this decision for new MLAs, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll answer the member's question. Right now this province is known across this country, across North America, and in parts of the world, frankly, for something that is very unique in the world today — a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we have a master of spin; there's no question about that. But the Premier has heard from people inside and outside the film industry saying they don't understand his decision. It makes no sense. It makes no sense from a common sense, Saskatchewan perspective. Having a form of tax credit in the film industry is the way this industry works across North America. Not only does the tax credit make sense; it makes millions for our communities. Will the Premier reverse his decision and reinstate the tax credit?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we're talking about a grant here. That's what this is. It doesn't relate at all to taxes paid in the province of Saskatchewan. What we're prepared to do with the industry, and we indicated that to Mr. Goetz and the association, is work on a tax credit that's based on businesses in this province, film producers in this province — and there's a number of them, and they're valued — and that we would be able to reduce the taxes paid in this province as an incentive for that kind of investment in Saskatchewan. At the heart of the hon. member's question is, well everybody else is doing this; everyone else is in this bidding war with taxpayers' money; everyone else is offering these grants. Everyone else has a deficit budget, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government made it clear on budget day, and the Premier confirmed yesterday, that they are in fact gutting an entire industry in our province by eliminating this film tax credit. When it comes to this decision, ideology has trumped common sense. Norm Bolen of the Canadian Media Production Association had this to say following the meeting with the Premier: "How do you function in a competitive environment if you have chosen to no longer be competitive?" Even Great Britain's Conservative government introduced, just last week, a new tax credit for this industry there to be competitive.

To the Premier: how can he justify simply using ideology when making a decision that has a negative impact on the lives of thousands of people in Saskatchewan, jobs in Saskatchewan, and economic development in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We welcome the member's question as always. Mr. Speaker, as we've said in the House before, no one is denying the fact that the film industry creates economic activity. Every industry does that. And no one certainly is denying the fact that the film industry creates unemployment, or employment. Every industry does that too.

Mr. Speaker, here is the central question: do we put more and more and more tax dollars into this industry and subsidize it at an ever higher rate when we are also being asked to deal with issues like affordable housing, like child care spaces, like

autism funding, like cancer treatment, like surgical wait times and building schools, hospitals, and highways? Mr. Speaker, we determined that we couldn't do all of that within our balanced budget, and that's why we are winding down the FETC [film employment tax credit] program and are working with the industry members to look at creative alternatives.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After yesterday, the Premier has people in the film and television industry hanging their hats on a slim hope that this government will come up with something effective to replace the existing tax credit. He and his government sold off SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network] two years ago to the detriment of this industry. After a negative backlash, the government convened a task force to find ways to assist the industry to remain competitive. This task force involved months of work by those in the film industry working alongside representatives of government.

The Premier said yesterday his government is willing to work with the industry — and he said that again today — to come up with solutions. But the task force worked for months on solutions that have been sitting on a shelf since 2010. To the Premier: he didn't listen to the expertise from the industry then. Why should anyone believe he is going to listen to them now, at the 11th hour?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Speaker, the first thing that we need to clarify is that the task force specifically advised us to concentrate on Saskatchewan companies, and that's exactly what we're doing here. Mr. Speaker, in addition to all of the investments to the film employment tax credit program, we must also mention that another \$110 million has been provided in other direct subsidies to the sound stage, to SaskFilm, to cultural programs provided by SaskCulture and the Saskatchewan Arts Board.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's a grand total of \$210 million. That's a lot of public investment. And despite the very best efforts of the industry — and they have been best efforts — the industry is collapsing dramatically. Production volume is down 70 per cent in the last five years. Employment is down almost 55 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, once again the central question we had to ask ourselves as a government is: do we enter into a bidding war with other provinces or do we reallocate scarce resources to other priorities and look for creative alternatives? We're looking for creative alternatives.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've heard from the Premier today that he's willing to extend the tax credit until June. But he said his government might come up with some kind of mystical replacement to the tax credits. But many in the film and television industry are still on tenterhooks. He's put off

the stay of execution for this industry, for this entire industry until June. So to the Premier: what is his plan to work with the industry, and when will he get down to work?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A brief answer to a brief question indeed. The work starts today. We had the meeting with the industry representatives yesterday. As we said, it was a productive meeting. It was a very positive meeting. I want to take this moment to, an opportunity to thank Mr. Ron Goetz and the members of the industry for their time and for their insight. It was very helpful indeed.

We are in fact retiring the old grant program. The Premier was very clear, very firm. The industry understands this, Mr. Speaker. They have already absorbed that message. They're already looking for creative alternatives. That's exactly the creative environment that we've established here, Mr. Speaker. We look forward to those discussions with real enthusiasm. We're looking for results.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier did not face the people who were here in the legislature yesterday. But surely you've seen the thousands of comments on petitions, on Twitter, on Facebook pages, and in every news report. Yesterday he asked people affected by this cut to be patient. Should people wait a few days before they continue to plan their future? Should they wait a few months? Should they wait a year? Or should people feel confident that they can spend their lives here in Saskatchewan continuing to build a career that they've already worked so hard to achieve? To the Premier, a simple question: do these people have a future here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — A brief answer to that question, Mr. Speaker. Of course they have a future in Saskatchewan, and we'll find more about the detail in three months time. Thank you.

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

Resources for Economic Development

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last year the Sask Party government provided about \$4 million a year to 16 enterprise regions throughout Saskatchewan. As we found out in last week's budget, the funding has been pulled. People across Saskatchewan changed their lives to implement the Premier's pet project, and now this government is abandoning this system and we have to go back to where we were.

Mr. Speaker, some regions are faced with paying out employees and closing offices, and that certainly wasn't what people in

Saskatchewan thought was coming. Mr. Speaker, we have instead more politicians and fewer economic development officers. To the minister: why is he cutting the Sask Party pet project?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We've been, as a government, very clear that we believe local economic development is best handled at the local level. And, Mr. Speaker, these enterprise regions belong to the local level. They're governed by local boards. These regions can continue if the municipalities see that to be the appropriate response. We've increased revenue sharing to municipalities by nearly \$21 million this year alone, Mr. Speaker, next year increasing by a further \$35 million. The resources are very much there for these enterprises to go forward, and we look forward to working with them in the future.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, this kind of answer is nonsensical in the sense that they're kindly off-loading to the municipalities. And it's just a prime example of how this government really does do the spin of off-loading responsibilities, giving in one hand and taking twice with the other.

Mr. Speaker, local municipalities worked in partnership with the province to reach regional economic development goals, but now they're being told the province wants nothing to do with them. And not only that, Mr. Speaker; it's pulled millions of funding from the regions to do their work.

To the minister: why did this government waste millions in setting up these regions only to spend more on closing them?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The premise of the member's question is simply wrong. The revenue increase to municipalities by this government has been over 100 per cent in the last four years. In 2007, transfers to municipal governments were \$127 million; today, \$237 million. The resources accorded to local government are at the highest level that we have ever seen. And what do we hear from the members opposite, from the Leader of the Opposition in fact, Mr. Speaker, who said we should cut more money from the municipalities.

[14:15]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I know this minister loves to recite the numbers, but it's cold comfort to families that have moved and are now looking at their future and what are they going to do. And what does he do? Just recite these stats.

But this is what Paul Martin, this is what Paul Martin had to say, News Talk radio's business commentator. And I quote, "I think that's probably going to . . ." And I quote:

I think that's probably going to leave some noses out of joint in the countryside, people who have said, okay we changed our lives to meet your system and now you're abandoning the system and we have to go back to where we were.

Mr. Speaker, this failed pet project is a costly step back for the people of Saskatchewan.

To the minister: will this government apologize for wasting millions on reorganizing these REDAs [regional economic development authority] into enterprise regions and admit this flagship government program is a failure?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we've been very clear that we believe that local economic development is best handled at the local level. We're going to be focusing our resources at the national and international level. For that reason, we've increased funding to STEP [Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership] by nearly, by \$500,000 next year, Mr. Speaker.

Our government's moving forward, pursuing innovation. And this member wants to talk about the economy, Mr. Speaker. The economy of this province has never been better. We have the highest population we've ever had, 1.067 million people. We're projected to lead Canada by almost every private sector forecaster in GDP [gross domestic product] growth, in economic growth, in job growth, in job creation.

Mr. Speaker, people are moving back to Saskatchewan after years of our young people being chased away by the members opposite. Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to focus on what is the appropriate role of the provincial government and we're going to continue to move Saskatchewan forward.

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

Mr. Forbes: — I think this is an interesting answer, Mr. Speaker, that the minister now is talking about his national, international plans. But this is cold comfort to some of the small communities, mid-sized towns throughout the province who put a lot of work into these enterprise zones in the belief that the government would be there for them. And now they're left high and dry and they're being off-loaded with expenses. There are a lot of work to do in municipalities, including infrastructure, making our roads better. But this government has decided instead that they would set the agenda.

Mr. Speaker, I ask again: will this government apologize for setting up the local communities for failure? Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again the premise of the member's question is just plain wrong. The massive transfers in revenues to municipal governments has been over 100 per cent in the last four years, Mr. Speaker.

There are incredible resources for municipal governments to

focus on local economic development and make those decisions locally, Mr. Speaker. I believe local communities have a much better sense of how to move forward with local decisions than do bureaucrats here in Regina. And for that reason, Mr. Speaker, we've increased the resources to municipalities and allowing them to take the lead on local economic development. That's just the right approach.

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

Provincial Budget

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, not only do the choices of this government not add up or make sense. Neither does its budget. The Sask Party's once again trying to play budgetary games with Saskatchewan people. For one, they've been overly optimistic on potash revenues. We've seen this before. We've seen how it turned out and it wasn't pretty.

For two, they've used some creative accounting in health and education capital to mask a few numbers, trying to make the numbers work on paper, Mr. Speaker.

For three, they've moved \$100 million of public debt on to the books of universities, Mr. Speaker. They did this so they could explicitly hide the deficit that they are managing.

Mr. Speaker, why won't this Minister of Finance come clean with the people of Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, there are some numbers that are crystal clear to the people of this province. For the first time in the province's history, this province has a AAA credit rating while jurisdictions across the world are struggling. Mr. Speaker, what we know, Mr. Speaker, is this government has paid down about 44 per cent of the debt, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's more than \$3 billion, Mr. Speaker. What that means, Mr. Speaker, is that since the day that we had the opportunity to form government under the leadership of our Premier, we are saving taxpayers about \$160 million in interest payments on the debt, Mr. Speaker.

Those are numbers that the people of this province can bank on. And, Mr. Speaker, they can bank on having the highest number of people working for the month of February, the highest number of people working full-time for the month of February. And they can bank on this government making sure that we're dealing with the financial situations and conditions of this province with a great degree of fiscal probity.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, maybe the minister didn't hear. We're speaking about budgetary balance or the lack thereof, Mr. Speaker. A deficit budget is one where the expenses are higher than the revenues. Based on the government's own documents, our debt is projected to rise by well over \$1 billion in this year alone, and will continue to rise over the next four years. In fact, there is no plan for debt repayment in the budget documents, despite the fact that they

promised to do so in the election. That's using their documents, Mr. Speaker. That's why it's not surprising but certainly disappointing, this government has changed accounting and punted public debt on to the books of universities. They want to try and mask their deficit once again.

To the minister: why won't he be straight with Saskatchewan people? What's he afraid of?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, what we've seen in recent days is this government table yet again another balanced budget on behalf of the people of this province. In fact, Mr. Speaker, TD Economics offered this:

Overall, the tone being struck this year is of careful management of public finances notwithstanding the province's enviable prosperity. Potentially Saskatchewan's projected surplus of \$47 million . . . could turn out to be Canada's only provincial surplus in the year ahead.

Mr. Speaker, the quote continues, "Although Saskatchewan is facing more prosperous economic times than most of its provincial counterparts, the budget reaffirmed its focus on sound fiscal management." Mr. Speaker, that's the theme that we're going to stay with on behalf of the people of this province.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, one thing's for sure: this government sticks to their lines. They don't let reality or facts stand in their way. They stick to their lines. But despite sticking to this slick public relations line of budgetary balance each and every budget, their record actually stands in the way. Verified by the auditor, the story is something very different.

For three consecutive years, it's been deficit followed by deficit followed by deficit. And that's in good economic times, Mr. Speaker. In 2009-10, a deficit of 173 million. In 2010-11, a deficit of 145 million. In 2011 and '12, the current fiscal year that we're just coming to a close, the deficit exceeds well over \$300 million. These aren't my numbers, Mr. Speaker. They're the Provincial Auditor's numbers, Mr. Speaker, from her reports.

Mr. Speaker, why won't this minister simply level with Saskatchewan people and admit sadly that this will be the fourth consecutive deficit budget from this government?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, there is one deficit in the House and that's a logic deficit on the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they began question period by asking for more spending, Mr. Speaker. They continued by more spending, Mr. Speaker.

What we have, Mr. Speaker, is TD Economics, CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce], BMO [Bank of

Montreal], all coming forward and praising the prudence of this Saskatchewan Party's government, Mr. Speaker, and the leadership of our Premier and our Finance minister.

Mr. Speaker, you want facts and figures. Manufacturing shipments are up 17.7 per cent, Mr. Speaker. The retail trade is up, Mr. Speaker. Wholesale trade is up, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is an economic leader, Mr. Speaker, and the key reason for that is fiscal probity and the balanced budget that was just delivered.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's clear the minister in no way wants to touch the question or in no way does his answer reflect the facts as the Provincial Auditor puts forward. And clearly evidenced here again today, this government's choices simply don't add up: the mismanagement of Enterprise Saskatchewan, the disastrous cuts to the film industry, and the budget itself and the accounting and PR [public relations] games, Mr. Speaker, its choice to spend millions to increase the number of politicians, doing so on the backs of seniors and families.

Mr. Speaker, it isn't fair, it doesn't add up, and it doesn't make sense. Mr. Speaker, why are this government's priorities so messed up?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, what we saw in November was a party addicted to spending promises, Mr. Speaker. And every day, Mr. Speaker, we were out listening to people. And, Mr. Speaker, people made it clear: make sure that you continue to manage the province's finances with great probity and responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

On the details regarding the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker, I will offer this from December 8th, 2011, Mr. Speaker. Here's a press release from the auditor, and it says, "The auditor has given these statements a clean audit opinion." Mr. Speaker, straight from the auditor, Mr. Speaker.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Funding Increased for People With Intellectual Disabilities

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pride that I rise in the House today to talk about a very important announcement that will improve the lives of Saskatchewan people with intellectual disabilities. I was pleased to introduce two women in the legislature today who are part of a group of people who are making a difference to people with intellectual disabilities.

Today I am proud to announce that on May the 1st, the Government of Saskatchewan will provide approved private service homes and mental health approved homes with an 11.6 per cent increase in their funding. This enhancement will

provide \$1.75 million annually and an increase in the following years.

Saskatchewan Approved Private Homes Inc., that represent both mental health homes and community living homes, will receive annualized resources of \$150,000 starting in year 2012-13 to ensure the delivery of enhancements to the approved private home sector.

This investment builds on our government's four-year commitment to eliminate the wait-list of 440 Saskatchewan people with intellectual disabilities who will require services and programs. By the end of 2012, services for 373 people, or 85 per cent of the wait-list, will be in place or in development across our province.

These funds will help ensure that our most vulnerable citizens continue to receive the services they require in the community where they live and help make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for people to live with disabilities.

The homes that are provided are so much more than just food and shelter. They are places where people share their love, where they support each other. They provide refuge and security and offering opportunities to learn and grow. They're more than just homes; they are families.

I want to thank Bev for the hospitality in her home and Iris for introducing her two sons to us today. And I want to thank the 400 homes right across our province that take care of 1,500 individuals with intellectual disabilities. We can't do it without you.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone across the province who have opened their hearts and their homes to the people with intellectual disabilities. As we go forward as a province, we'll be working closely with the Saskatchewan Approved Private Homes Inc. to work towards a goal of making Saskatchewan the best place to live for everyone in the province, including those with disabilities. Thank you.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank the minister for sharing a copy of her remarks before the House sat, and I do appreciate that. And I want to join in in saying, this is a good news announcement. This is very good. We appreciate the attention that is on this initiative, that it's an important one. And of course we all want to think of Saskatchewan as the best place that people with disabilities, particularly with intellectual disabilities, find Saskatchewan the best place to live. So this is good news.

I won't go on long, but I just want to say that the enthusiasm, the commitment this government has taken to eliminate the wait-list of 440 Saskatchewan people with intellectual disabilities, we'd like to see that taken on in terms of other housing initiatives. We have agreed with this. And quite often the government will use a benchmark system, and we think that's a good idea. But we know there are other wait-lists involving affordable housing, particularly for seniors and those on social housing, that we think should be in place as well.

So with that, again we would echo the thank you to the people in the gallery and to people who have made this responsible. 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 249 through 294.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled responses to questions 249 to 294.

[14:30]

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

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

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

Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. It's indeed a pleasure today to join into the debate on this balanced budget that was tabled by the Finance minister last Wednesday in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. I believe it's the only balanced budget thus far in Canada and quite likely going to be the only balanced budget in Canada, and one of only three in North America is what I'm told.

Before I begin my remarks on the budget itself, Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge a couple of people up in your gallery that were introduced earlier by the member from Regina Dewdney. And those are my constituency assistants, Ron Naidu and Delsey Roske, who do a great deal of work for me in the constituency office. Of course we have Kristen and Becky there as well, who ably assist the member from Regina Dewdney and the member from Regina Douglas Park who I have the pleasure of sharing a constituency office with here in Regina, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to acknowledge all of them and thank them for the very hard work they do, particularly for me as I've been quite busy lately since the election serving on Treasury Board in the development of this budget. And we couldn't do it without them.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the caucus staff here at the Legislative Building and all of the ministerial staff that work in the various ministers' offices who assist us as private members. Quite often we'll get enquiries or questions or issues come up with constituents, and our constituency

assistants, along with ourselves obviously, work with the caucus staff and with the ministers' offices in answering those questions or helping them out. And they do a terrific job here, and I think we all owe them a round of applause as well, with my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to join in this debate on, as I said earlier, the only balanced budget tabled so far in Canada. I think it's important to acknowledge the fact that this Minister of Finance deserves congratulations on tabling this type of budget in the economic conditions that the entire world is faced with today. I think this budget, Mr. Speaker, I know this budget is fiscally responsible and it is targeted to those priorities of our government. And more importantly, Mr. Speaker, it fulfills the campaign promises that we campaigned on last fall during the election.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've been listening to the debate in the Assembly here over the last few days about the budget, and I find it quite interesting, particularly from members of the opposition side, in analyzing the budget and critiquing the budget and criticizing the budget, and I've yet to hear anybody on that side of the Assembly find anything good in this budget, Mr. Speaker, which I find passing strange.

I also heard the member from Saskatoon Massey Place last night as he engaged in this debate, his opening comment was that this government has misplaced priorities with respect to this budget. And, Mr. Speaker, as I review this budget and heard the Minister of Finance deliver it in this Assembly, this budget has record spending in health care, education, highways, social services, and infrastructure renewal, Mr. Speaker. So if those are misplaced priorities, then those are misplaced priorities of the people of Saskatchewan because that's what they voted for last fall, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I also take great pride in the fact that after the election the Premier asked if I would serve on Treasury Board, and I had a front-row seat in the development of this budget. And why I offer congratulations to the Minister of Finance and take my hat off to him is because I don't think the people of Saskatchewan get an opportunity to see how much work goes into the development of a provincial budget. I don't think they get to see how many hours this particular Minister of Finance and his officials in the Ministry of Finance as well as all ministers in the cabinet, Mr. Speaker, and their officials work to put the budget together. I was very fortunate, as I said, to have a front-row seat in watching that develop, and it was a fascinating experience. It was a fascinating experience because you get to see a cross spectrum of all the ministries at work across government, Mr. Speaker.

Now governing is about making choices, and governing is about making some difficult choices, and government is about fulfilling the campaign promises that you ran on as well as ensuring that you're meeting the priorities of the people of this province. In a time of economic upheaval, Mr. Speaker, throughout the entire world, and the probability that every other province in Canada is going to be running massive deficits this year and placing financial burden on future generations, this Finance minister ensured that Saskatchewan stands as a beacon of fiscal prudence and responsibility.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the development of this budget there are a number of components that contributed to it. There is the caucus and what my colleagues in the caucus brought back to the caucus table about what they were hearing in their constituencies and what were the priorities that they heard on the doorstep in the campaign last fall, Mr. Speaker. There were also the campaign promises that the Premier made last fall that the people of this province voted overwhelmingly for.

So when I was going around my constituency, Mr. Speaker, last fall, and over the course of two years before that, I can tell you that the number one issue raised with me on the doorstep was health care. I had many individuals in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, tell me very personal stories with respect to their interactions with our health care system here in Saskatchewan. Some of them were good; some of them not so good. Some of them dealt with family members that were currently going through the health care system. Others dealt with family members who had been through the health care system or their own personal stories and the experience that they had. And I found them compelling stories, Mr. Speaker. And when I asked them, what is it that we should be doing as a government with respect to the health care system, I heard over and over and over again, keep doing what you're doing. Keep reducing the surgical wait times in this province. Keep attracting more doctors to this province. Keep hiring more nurses.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the people on the doorstep tell you that as their number one priority, I think it's important that that get integrated into a provincial budget to address those issues. So in response to those kinds of comments and concerns, Mr. Speaker, our government responded by some of the following initiatives within the health care budget. And I think it's important to have this on the record because I hear a lot of flourishes of rhetoric from members opposite as to the budget cut this and the budget cut that and it doesn't do enough here and it doesn't do enough there and that.

But what are we really talking about, Mr. Speaker? We're talking about targeted funds to programs that help those in society that are our priorities as a government, including committing \$60.5 million for the Saskatchewan surgical initiative. Now, Mr. Speaker, this money will allow us to perform 8,000 more surgeries this year than would have been done in the year prior to the surgical initiative being launched. This surgical initiative, Mr. Speaker, will allow us to stay on track to reducing wait times to no more than three months by the year 2014, a target the Premier and the Minister of Health have set out and we're determined to keep.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also set out \$4 million to expand the colorectal screening program province-wide. We saw an announcement by the Minister of Health the other day, I think it was yesterday, and it's being lauded across the entire province by those in that profession — the oncologists and those that work in cancer across the province, Mr. Speaker — as a visionary decision on the part of this government.

In this budget, the Minister of Finance also allocated \$5.5 million to implement and get off the ground, literally get off the ground, the STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] helicopter ambulance program, Mr. Speaker. Now I note when that program was announced, I wasn't a member of this

Assembly, but I do note the opposition's reaction to it and they basically scoffed at it, Mr. Speaker. They said it was a pipe dream. They said it wasn't even necessary. They said it would never happen. And this budget has five and a half million dollars in it to ensure that that program takes off.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also allocates \$17 million in an increase to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency which will fund new patient referrals, chemotherapy treatments, and mammograms.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if those are misplaced priorities, I don't know what priorities the government should have with respect to their health care budget. We have over \$10 million to continue the government's commitment to expanding the registered nurse training program by 170 seats, the very things the people on the doorsteps told me in Regina Northeast: get more nurses to work here in the province. And following through on our campaign commitment to forgive up to \$120,000 in student loans for new doctors and \$20,000 for new nurses, these are the priorities that the people of Regina Northeast spoke about when we talked about health care, Mr. Speaker. And I believe this Minister of Finance and this Premier have responded in spades.

Mr. Speaker, the second issue that I heard about most often on the doorsteps was that our government should continue to support those most vulnerable in our society, particularly people with disabilities, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, and low-income seniors.

Mr. Speaker, this Premier and this Minister of Finance with this budget spoke directly to those concerns with initiatives such as expanding the Saskatchewan assured income for disability eligibility so that the number of clients will rise from 3,000 to 10,000 adults this year, and benefits will increase by \$200 a month beginning in July and rising to an increase of \$350 a month four years out.

Mr. Speaker, we also increased the seniors' personal care home benefit by \$278 a month, and that will rise to an increase of \$369 a month by our fourth year. Now these don't get a lot of headlines, Mr. Speaker, but they make the world of difference for the people that it directly impacts.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we also . . . And this one I know gets under the skin of the members opposite because for 16 years they didn't touch this, and I heard about this on the doorstep, Mr. Speaker, the seniors' income plan. Not only did the government double it in its first mandate, but during this term we're increasing the seniors' income plan by \$50 a month this July and rising by \$10 a month over the next three years.

And, Mr. Speaker, new funding for the children and youth agenda, including new monies for enhancing the autism spectrum disorder therapies and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Mr. Speaker, the third area that I heard about the most on the doorstep from the constituents of Regina Northeast was in the area of continuing to build our highways, repair our existing highways, and invest in our infrastructure here in the province. In response to that, Mr. Speaker, well over half a billion dollars has been allocated in this budget for new highways and in

excess of a quarter of a billion dollars in unrestricted transfers to municipalities throughout the province. This translates, Mr. Speaker, into a 133 per cent increase in funding for the city of Regina since this Premier was elected in 2007.

Now, Mr. Speaker, those were the priorities, the top priorities I heard about on the doorstep when I was campaigning in Regina Northeast. And the people of Regina spoke loud and clear in that particular election. Prior to the election on November 7th, of the 11 seats in Regina, the NDP held eight and the government held three. And after the election, the government held eight and the NDP held three. And it's because, Mr. Speaker, I think the members opposite forgot about the priorities of the people of Saskatchewan. They became misaligned with them, Mr. Speaker.

And when I look at the members opposite criticizing the government, criticizing the budget, offering their critiques and never offering anything as an alternative to what they would do with this budget, Mr. Speaker, I find that passing strange. So the only thing I can go on is to think about with respect to what their platform document said last fall and where their spending priorities were if they were government. Now I know they've ran away from that platform as fast and as quickly as they possibly could, and they don't want to talk about it any more, Mr. Speaker. But it's instructive. It's instructive to the people of Saskatchewan to understand, what would the NDP do if they were government and they had controls of the purse strings in this province, Mr. Speaker?

So I wanted to make sure that I got their platform correct, and I went back to the website and had a look at it. And I find it, on the first page, rather interesting when they had announced their platform, Mr. Speaker, that they were going to review potash royalties to ensure Saskatchewan people get their fair share of revenues. Review potash royalties. And what do we see a couple of weeks after they launched their platform? They weren't just going to review potash royalties, Mr. Speaker. They were doubling the tax on the potash industry. As Mr. Lingenfelter said time and time again, it's only a nickel. It's a nickel to a dime. Now the people of Saskatchewan know that, Mr. Speaker. That's a 100 per cent increase on the taxes on the potash industry in this province.

They further went on to say that the NDP's platform is fully costed, affordable for Saskatchewan, and will not increase taxes for any citizen in the province. It includes a plan to pay down debt, save for the future using the innovative Bright Futures Fund, and address much needed infrastructure repairs including fixing highways and helping municipalities with water, sewer, and recycling services. Sounds kind of familiar, Mr. Speaker.

And then I went to their actual platform document because I thought there's some good ideas in there, and I'm sure that they — because it says it's fully costed out — I'm sure they were going to want to show the people of Saskatchewan exactly how much that's going to cost. So we looked at the promise for resource revenue sharing with First Nations in the province. No costing for that in the platform, Mr. Speaker. No idea how much that was going to cost the people of Saskatchewan. It was a promise made up on the back of a napkin as the leader of the opposition went into a First Nations community because it was the announcement of the day, Mr. Speaker.

They were going to twin the highway from Yorkton to Balgonie, estimated cost \$200 million. Not in the platform. Nowhere in the platform, Mr. Speaker, and no costing for it. Then they were going to twin the highway, Highways 6 and 39, from Regina to the US border, estimated cost \$250 million. Not in the platform. No costing of that. No idea where they were going to pay for it, Mr. Speaker.

Oh and then the trip to Prince Albert. And I remember the member for Regina Rosemont, Mr. Speaker — the Finance critic who was the financial architect of their platform last fall and who would be the de facto Finance minister had they won the election, Mr. Speaker — standing shoulder to shoulder with the then opposition leader in every camera shot he got at every announcement, two, three times a day here in Regina, Mr. Speaker, announcing all of these different programs with no costing to them whatsoever and no idea how they were going to pay for them. They went up to Prince Albert and announced a new bridge for the city of Prince Albert, estimated cost \$50 million. Nowhere in the platform, Mr. Speaker, no costing of it.

They announced a 400-megawatt wind farm, Mr. Speaker — I had a little experience at SaskPower looking at the costs of these kinds of projects — estimated cost approximately \$500 million. No budget for that. No budget for that. That one was mentioned in the platform, Mr. Speaker, surprisingly, but there was no budget for it and no word to the people of this province what their electricity utility rates would be had they gone ahead with a 400-megawatt wind farm, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

So then I look at, going back to their platform document, we are going to include fixing highways and helping municipalities with water, sewer, and recycling services. And shortly after the budget was brought down last week, Mr. Speaker . . . What's their true agenda? What do we really know what the NDP was going to do had they formed government?

A reporter asked the Leader of the Opposition — and I don't think his caucus colleagues knew he was doing this interview or what he said that morning because I recall question period, and they were rather shocked at what he said, Mr. Speaker — the reporter says, okay, so if there's more money needed for Saskatchewan filmmakers, where would the money come from out of the budget, in your mind? And the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, said, "well practically," and I quote:

Well practically there are a number of areas where they could have left money for films. And one of the things they could have done is look at some of the initiatives around agriculture and look at some of the things they've done for municipalities.

In the 1990s, Mr. Speaker, that party turned their backs on rural Saskatchewan, and it cost them every seat in rural Saskatchewan. In the 2007 election, Mr. Speaker, seniors and the youth of this province figured out that they don't stand for them. They don't speak for them. And when I was campaigning, Mr. Speaker, in 2011, what the people told me on the doorstep is that they haven't got clue one what they're doing with respect to fiscal responsibility. They got into a bidding war here with respect to every announcement every

single day, two or three times a day, Mr. Speaker, worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and no idea how to pay for it.

So they said to me, Mr. Speaker, on the doorstep, we want a steady hand on the till. We want a responsible government that looks at our finances and manages them in a responsible and fiscally prudent way. And that's what they voted for, Mr. Speaker. So as I look at what the three priority areas were for my constituency, what my constituents indicated to me, we had funded those things in spades in this budget, Mr. Speaker. We have addressed those priorities. We have fulfilled campaign platform commitments, and we have not recklessly spent our children's future like other provinces are doing right now.

And the one thing, Mr. Speaker, I notice no one has talked about yet with respect to this budget — not a single tax increase. There's no tax increases in this budget, Mr. Speaker. We campaigned on not raising taxes, paying down debt, and funding the priorities of the people of Saskatchewan. And we'll do it in a balanced fashion, Mr. Speaker. And that's exactly what this Minister of Finance delivered last Wednesday during the budget. So, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment put forward by the opposition, and I will be supporting the main motion as put forward by the Minister of Finance. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the debate today. I say a pleasure intentionally because of course it's a real privilege and an honour that is entailed in this job that we've been given by the people in each of our own respective constituencies. And it's something that we shouldn't take lightly, Mr. Speaker, and I know that I don't. I know that I'm very grateful for the support that has been given me by the people in Regina Elphinstone-Centre and that I'm very humbled by the trust that they have extended me in a number of elections now. And that the job that they have given to myself and to members of the opposition, one of the things we've got squarely in front of us, Mr. Speaker, is to keep, this government, their feet to the fire, to hold this government to account.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we just had an election, and the people spoke very clearly in that election. And they built this House, Mr. Speaker. And I guess I recognize that, and I respect that as a democrat, and I respect that as someone who feels quite blessed to live in the parliamentary democracy, to live in the free and open society that we live in, Mr. Speaker. And I'm also very aware that the cost of that is eternal vigilance and that, in terms of gainsaying and securing those freedoms and fighting for those freedoms, there is a role in that, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the work of the opposition in holding the government of the day to account.

And again that time will come when we put that alternative before the people of Saskatchewan in terms of how we think we can respond better to the hopes and dreams of Saskatchewan people. But there is a certain recognition, obviously, that members opposite have a mandate. And that is to be respected, and that should serve as the basis for holding them to account.

So I guess that informs my perspective, Mr. Speaker, in what I'll be saying in my remarks today in this budget speech debate.

I guess before I get too far into that, I do want to say, as others have in this debate, a word of thanks to family and friends, to supporters, and to the people in Regina Elphinstone-Centre, the people that help me to do the work that I have set before me. I want to thank the folks in the different critic areas that I have the privilege to represent and to try and seek better answers and better accountability for the people of Saskatchewan. And that is again something for which I am quite thankful.

I guess the one thing that stood out for me in this budget, Mr. Speaker, is again for 11-plus billion dollars of expenditure for the massive mandate that the members opposite received in the campaign, for the great attention that's been paid over the years to, you know, put forward a platform, put forward lists of ideas, and then the great pride that is taken in checking those off. I think, you know, promises made, promises kept has been a bit of a battle cry over the years for members opposite.

The thing that I found most interesting in this budget were the things that hadn't been campaigned on. And certainly, you know, I go no further than the remarks last night from the member from Cypress Hills, who I consider to be a wise individual, an honourable individual in this Assembly, and I think he brings a lot, I'm sure, to the debates of that caucus and certainly brings a lot to the debates on the floor of this legislature.

But one of the things that I couldn't disagree with him more about was the treatment that he gave the situation around expanding the number of members of the Legislative Assembly, the numbers of politicians by three. And I think, Mr. Speaker, if there had been a . . . That of course is one part of a piece of legislation, Bill No. 36, that was brought forward to change how we build the constituencies in this province, that changes how people get counted in that fundamental element of our electoral system, eliminating everyone under the age of 18 in terms of the purposes of how we count for the building of constituencies.

That was one part of Bill 36, but the other part was the question of adding three additional politicians. And the member from Cypress Hills, being the wise, insightful individual that he is, offered up a number of reasons as to why this was called for. And I think that begs the question, Mr. Speaker . . . It's not so much the merits of the measures on the table. One of the things that is indisputable is that that as a proposal was nowhere in the platform of this government when they were on the hustings this past fall.

And again, Mr. Speaker, when you're going after the very rules by which we conduct our elections, after the very basic building blocks of our electoral system, the real bricks and mortar of our democracy as we practice it here in Saskatchewan, if you're going to do something like that, at very least you should talk to the people before you get a mandate to govern. And if you don't have a mandate to do that, Mr. Speaker, and then you foist that on the people instead, that says a lot about the commitment of your party to democracy.

And I've heard different things from members opposite about

how other governments have done this or other people have done this. And I think if that's their defence, Mr. Speaker, that all the other kids are doing it too, or you know, if they're all going to jump off the bridge, I suppose these people would as well, but if that's the defence, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty clear what this is about. And again, there are some thoughtful arguments that can be marshalled about the merits of the proposals of themselves. But what is indefensible, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that this was brought forward after the election without gaining a mandate from the people of Saskatchewan.

Not once did this government come forward to the people of Saskatchewan and say, hey what do you think of three more MLAs? What do you think of discounting everyone under the age of 18 and what that means for the drawing of the electoral boundaries in Saskatchewan? And that's a pretty fundamental question, Mr. Speaker, as to how we conduct elections in this province and as to how a government would govern. And if they hadn't, if they haven't got a mandate to do that, then they shouldn't be surprised when we on the opposition benches say, that is something you didn't campaign on. That's something that you weren't straight with the people of Saskatchewan about, and that is something that we will oppose you on.

And on top of that, Mr. Speaker, you get into the question of, you know, three MLAs, responding to growth and how that does or does not provide for better capacity in the electoral system and on and on. You know, again, fair enough arguments within a fairly isolated sense, Mr. Speaker. But when you put that alongside the fact that this is a government that has campaigned on being ready for growth, but alongside that they're reducing the public services that people count on in so many different ways by 16 per cent. And that's what they like to call, I think in some circles, cognitive dissonance, Mr. Speaker, in terms of you say, we need to cut on the one hand because we're growing on the other, but we won't cut the number of politicians. Oh, and by the way, the one part of the civil service that is exempt from the four-by-four initiative is the Premier's office.

So on a number of fronts, Mr. Speaker, you know, the members opposite, they get up with this hue and cry about, you know, how could you oppose us? And they're so very disappointed in us, and all this and that. Well, Mr. Speaker, we're disappointed in them because we think they should have campaigned on that. If this was such a great idea for them, they should have gone out on the hustings and talked to the people from door to door and said, you know, all those problems that you've got in this province — guess what, we've got an answer, and it's going to be three MLAs coming forward. We think that would have been real interesting to see how that worked out, Mr. Speaker. But what they did instead was come after the election, bringing in a measure that wasn't in the platform, wasn't in the Throne Speech, but gets slid in as a last-minute measure just before Christmas.

And again, Mr. Speaker, this is a measure . . . The members opposite don't like it when we bring it up, but this is something that shows, I think, priorities on the part of that government opposite. And if they've got money for more politicians, if they've got time and effort to devote to messing around with the basic building blocks of our democracy, then we find that — to borrow a phrase from the member from Northeast — we find

that more than just a little passing strange, Mr. Speaker. We find that to be a clear example of misplaced priorities.

Another thing that's interesting, Mr. Speaker, in terms of something that I wish that they would have campaigned on in the campaign, was the fact of the increase that is going forward for the children's and seniors' prescription drug plan and increasing that amount from \$15 to \$20. And that's on a single prescription, Mr. Speaker. And if you've got multi prescriptions and you're on a fixed income, that adds up very quickly. And leaving aside the fact that . . . You know, it gets brought up in this House in some kind of equivalency. They say, yes, we have to make a tough choice on the one hand; but don't worry about it, we're increasing the seniors' income plan on the other, and aren't we great people into the bargain.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, again in terms of the total expenditure involved, for the one hand, the increase that's anticipated for the seniors' income plan, it's \$3 million. But for the tax expenditure involved or the amount of money that's involved in the increase on the prescription drug plan and the way that's going to have grandma and grandpa paying more for their medicine, that's worth \$10 million. So as the Minister of Finance said in the first hours after the budget, this is a government that likes to give on the one hand but take and then take and then take some more on the other.

So again, Mr. Speaker, was that something that they got a mandate from the people to go out and do, in the way that they conduct the finances of this province? It was not. Was that something that was in their platform or was in the Throne Speech? No, it was not. This is something that comes in after the budget. And again they wonder why we have a problem with the way they're conducting their affairs over yonder. Not accountable, and it was nowhere to be seen in the election, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

And I'll tell you this for sure. The seniors that I talk to, and I have a fair contingent of seniors in the fair riding of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, they were quite interested in what the members opposite had to say. They were quite willing to give those members a chance in terms of making their case, and they were interested in some of the measures that were brought forward.

But I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker. They're particularly interested in the fact that after the election, they've now come forward with this measure to stick it to seniors, to make grandma and grandpa, moms and dads, people that have contributed all their lives, this is one way where . . . When that government was saying the only day better in Saskatchewan is tomorrow, well guess what? Tomorrow you're going to be paying extra on your prescription drug plan. And it would have been great if they'd campaigned on that, Mr. Speaker. But that was not the case. So they wonder why we're opposing them on this, Mr. Speaker? That's exactly the kind of reason why we are opposing them.

I think about what happened with the enterprise region and certainly the flagship document that the Premier put out around *The Promise of Saskatchewan*: let's keep it. Enterprise

Saskatchewan was of course one of their flagship entities. And what they did was overlay that on top of the regional economic development authorities. And you know, as my colleague from Saskatoon Centre had pointed out in question period today, citing the remarks of Paul Martin, everybody got to rearrange their lives according to this new way of doing business, and how it was going to get government out of the business of picking winners and losers, and you know, no end of far-flung right wing rhetoric, Mr. Speaker.

But the brass tacks of it, the bottom dollar of it is that this was an idea that took something that was working, jacked it around for a couple of years to a place where it wasn't working. And you know, we talk to business people as well that were quite frustrated with the experience of working with Enterprise Saskatchewan. And they come back and say, well okay, we're going to shut it down; we're going to throw what was good about the REDA system out with the baby with the bath water.

And I guess, you know, they'll talk about increased revenues for the municipalities on the one hand. But this is something that they didn't go out and campaign on at election time and say, guess what, city of Regina? All the good work that you do through the regional opportunities corporation and good folks down at RROC [Regina Regional Opportunities Commission] — who I might add are located in beautiful downtown Regina and part of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, Mr. Speaker — all that good work you do, well it should slide back to the city, and the city's going to have to pick up the dollar, and you're going to have to deal with losing a sizable amount of your budget and figure it out from there.

And this is a group that's done tremendous work around economic development in the Queen City, has a solid track record, and they didn't even warrant consultation on this, Mr. Speaker. This was something where the sector very much felt sucker-punched by this government, where the sector felt like they had been doing things well and in a very successful, productive way. They had been told to reorganize in light of the new sort of buzz phrases and plans of the members opposite and how this was going to be part of the promise of Saskatchewan, and let's keep it. They do all that, Mr. Speaker, and then they get sucker-punched come budget time.

So again, Mr. Speaker, it would've been great if they'd campaigned on that at election time because I think we could've had a real good debate about that, but that was not to be. But what does leave, what is falling to the official opposition is to hold them to account on this measure.

I think about the tourism agency, Mr. Speaker, and the great success that it has had over the years. And alongside that, Mr. Speaker, running parallel is the years and years and years of trash talk I've heard from various other members opposite about Crown corporations. I think one of the greatest ironies in this budget, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that they've rolled it over into a Crown corporation. And it's not because Tourism Saskatchewan was failing. Far from it, Mr. Speaker. And you know, a number of reviews and including various of their own analyses and the cultural paper they put out on the sector, this is an agency that is working and working well. But what seems to be their central motivation, Mr. Speaker, was revealed by the Finance minister when he said this was more about more

closely coordinating the communications activity of Tourism Saskatchewan.

And you know, I guess given the decade-plus worth of rhetoric I've heard from certain of the members opposite about, you know, Big Brother and control and Crown corporations and the dead weight of the public sector and on and on and on, you'd think that they could at least live up to some of their own rhetoric on this front, Mr. Speaker. But that's not the case. They're taking what has been a very successful industry-led partnership with people who know their business best, that has been adjudicated as such not just by, you know, industry participants but by their own sort of policy documents when they like to roll them out, they're taking that and they're rolling it over into a Crown corporation — so what, Mr. Speaker? — so then they can get their hands on the communications dollars and better coordinate the spin.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I think that's something that they should have campaigned on. I think that would have been great to have a real discussion about out there on the hustings, about how you'll take an agency that is working and working well for the province of Saskatchewan, and your main problem with it is that you can't control it enough, that you can't get your hands around its steering wheel hard enough. So again, Mr. Speaker, it would've been good if they come out to the hustings on that. But that was not to be.

The one that I think is most shocking in terms of measures that weren't campaigned on, measures that this government took distinct steps to try and sand down the rough edges of the way they were perceived by the sector and by people when it came to the arts and culture sector in this province, was the film and television industry change that we've seen in this budget, Mr. Speaker.

And again I've not been here as long as some in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, but I've been here for a while — and not pointing any fingers specifically, Mr. Speaker, class of '91. But the thing I want to point out is this. I've been around here long enough to hear from members opposite about the way . . . I've seen them throw stones at the film and television industry and to see them question various of the decisions and investments that were made on what turned out to be a rousing success. And it was with great interest that I watched, after the 2003 election in particular, Mr. Speaker, the way that members opposite under their then new leader, now the Premier of the province, went about trying to set out this narrative of no, no, no, we're not . . . We're not threatening people. We're very nice. We understand the creative economy. We understand the contribution that arts make to the economy. And you know, this is an industry that, since 1998 with \$100 million in the tax credit, has returned six times that, Mr. Speaker — more than six times that — \$623 million worth of economic activity.

So the members opposite had sort of come around to at least sort of soft-peddalling their arguments around how this was all a bad thing, and in fact you know, seemed to really take on a real liking for the industry. And when it came time for cameo appearances on *Corner Gas*, Mr. Speaker, you know, you couldn't beat them away with a stick over there. They were real excited to come on down and get shined up and, you know, jump on the bandwagon. And I guess that's, you know . . .

Having seen some of the history play out, Mr. Speaker, that kind of makes you a bit sick. But you know, at least it seemed to indicate some kind of evolution on the part of the thinking of members opposite, some kind of recognition of the facts, that the film and television industry provided good jobs for a lot of creative people that we want very badly in this economy. It provided economic benefit, much more than that 1 to 6 ratio that I've talked about in terms of the great sort of spinoff involved.

But I guess, Mr. Speaker, the chickens come home to roost in this budget where, you know, we'd seen them make the move on SCN, which again was characterized as cutting off an arm of the industry, to moving to the budget, where they moved to cut off the head of the industry. And the thousands of people who have signed the online petition and what they have to say, it's worth going through those comments, Mr. Speaker, to see what those folks have to say.

And there's some very wise counsel offered up in the *Leader-Post* this morning, Mr. Speaker, by columnist Murray Mandryk about the need for the Premier of this province to listen to what people in that industry are having to say. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, I'm skeptical obviously because I've seen some of the history for various of the members opposite when it comes to the film and television industry. There's a hostility to it that I don't quite understand. There's a willingness to ignore the way that the studies keep coming in about the financial returns on it. There's a willingness to do something like SCN and then, as a sop, promise a task force that takes months and months of people's time and gets them involved and builds some kind of sense of hope only to come back around to the measure in this budget with the film tax credit, the film employment tax credit.

And again, Mr. Speaker, if you . . . There's an adage that I often think of in political life wherein with reasonable people, you can reason. And in the case of this measure, Mr. Speaker, I think there's nothing, nothing more plain than just the sort of hostility that has been allowed to bubble up after years that I remember quite well. But the way that members opposite had campaigned and sort of tried to present a sense of the illusion of moderate, thoughtful, culture-sector-friendly government and on this one decision, Mr. Speaker, reveal what was really at hand.

And again, I don't entirely understand what's happened here, but it doesn't make sense on the facts. It doesn't make sense on the economic analysis. It doesn't make sense in terms of the way that members opposite went out on the hustings in the last campaign, you know, for years before that liked to shine up the set of *Corner Gas* and cameos and all of that. All of that doesn't make sense, but we're left with a situation where an industry has been dealt with by what some characterize as a death blow, and this measure consisting of cutting the head off the industry and the thousands of people who will be sent from this province.

And I urge the members opposite to look at the facts and look at the . . . listen with your ears open to the people and find a way to make this work. Because this is an industry that's been built up over many years and has had a lot of people devote a lot of sweat, blood, and tears to it, Mr. Speaker and that tells the

Saskatchewan story so very well. That gives us something to be proud of in this province, that helps us to, of all those things we have to be proud of in this province, Mr. Speaker, that helps us to tell that story to the world.

And again, Mr. Speaker, if they didn't campaign on it, how the heck does it . . . And not only that, Mr. Speaker, not only did they not campaign on this, they sent people out for a task force and said, we're going to listen to you. So we're skeptical about this stay of execution that has been provided to the sector by members opposite. But I — and maybe this is naive of me, Mr. Speaker — but I hope that the members will look at the facts. They'll do the analysis. They'll talk to people in the industry. They'll talk to people around Canada, and they'll get over their ideological blinders and make a common sense decision on this and make a sense, make a decision that works for the people of Saskatchewan.

So for all of those reasons, Mr. Speaker, there are other things that I can say about different issues that I have with this budget, but I think that's where it does get summed up in the amendments, Mr. Speaker.

And again, you know, some of the members opposite have complained that we haven't been balanced enough in our commentary or that they get very angry and they shout and yell about, you know, why aren't you happier with us and pleasing us and why aren't you saying nice things. And they're doing this in sort of a shouting tone, Mr. Speaker. But you know, that's how some of the folks over there do business.

But I do want to point out some things that I think are valuable initiatives in this budget that I like to, that I hope will have a positive impact on people's lives, that I am glad to see in this budget. And again, particularly under the better access to health care segment of this budget, I am very interested to see what impact the increase in funding to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency fulfills. And again I think, I think as we all know in this House, Mr. Speaker, cancer touches so many lives in so many terrible ways in this province. And I have so much admiration for the people that join that battle with such a terrible disease and the dignity and the determination with which people make that fight. And I guess any time that we as a government can come together and help people that need that help, I think that's a good thing to see.

[15:15]

And I think we're all reminded of that in various ways in this very Chamber today, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the different sort of challenges that even members in this Legislative Assembly have had put in their way as of this minute. And I guess I don't want to get preoccupied about that, Mr. Speaker, but I think that's representative of the way that cancer touches lives right across this province. So in terms of seeing the dollars put forward for the cancer fight, I think that's a particularly important expenditure of the public purse, and I'm glad to see it.

We're very interested to see how the surgical care initiative works out. We hope that the way that the headlines are being written matches up with the story on the ground, but again that's an expenditure that we're glad to see in the budget.

I'm glad to see that there's continued progress on the Saskatchewan assured income for disability eligibility. I do think that's an important measure, Mr. Speaker. And certainly earlier today, one of the individuals that was introduced around the care home announcement, Bev Duncan, before she'd gone on to this aspect of her career, had done tremendous work over years with the Saskatchewan Voice of People with Disabilities and, you know, for me has been a very valuable sort of teacher on these issues. And I know that those are people that we'll be looking to hear how this is working out on the ground. But the way it appears on the face of it, Mr. Speaker, this appears to be a good measure, and I'm glad to see it in the budget.

The child and youth agenda, again I think those are incredibly important dollars to be put forward in this budget. We're glad to see those, the work that continues on. Again the minister's introducing Mr. Mark Fox and the folks from FoxValley the other day when they were here at the Legislature, we're very interested to see how that work carries on on the ground. But again on the face of it, it would seem to be a good expenditure. The autism spectrum disorder therapies, additional investment there. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, we're glad to see those expenditures.

Something I'm particularly interested in seeing how it works out, given where I come from, Mr. Speaker, is the Community Mobilization project in Prince Albert. I'm interested to see how this investment does in fact bolster and improve what seems to be on the face of it some pretty promising work.

I guess the one beef I would have with it is that in the inner city of Regina we've had some very good work done over the years with the inner city community partnership. So not to be too much on the, well what about the inner city community partnership in Regina, but what about the inner city community partnership in Regina, Mr. Speaker?

This is something that brought together the community and the three levels of government and made some very significant progress on a number of fronts, one of them being improving the quality of housing stock in North Central and Core — now renamed Heritage Regina — work that was done that informed work on the provision of addiction services, work that helped build community pride, Mr. Speaker. That was a very important initiative. And I know that, for me, this is sort of how I understand what's going on with the Community Mobilization project. But one thing for sure that we'll be looking for is to see how that works out. But I think that there were some very valuable lessons learned in the experience with the inner city community partnership that should have been built upon, instead of the way that the momentum stalled and in some cases went backwards, Mr. Speaker.

Housing has long been a particular interest of mine, Mr. Speaker. And again when you know we have a point six vacancy on rental accommodation in the city of Regina right now — we had it in the fall, and we've had it through the winter — and in terms of the casework that comes into the constituency office in Regina Elphinstone-Centre and some of the most desperate circumstances that you'll encounter with people struggling so hard to pay the bills and to put bread on the table and to get the kids off to school and to make all these things go round, Mr. Speaker, against a backdrop of, like, a desperately

tight housing situation and the way that that impacts a life, you know, a house is not necessarily a home but try to build a home without a house, Mr. Speaker, and you've got too many families out there that are struggling with that.

And there has been some action over, there were some announcements on the part of the government that I'm interested to see again how they work out. Some of those announcements have been in the works for a considerable period of time, Mr. Speaker. Some of those announcements in fact represent dollars that were expended quite a few years ago. Some of those announcements, Mr. Speaker, will await the proof and how that fits into the pudding.

And again, one of the things we're very skeptical of on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that one of the first actions the government, that Sask Party government undertook when they came to power was to cut the budget for Sask Housing Corporation. And so they cut the budget on the one hand and then that prompted the need for the Merriman-Pringle task force. And the recommendations from that good work, you know, still continue to show up to this day, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way that wasn't seized upon by the government, the way that Merriman and Pringle were able to do their work and then the way that the housing crisis continued to get worse. So again that didn't seem to have an effect. And then years after that, we had the summit and again, you know, different measures on the part of the members opposite. But we know this: the point six vacancy rate in terms of rental accommodation. We know that homeless shelters and emergency housing is desperately, desperately tight in the city of Regina.

And again, Mr. Speaker, for every good measure that the members opposite bring forward, and I'd cite the Habitat for Humanity monies put in this budget as one example, Mr. Speaker, particularly in Regina after they'd reorganized in 2006 under the able leadership of then Chair Peter Bergbusch and the way that that work has been carried forward by Dennis Coutts, we think that that was work well done. And we're glad to see those dollars brought to bear in the great work that Habitat for Humanity does.

But the thing that we worry about, Mr. Speaker, is that they have been one of the main actors on the housing front for too long. And different other measures that the members opposite have brought forward, frankly we're skeptical about how that is going to put a dint into the desperate situation that we see.

And again, Mr. Speaker, the vacancy situation around rental has been like that for years. And the way that that translates into different things, Mr. Speaker, like the increased utilization of food banks, again in times when this government has been preaching prosperity, we've seen the utilization of food banks go up. And one of the members that I was very interested to see come to this Chamber is the member from Saskatoon Sutherland . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member from Saskatoon Sutherland. So I'm hearing some from the Minister of Social Services.

While it's very interesting to see that, you know, there's of late a decrease in the utilization of food banks, but what we've seen for too many of the years under the members opposite — so

much so that the member from Saskatoon Sutherland commented on it when he was both the CEO of the Saskatoon Food Bank and the Sask Party candidate for Saskatoon Sutherland — too much not being done to help out the most vulnerable in our society. And this, the spike in it, is really driven by the fact that you've got people that, you know, if you're going to make the rent, you've got to pick it up somewhere else. And you see people responding to that in different ways. But certainly utilization of the food bank was one of those ways, Mr. Speaker. So that's something we'll be keeping a very close eye on.

In my duties that have been entrusted to me in the House, Mr. Speaker, I've been entrusted as the critic for SaskEnergy; the critic for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing; the critic for First Nations Métis Relations; and a critic for Provincial Secretary. In those ministries and in that Crown, Mr. Speaker, I guess, a few general observations. There's not enough being done in terms of better engaging First Nations and Métis people in the economic and educational opportunities in this province. And you know, you don't have to take my word for it, Mr. Speaker.

After the budget there were some pretty scathing comments come out from different First Nations leaders on the shortcomings of this budget. And again this week saw the final arrival of the task force which has been retooled as the First Nations and Métis education and employment task force. It started out solely focused on First Nations. Rita Bouvier, Don Hoiium, Chair Gary Merasty — you're good people and have made a great contribution to the public life in this province.

But, Mr. Speaker, the fact that they are now finally being put into play when they were supposed to have been put into play back in the fall, to see that coming now late, especially when on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, members opposite were quite, quite happy to make cuts in a very expeditious fashion. I think of the cut that was made to the Aboriginal employment development program, the way that that program was axed unilaterally where agreements were torn up on budget day with the press of the fax button, Mr. Speaker. Again, we think there's the hype and we think that there's the rhetoric, but on the other hand, there's the record. And this of course is taking place against a backdrop . . . In 2007, First Nations unemployment was on the order of 13 per cent and unacceptably high, Mr. Speaker.

The problem is for the different sort of things they like to sprinkle and select in the way that they presented their budget, and you know, good things in their own right. It doesn't take away from the overall picture where First Nations unemployment is north of 20 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And again, there's the hype and the rhetoric on the part of members opposite but there's the record, and the record is that unemployment for First Nations people has gone from an unacceptably high level to increase by almost a third, Mr. Speaker.

So again we have high hopes for the work of somebody like Don Hoiium or Gary Merasty or Rita Bouvier, but you stack that up alongside the record of members opposite, and it gives us cause for concern.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are a great other number of things that I could get into in terms of this budget. I think about the fact that different unfunded pressures that are coming in the corrections system, the way that the Crowns are being used again as a cash cow, the way that this government likes to preach a balanced budget on budget day but come the mid-term, or the third quarter, well guess what? They've gone to the Crowns yet again to get another dividend to make up for the shortcomings in the budget.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think one of the things that was interesting about the language in the budget was there was, I think it was the regular special dividend. You know, any time you're taking the regular special dividend, for one, George Orwell is smiling some place, but for two, it for me symbolizes the fact that the members opposite have . . . You know, it's no small wonder that they've got religion on the Crowns, Mr. Speaker, and you know, people like the member from Wood River who suddenly is so excited about creating Crown corporations that they want to roll over Tourism Saskatchewan from an industry-led agency to a Crown corporation. You know, given the way that the Crowns have served as the piggy bank for this government when it comes to balancing their budget and making sure that, you know, if it didn't add up on budget day and it didn't add up in the first quarter or the mid-term, well then we'll just go back and get another regular special dividend. Again, pretty interesting to watch, Mr. Speaker.

[15:30]

In so many ways I think about the — to close, Mr. Speaker — I think about the seniors whose doors I knocked on in the election and who I see on a daily basis in Elphinstone, and I think about the way that they were interested in this government opposite, but the way that they have reacted in a very negative way to the increase on the prescription drug plan that wasn't campaigned on, Mr. Speaker. I think the way that they reacted and the fact that, you know, it's one thing to cut public services on the one hand and be promoted by the members opposite and, on the other hand though, add three more politicians, three more MLAs that they didn't campaign on.

I think about the young families in Cathedral and frankly throughout Regina Elphinstone-Centre, and the people that have made good livings and who have been creative and who have added to this pride that we have in being from Saskatchewan and telling those Saskatchewan stories, and I think about the way that this government did not campaign on the film employment tax credit being eliminated, Mr. Speaker. And worse than that, the way that members opposite over time would like to go shine up various film sets, such as the cameo from the Premier on the set of *Corner Gas*. I think about that, Mr. Speaker, and the way that that doesn't jibe with the priorities of the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre. And I know that I'll not be supporting the budget.

I think about the fact that we've got the North Central Shared Facility again, what should be, what should have been up and running by now but has stalled and gone sideways and had multiple announcements from members opposite, but precious little in the way of action, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I think that that's a shame and I think it's something that shows where the priorities of the members opposite are and how that doesn't

serve the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

I think about the haste with which Herchmer School was torn down, but the lethargy or the startlingly slow pace when it comes to finding that replacement facility for both Wascana and Herchmer, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I think that this is a government that has got some pulling up of its socks to do. I think of the way that overall the government campaigns on saying that it's a balanced budget and likes to say a lot of harsh things in this House, but doesn't recognize the history or recognize the fact in 1991 of more money being spent on servicing the debt than was being spent on the entire Education budget, Madam Deputy Speaker. I think that's telling.

I think when there's a labour skills shortage in this province and you see the government increasing the amount that apprentices have to pay, I see that as . . . while at the same time going around the world to try and find labour to bring to Saskatchewan, and not being able to line up that tremendous potential labour force that we've got here in Saskatchewan with those labour force needs, I think that shows a government that's got priorities that are out of touch.

So on so many grounds, Madam Deputy Speaker . . . And again there are some good things in this budget, and we don't dispute that. What we dispute, Madam Deputy Speaker, what we oppose, what we demand better on, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the fact that they campaigned on something that was very different from various of the aspects of this budget. And for that we will not stand. And for that we will stand opposed to this budget. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, to close, I stand in favour of the amendment and I will oppose the budget of this government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell): — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Ms. Deputy Speaker. This is the first time that I get to . . .

An Hon. Member: — Madam.

Mr. Lawrence: — Madam. Okay, Madam Speaker. This is the first time that I get to stand here and take part in a budget debate, yet again another balanced budget put forward by the Saskatchewan Party government.

But first, Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my wife, Marjorie, for all her wonderful support in this endeavour that we have chosen to embark upon. And I also want to thank my children, Geoff, Dylan, and Ryan, and let's not forget Kyle — actually these are young men building their future in Saskatchewan, not children — and their support that allows me to be here.

And I want to thank my mom and dad for getting me here as well. My mom actually came to watch the budget speech and this is the . . . It was the second time she was in the House. The last time she was here, she said, she was eight or nine years old, but I won't say how many years it's been since she's been here. And it was the first time she came to see a budget speech, and she was so impressed by the Minister of Finance and the way he delivered the budget and keeping Saskatchewan moving

forward.

Some of our members, and even the Finance minister, has spoken of this before and it's about our kids coming home. And then some of us with younger families and those of us with our kids just getting ready to leave the house and become empty nesters — well for some of us, we hope we're there — and we don't have to worry about sending them away to other provinces. They actually get to build their future here in Saskatchewan. And it's budgets like this one that enable us to honestly say that.

This budget is about keeping the Saskatchewan advantage. And what this means is that we were able to balance the budget, keep the economy going, and keeping our services affordable and sustainable in the long run.

You know, around the world today we see the chaos created by unsustainable debt growth and that governments were not living within their means. Here in Saskatchewan, we don't do that any more. It's about fiscal responsibility, without which we can't keep this province moving ahead. To keep moving forward, we are doing what we said we're going to do. And it's like the first-time homebuyers tax credit, that equates to an \$1,100 non-refundable tax credit to families.

We also have the strategy to increase housing supply across the province, including direct investment in affordable housing projects, improving housing affordability, and enhancing strategic planning for housing together with the current program and enhancement in this year's budget.

We expect to have up to 10,000 new rental units and over 2,200 new entry level homes and over 650 new student residences. This budget has funding specifically directed towards the housing projects of \$15.9 million, an increase of \$2.9 million. Not a decrease. Not a decrease. This is spread over the rental construction incentive and affordable home ownership program, because these programs were way more successful than projected with the rental construction incentive receiving applications for 6,200 rental units and there was only 2,900 projected. And with the affordable home ownership program, there were 850 and only 250 more than that anticipated.

On top of that, this budget includes a 10 per cent per point reduction in the corporate income tax levied on income earned from the construction and rental of qualifying new multi-unit residential rental projects. Funding for this initiative is estimated at \$34 million for the first five years of the program. And this is something that was actually brought to me at the doors in Moose Jaw Wakamow during the election.

And some of the other budget highlights related to housing include \$10.2 million invested in new expenditures by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, including \$1 million for Habitat for Humanity to help an additional 20 low-income families achieve home ownership. They've talked about that. We're helping people achieve home ownership. And \$9.2 million for the rental development plan to develop an additional 200 rental units in the communities with the long-term housing needs.

So what this means to the people of Moose Jaw Wakamow is

... Actually on Friday, I was at a ribbon cutting for the construction of a new \$2.8 million condominium development for 15 low- to moderate-income families, and that's with 1.9 million in financing assistance from the Government of Saskatchewan through the Headstart on a Home program. And I'd like to quote the Minister of Social Services here:

We are pleased that Moose Jaw is the latest community to take advantage of HeadStart on a Home to help meet the need for entry-level housing in Saskatchewan ... Increasing housing supply within the price range of families and individuals currently renting will help many Saskatchewan citizens purchase their first home. This program is a key initiative under our housing strategy for Saskatchewan ... [and it was] released in August last year.

So it's affecting the people back home in my home community, and again, it's good for Saskatchewan. But that's what we say about our budget and how we like it. And of course being on the government side of the House, we're going to like what we say. But let's listen to what the people of Saskatchewan say.

So let's quote SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association]:

SUMA is thrilled with the new Corporate Income Tax rebate on rental housing. The government is leading the way in Canada in addressing this critical urban need, and today our current and future residents are better off because of this announcement.

And that's quoting Jim Scarrow, vice-president of the cities, in the SUMA news release.

Again, quoting Bill Madder, spokesperson of the Association of Saskatchewan Realtors:

Tax reduction lowers the key barrier that has kept private dollars from flowing into rental accommodation. This new initiative is a very positive step in the right direction.

The rebate on business income tax puts Saskatchewan in a leadership role nationally. Tax treatment of rental investment and income has been a major federal-level problem. Here we see Saskatchewan stepping outside the box to come up with a [new] home-grown answer.

News releases out there. And again it's the people of Saskatchewan speaking, not the government.

Well actually we're quite pleased, something that we actually didn't see coming — the rental housing tax rebate. And we've been stressing for a couple of years now that the tax treatment of rental properties has been a real disincentive for people getting into the rental marketplace. Well I think it's a huge step on the rental side, and again, the ownership side is something that the market tends to take care of itself. But over many years, we've had a real shortage on the rental side, so I think it's a big help. I think it's a potential home run for the provincial government.

And that's Bill Madder, spokesperson for the Association of Saskatchewan Realtors, and he was speaking on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] radio.

The move on housing that you just referenced is going to be a positive thing. One of the biggest challenges to our growth is a lack of housing for the new people — immigrant and new people moving home. But overall they've struck a good balance.

That's Steve McLellan, president of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, and that was on CKRM radio.

This is good news, and it's a surprise too. We have a housing crisis in this province and city, so to the extent that they're offering new programs to help this is very good news.

Michael Fougere, Saskatchewan Construction Association, CJME radio.

[15:45]

And I can go on and on and on with quotes from the people of Saskatchewan, not the government. But let's move on to the municipal funding that's been put forward. The 2012-13 budget provides 349 million of direct provincial support to the municipalities. This represents a \$45 million or 15 per cent, 15 per cent increase from the 2011-12 budget and 107 million or 44.2 per cent from the '07-08 budget.

Now I'm not a math whiz, but when it goes from 15 per cent or 44 per cent, and it's being based on actual spending, that doesn't seem like a cut to me. That seems like an increase. This funding includes only provincial funding to municipalities and as such does not include the \$86.9 million of federal funding that flows through the ministry directly to the municipalities. The revenue sharing in 2013 through Municipal Affairs will be . . . Oh, lost my spot. What this means to the people of Moose Jaw is that the funding for the city of Moose Jaw in '07-08 was \$2,822,796, increased to \$6,310,203 in the 2013 budget.

You know, and the thing is we can go right to the website now. The Municipal Affairs department has set up this wonderful website. You go to www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/revenuesharing. I'm a big computer guy, so I like going there. It's got it set up for your cities and your RMs, pulls up this wonderful little chart, and it shows every year where we increased the funding. We haven't decreased the funding.

So in Moose Jaw what it means is it's gone, over the last five years it's gone up 124 per cent. Now it's not just the cities that have increased the funding. What it means is the RM of Baidon, which just happens to be part of Moose Jaw Wakamow, has seen an increase of 63 per cent. And then the RM of Moose Jaw since '07-08 has seen an increase of 232 per cent. Again we see revenue sharing in Saskatchewan going up, not going down, not cuts.

So you know, the one thing I've noticed most since I've been in the House is the difference between optimism and pessimism. We hear it a lot. And this side of the House appears to be very optimistic about the future of Saskatchewan. It's really hard to

sit here day after day after day and listen to negative and pessimistic. And I love this province, you know. It's great. My kids don't have to leave because this government has enabled them to build their future right here. Pessimism is not the way to go, and it showed in the election in November. We have 49 members; the opposition has nine. And that's pretty simple math, you know. It's pretty straightforward. And when the people of Saskatchewan spoke, they asked us to do that. They asked us to move ahead with this province, and that's what we're doing. And it doesn't quit with municipal funding.

Let's take a look at education, education. So again the transition strategy will provide school divisions with a transition period of two to four years to realign their spending to the new funding levels. It will also allow them to strategically plan for changes to their service delivery and look for operating efficiencies rather than layoffs. An additional \$10 million will be provided to the school divisions for transitional assistance in 2012-2013. As a result of the new funding formula together with the funding increase, school divisions will see funding increases this year ranging from 1.7 per cent to 14.4 per cent. Now again I'm not a math whiz, but when it's going up by 1.7 to 14.4, that signifies an increase to me.

So the operating funding of our schools, the Government of Saskatchewan's overall funding to school divisions has increased by 20.7 per cent since 2007. Again that seems . . . It's not rocket science. It's just math, simple math — 20.7 per cent increase. So to sum it up, just about 21 per cent is not a cut in funding like the members opposite say.

Again we need to listen to what the people say.

Today's budget demonstrated shared commitments and priorities among the Government of Saskatchewan and school boards across the province. We welcome the spirit of the new capital funding model and are committed to working with the province to ensure that the children and youth have adequate, safe, and healthy places to grow and learn.

And that's from Sandi Urban-Hall president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association.

We have more news releases:

Well I think that the most exciting piece is that there's recognition that education is a foundational piece to growth in Saskatchewan. So with that then there was a number of pieces that we heard that are very promising to us.

Again, that's Sandi Urban-Hall and that was on CBC. Now let's hear from the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation]:

STF welcomes priority placed on education in the provincial budget.

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation welcomed the provincial government's pledge that pre-K to 12 education is a priority in this year's provincial budget.

And that's a Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation news release.

You know, Steve Allen, the president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, on CJME radio had this to say:

The increase to funding is welcome and the fact that education is placed as a priority for the government. We think education is an investment. It's an investment not in just infrastructure, in other things. It's an investment in children, in the people of the province. So that's very important. We do welcome the increases that there are.

And again, that's Steve Allen, the president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.

And, you know, we can go on and on and on. We can go into the northern spending. The 2012-13 budget provides a \$273.4 million or an increase of 2.3 million for activities that benefit those in the northern administration district. You know, I'll talk about First Nations and Métis funding. I've been a president of Métis for a few years now. The 2012-13 budget provides 172.4 million, an increase of 4.7 million, or 2.8 per cent for First Nations and Métis people. And this funding excludes provincial expenditures that may be accessed by the general population. So again we're seeing increase, we're seeing increase.

Training, impacts on post-secondary students, impact on people with . . .

An Hon. Member: — More numbers.

Mr. Lawrence: — Yes, more numbers, basic numbers, you know, R & D [research and development] again. And, Madam Speaker, I just want to sum this up. I want to sum this up and keep it simple. We provide a balanced budget and a growing economy. The Government of Saskatchewan has achieved a balanced budget that keeps the economy growing. By what? Maintaining lower debt, historic tax reductions, investing in key capital program areas, and sustaining and enhancing core government services. And we haven't even got into health care — better access to health care, improved quality of life and making life more affordable. This is why, Madam Speaker, I'm speaking in favour of the budget and against the motion from the opposition. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell): — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I remember members of the opposite when they were . . . 16 years of running this province, and I remember their campaigns, how they campaigned about, you know, they're going to do this, they're going to do that. But they never once said that they were going to raise the PST [provincial sales tax]. And as soon as they got elected, what did they do? They raised the PST. And what have we done? We decreased the PST.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am honoured and humbled to be standing here today to address the budget of 2012. I would first like to thank my wife, Sheila, for all the support she gives me to be here. It wouldn't be possible for me to be here without her support and being behind me all the time and not worrying about where I was.

Madam Speaker, the areas of the budget I will discuss are all

things that I believe are very important to the good people of Saskatoon Meewasin, Saskatoon, and Saskatchewan as a whole. These are all concerns that I've heard at the doorstep and they truly resonate with seniors, students, work families. The themes of my speech all begin with the letter H, Madam Speaker — housing, highways, and health care.

Madam Speaker, it my privilege to stand in the House today to present to you and through you these important aspects of the budget. Madam Speaker, before I was elected I spent a lot of time assisting Aboriginal groups acquire homes for people with lower income. Housing to me is a very important issue, to be sure. With this budget the government has assured that housing in Saskatchewan is available and affordable.

The rapid growth of our province is a mark of progress and a sign of our economy is thriving. However the rapid growth comes with growing pains. Affordable housing is a concern for many Saskatchewan residents, Madam Speaker. These concerns were heard at the door by the government and was addressed in this budget as well as last year's budget. At that time, Madam Speaker, we announced a five-point plan to make purchasing new homes simpler and potential homebuyers with modest incomes. This, along with the immigrant investment program, has been successful in providing homes to low- and moderate-income families. With a goal of 4,600 new housing units, these initiatives will certainly help this deserving cause.

Low-income housing is not a cut and dried model, as we cannot simply build houses and hope they get filled up. Madam Speaker, rental properties, therefore, are equally as important. Condominium units in North Battleford, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, and Yorkton are currently under construction through the affordable home ownership program. This program was estimated by the government to have 40 units purchased and a remarkable 164 applications have qualified for funding. Madam Speaker, this is impressive and an example of how this government is maintaining the Saskatchewan advantage.

Another way government is aiding construction of low-income housing is by easing taxation on companies that wish to build low-income housing. Madam Speaker, the corporate income tax rebate introduced by the Minister of Finance last week will equate to 10 per cent of the rental income accrued from these projects over 10 years. With this rebate and the other initiatives this government has introduced, we expect that an additional 10,000 new rental units will be constructed. This is a positive number, Madam Speaker, and we will continue to support those who do work with lower income housing.

We recognize that there is much left to do, but we believe that Saskatchewan is in a much better position than it was prior to 2007. Madam Speaker, we have averaged 5,908 housing starts per year since our government took office, and we can all agree it is a marked improvement from the 2,900 housing starts per year average for the 16 years previous. This government housing initiative helped keep the Saskatchewan advantage that this province deserves.

Here is some quotes. Pat Fiacco, mayor of Regina, stated:

Thanks to the Premier and the government for the rental

construction tax incentives. It's needed in my city and our province.

[16:00]

Another quote: Jim Scarrow, vice-president of cities, stated:

SUMA is thrilled with the corporate tax rebate on rental housing. The government is leading the way in Canada in addressing this critical urban need, and today our current and future residents are better off because of this announcement.

Madam Speaker, infrastructure has been a central theme for this government since it took office in 2007. Since our government was elected, we have invested \$2.2 billion in highway infrastructure. As an avid outdoorsman, I tend to travel more roads than simply Highway 11 between Saskatoon and Regina. I and my colleagues understand the importance of road maintenance. Over the last four years, Madam Speaker, we have built, rebuilt 770 kilometres of rural highways and have repaved another 1485 kilometres of roadway. Overall, over 6000 kilometres of highways have been improved since 2007.

Our government has facilitated much work for these roads. However, there is much more that must be done to fix the dilapidated highway infrastructure we inherited from the NDP. In the first four years of our mandate, Madam Speaker, we spent 64 per cent more on roadway infrastructure than the previous administration spent in their last four years. The government has had to fix many potholes left by the NDP, Madam Speaker, and we are just now catching up. This budget's highway provisions in the last four years of road repair and maintenance are key parts of keeping the Saskatchewan advantage.

Here's a few quotes: Shantel Lipp, president, Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association news release:

Since 2007, this government has demonstrated commitment to dealing with years of neglect of our highways and infrastructure, while at the same time ensuring new infrastructure is in place to accommodate our growing economy.

Another quote. Sean Wilson, board of directors, Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association news release:

This budget will allow us to work in partnership with the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure to maximize the efforts of our industry. This kind of spending means we can promise long-term, predictable employment to our employees.

Madam Speaker, health care is quite important to me because, Madam Speaker, frankly, none of the members present today are getting any younger and that includes myself. Health care under our mandate has seen great improvements and we intend to continue the good track record of our government with this budget. Over the last four years, Madam Speaker, we have worked diligently on the Saskatchewan surgical initiative, which was created to improve access to patient care in Saskatchewan. Since the initiative's implementation, Madam

Speaker, we have seen drastic reductions in wait times. The number of people waiting longer than 18 months for surgery has dropped 81 per cent since the initiative began. And the number of people waiting more than 12 months has dropped by 69 per cent. These are positive numbers, Madam Speaker, and we are proud of them. We have much to do here, but we hold our heads high and stand firmly behind this initiative and the impressive results it has produced.

A promise to increase the Saskatchewan Income Plan by \$50 was kept with this budget, Madam Speaker. This initiative is important to those seniors who depend on this money, and it has been far too long since this amount of money has been raised. The increased seniors who qualified for Saskatchewan Income Plan will receive \$240 per month, which means, Madam Speaker, that these qualifying seniors will receive \$2,880 a year. This is a very, very positive increase as much as needed one considering what these qualifying seniors were receiving before 2007. Prior to 2007, seniors received \$90 per month through the Saskatchewan Income Plan, which amounted to \$1,800 less than what seniors will receive after this budget. Madam Speaker, in the five years we've been fortunate enough to govern Saskatchewan, we have tripled the amount provided through the Saskatchewan Income Plan. Madam Speaker, this is another reason we will retain the Saskatchewan advantage.

The most important initiatives in this budget, Madam Speaker, are those that will help the people that need it the most. The first initiative is the increase that this government has given to the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program. Madam Speaker, as the Minister of Finance so eloquently, on budget day, on budget day: "Our goal is to make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for persons with disabilities and to make that part of the Saskatchewan advantage."

We have added nearly \$18 million to this very worthy program, which translates to an increase of available benefits of \$200, and an increase of 350 in the fourth year. An increase to this program also means that the number of people who are eligible for the program will more than triple to as many as 10,000 eligible adults. We promised expanded coverage for people with disabilities and we kept that promise, Madam Speaker.

The second initiative is geared towards reducing wait times for cancer patients in Saskatchewan. Madam Speaker, cancer is a horrible disease that unfairly takes the lives of those inflicted with it well before their time. This piece of the budget is crucial, Madam Speaker, so we can reduce the wait times for treatment and attempt to eradicate this disease. We have made significant progress in this area since we received our first mandate in 2007. The wait-lists have dropped from almost 600 people waiting for treatment to less than 100. This has positively impacted people in our province, and we will continue to build on this success. As the Minister of Finance told us, this budget provides an extra 13.8 per cent for the Cancer Agency which translates to \$16.9 million. This funding provides for more than 6,000 new patient referrals, nearly 30,000 chemotherapy treatments, 39,000 mammograms. This is a huge increase and an important one, Madam Speaker.

We will also be providing an extra \$4 million to expand the screening program for colorectal cancer province-wide. We are on the right track with this much needed funding, but there is

still much to do in this area. We will continue to support cancer patients through their battle with this extremely unfair disease, and we will pledge to do all that we can to aid them, Madam Speaker.

Here's a quote. Rosalee Longmoore, president, SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] news release:

We are interested in the budget's potential to work towards addressing patient and workplace safety, improving access, and reducing surgical wait times. SUN is looking forward to continuing our collaborative partnerships with the government and the ministry to see exactly how these initiatives and resources can be used to further enhance quality of care in the best interests of Saskatchewan patients and their families. The safety of our patients and their families is paramount important to registered nurses in Saskatchewan. SUN supports the government's attention to this issue.

Madam Speaker, this budget is balanced, prudent, and is what residents of this fine province want to see and wanted to see when we were most recently elected. Saskatchewan residents want fiscal responsibility for their government to make good economic decisions with this budget.

Madam Speaker, we are providing all of these things, especially so in the areas I touched on today. It is important for our government to grow responsibly and to make sure that we are spending within our means. With this budget, Madam Speaker, we are keeping promises while balancing the books. This is the responsibility that Saskatchewan residents want and deserve. Madam Speaker, this is what this government is providing. With that, Madam Speaker, I support this budget. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Tell): — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw North.

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I just want to acknowledge the city of Moose Jaw and how proud I am to represent the people of Moose Jaw North and the city of Moose Jaw. And that was kind of confirmed in a news release that came out just last week that says, "Saskatchewan cities keep competitive advantage." It cites that Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert all placed in the top one-third ranking in a comparison of 133 business locations across 14 countries. Saskatchewan cities have continued to maintain a competitive advantage according to the 2012 competitive alertness study released by KPMG. Among 33 Midwest American and Western cities, Moose Jaw ranked first, Prince Albert second, Regina fourth, and Saskatoon seventh. So it's good to acknowledge the cities and the progress of the cities in this great province of Saskatchewan.

And, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to talk about Saskatchewan. We've come a long way over the past number of years. There's been great change in this province, change in direction from mediocrity to pride, from have-not to leading the nation in many factors: population growth, economic development. The nation of many factors includes the growth that we see in our cities, in our towns. We've gone from depopulation to the strongest growth and the lowest unemployment rates in Canada.

This has become the Saskatchewan advantage.

Through this growth and economic success is the challenge of keeping the Saskatchewan advantage. Madam Speaker, this budget is keeping the Saskatchewan advantage. It's balanced. It's sustainable. It's keeping the promises of improving the lives of Saskatchewan people and continue growth in infrastructure, education, health, keeping the economy strong. Yes, Saskatchewan has enjoyed unprecedented growth over the past number of years. We have seen the province grow from have-not status to a province that's leading the nation in economic growth. Saskatchewan is forecast to lead the nation with 3.1 growth this year and again at 3.3 per cent growth in 2013.

There was an article in the *Leader-Post* just last week that Saskatchewan leads economic surge. Not just growth, Madam Speaker, economic surge. Saskatchewan will lead the province, and I'm quoting from the article, "Saskatchewan will lead the provinces in economic growth this year" according to the Royal Bank. RBC expects that rising demand of the provincial's natural resources, increased capital expenditure and continued growth in agricultural production will continue to real GDP growth of 4.6 per cent in 2012 and 4.7 per cent in 2013, the article says.

When we look back, and judging from some of the comments we heard from the member from Athabasca . . . And we look back, and what he's saying was that the NDP is the only party that can lead this province. But we look back on their history and the mismanage of the NDP government. And my learned friend from Wood River talked about SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] and Navigata and dot-com, Craig Wireless, Channel Lake, even mega bingo, where that government lost over \$200 million. And they complain about and say . . . talk about the expansion of three more MLAs, when they lost that kind of revenue — \$200 million in 15 different ventures.

And to talk about good ethics, one of the things that always comes to my mind when we talk about ethics is the Murdoch Carriere case, where he harassed women. And I know, talking to the people in Moose Jaw that worked in the government building in Moose Jaw while this man was there, there was women that wouldn't go in the elevator with him. It's a two-storey building, Madam Speaker, and they wouldn't go into the elevator because they knew they would be harassed.

Well this man was found guilty on two counts of common assault. But did the present government, the NDP government fire him? No, they let him resign, and they paid him out \$270,000 for a settlement and ensured compensation for 35 years of pensionable service through the government services. The women in this case, nine women that came forward, had a combined restitution of \$135,000, only half of what they paid this guy. And yet the member from Athabasca talks about the ethics and the goodness of the NDP. We can't go back there. They're unethical. They're not good people to run this kind of a province. They have no understanding of growth. They have no understanding of business and they do not believe in success.

If you remember the old map of resources that used to circulate — and I've got one in my office — of the natural gas and oil

wells in Western Canada, and there was a stark border crossing where the oil wells and the gas stopped right at the Saskatchewan border. It's because it was never developed. It was never used for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan. Madam Speaker, those days are all changed, and now the province is doing well.

[16:15]

We can talk about our generation of children who left the province. I think that was the NDP idea of child care. Send the young people out. They'll get established somewhere else. We don't have to worry about child care. The lack of foresight in the development of our riches in this province has been changed around, for the province is doing very well. And, Madam Speaker, we've come a long way and we're not going back there. We've come by it with honesty, integrity, and foresight, caring, and good governance, and above all, growth in the economy and growth for the people of Saskatchewan.

The budget was about maintaining growth and keeping the Saskatchewan advantage. The economic strife that we see throughout other parts of the world — and I think of Greece at this time — where trying to cut back on social programs has caused great strife in those places. Even when we look to our neighbours south of the border in the United States where they're struggling with recession. Well here in Canada, even Ontario, which was a powerhouse for years, is now a have-not province. Saskatchewan is the only jurisdiction, the only province, that has a balanced budget so far this year, Mr. Speaker. It's a balanced budget. It's the fifth balanced budget of this government. And what is more, this budget, a balanced budget, has no tax increases and no new taxes.

In the last four years we've had balanced budgets along with tax reductions, reductions in property tax and income tax, corporate tax, so that we can be competitive in this world. We've invested in infrastructure and highways and education, in training. We've paid down considerable debt — 44 per cent. And we still have a balanced budget with no new taxes, no increase in taxes. We're growing the economy, improving services, and keeping Saskatchewan strong — keeping the Saskatchewan advantage.

We're keeping the budget balanced. We're keeping the spending in check. We're keeping our economy strong and growing, and keeping promises made in our election and keeping the debt low. Being responsible to the citizens of Saskatchewan, focusing on quality of life for all citizens. This budget is about health. It's about education. It's about supporting the families and housing and the special needs for those that are most vulnerable.

When we look at the health care, we've increased funding for the Saskatchewan surgical initiative. This will allow 8,000 more surgeries a year toward our goal of reducing surgical wait times to not more than three months by 2014.

Planning continues on the hospitals in North Battleford. And of particular importance to the Moose Jaw and area is the new hospital in Moose Jaw. And I can tell you that planning is continuing. There's negotiations going on right now between the city and the Five Hills Health Region. And in any day now they will be able to actually announce where the new site will

be for the new hospital. Keeping the Saskatchewan advantage is investing in health care and looking after patients and making patients first.

This budget introduces a new education funding formula and increases K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] funding. This formula developed a new model to ensure funding is provided in an equitable manner right across the province. With the new funding formula, education funding is increased anywhere from 1.7 to 14.4 per cent. We've increased funding for school divisions by over 18 per cent in our first term. The budget is also providing \$38.6 million to begin construction on six new schools, Mr. Speaker.

The Saskatchewan advantage scholarship provides all new high school graduates with up to \$2,000 over four years to be applied to tuition fees at any Saskatchewan post-secondary institution and help cover the costs of post-secondary education. Saskatchewan already has the best student retention plan, with \$20,000 for university and college graduates. This budget provides \$12 million increase to support operating costs at our post-secondary institutions. Keeping the Saskatchewan advantage is supporting and improving education.

When we look at family support — extending the PST exemption to children's clothing for ages 17 and under, expanding the active family tax benefit for those 17 and under, and providing funding for 500 new daycare spaces. Mr. Speaker, we've increased the daycare spaces from 8,850 under the NDP. We've increased that by over 4,400, an increase of over 40 per cent of daycare spaces when the new 500 are in existence. So we've increased and planned for an expansion of over 40 per cent. Keeping the Saskatchewan advantage is supporting families.

When we look at housing, last year our government announced a five-point housing plan, making it easier for Saskatchewan people in modest incomes to purchase a new house. Our goal is to add at least 4,500, 4,600 new housing units over the next five years. And last week — and the member Wakamow mentioned this — last week we were pleased to attend the official opening of a groundbreaking project with the Social Services minister to provide 15 family units in under the Headstart program. Keeping the Saskatchewan advantage is assisting in affordable housing.

People with disabilities is part of keeping the Saskatchewan advantage. We are keeping our promise to increase both the number of eligible individuals and increase the monthly benefits under the Saskatchewan assured income for disabilities program. We are adding another \$18 million to the program to provide greater benefits to a larger number of people with disabilities. The available benefits will go up by \$200 in July of this year, and our goal is to make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for persons with disabilities and to be part of the Saskatchewan advantage.

To our low-income seniors, we will keep our promise to increase the seniors' income plan by \$50 a month and \$10 a month for the next three years. Mr. Speaker, in our first term we doubled the benefits for the low-income seniors, which they have not had for 16 years under the NDP. And by the end of our first . . . by the end of this next time, Mr. Speaker, the seniors'

income plan will have tripled from what it was under the NDP. Providing a seniors' and personal care home benefit of up to \$3,000 annually is also a benefit to low-income seniors residing in personal care homes.

Mr. Speaker, keeping the Saskatchewan advantage is assisting low-income seniors. To keep Saskatchewan moving forward, we will keep the Saskatchewan advantage, balance our budget, grow our population, invest in infrastructure of schools and hospitals and roads and highways. We will care for the underprivileged. We will make safe Saskatchewan, keep spending in line with fiscal responsibility, maintain a low debt, and keep competitive taxes.

Mr. Speaker, there was some difficult choices. The film tax credit was a tough choice. I believe when it was first brought in it was a good decision. But as other jurisdictions became more competitive and the Canadian dollar, which once was 80 cents American, is now at par, without a bigger investment, the competitive edge is being lost. Yes I'll admit that *Corner Gas* — and I like watching that show — really put Saskatchewan on the map and it was because of this tax advantage. But the follow-up series of *Dan for Mayor* and *Hiccups* all moved to BC [British Columbia]. So you can see that advantage has been disappearing.

And yet the Leader of the Opposition wants to jeopardize growth in other areas. When he was asked where would the money come from, the Leader of the Opposition said there are a number of areas where they could find the money for films; one of the things they could have done is to look at some of the initiatives around agriculture and look at some of the things they've done for municipalities. Mr. Speaker, he was willing to jeopardize the agricultural sector, the rural sector, for the sake of films. I'm sorry, I don't think we should go there.

We are a responsible government. Enterprise Saskatchewan, in some areas, I think they were doing very, very good work, and we trust that the stage is now set that they will continue to do that work through local, regional support. I suggest that no one knows better than the local authorities what economic priorities should be. Through co-operation, municipal governments can best prioritize goals and work together to attract development for economic planning.

With the new sharing formula for the municipalities of 1 per cent of the PST, municipalities received a 29.5 increase in 2011-2012, and this year the municipalities will receive a further 9.5 per cent increase. In Moose Jaw itself, that went from 2,822,000 in 2007 to 6,310,000 in 2012 — that's more than double, Mr. Speaker. I'm confident consideration will be given for investment in economic development for growth as this responsible government keeps on moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, while other jurisdictions in Canada continue to struggle with sluggish economies, Saskatchewan remains strong and remains growing. This budget keeps the Saskatchewan advantage. It will keep our province moving forward. It will keep our province growing.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment offered by the opposition is, really confirms the irresponsibility that they had and they still seem to have. I will not be supporting the amendment, Mr. Speaker. I

will support the government. Thank you.

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

Mr. Broten: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member of Massey Place has raised a point of order. Would the member briefly state his point of order?

Mr. Broten: — Happy to, Mr. Speaker. I was listening to the remarks from the member from Moose Jaw North, and in his remarks he made some comments about members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. And the remarks that I heard in his speech, Mr. Speaker, in referring to members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, were that we were not ethical and not good people. The member will know that all members of the Assembly are honourable and that it is not appropriate in any way to impugn the character of another member of the Assembly. And I would ask the member from Moose Jaw North to please withdraw those remarks and apologize, and failing that, Mr. Speaker, for you to rule on the matter. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I believe the comments raised by the member for Moose Jaw North, I mean this was debate, points under discussion. Members yesterday from the opposite side were impugning members over here, at which point the Speaker actually had to intervene, had to remind them of the rules of decorum in the House. And I'm not sure if the member remembers that, but that happened last night. Mr. Speaker may want to review the matter, but my view is we were simply undertaking a debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — I will review *Hansard* and bring back a ruling to the Assembly. I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, fellow colleagues and members opposite. It's with great pleasure that I rise in the House today, and I'm thankful for the opportunity to participate in the budget debate of 2012. It's an honour to attend this sitting of the Assembly and represent the interests of Saskatchewan Rivers constituency, and obviously I'm very pleased to be here today. And I'm excited about the future of people and their choice of the province. I'm very excited that they chose me to be here today. Thank you.

And also I would like to thank my family and my very patient friends. And when I go home on the weekends and this little 3-foot blond comes running up to me and says, grandma, grandma, I'm so happy to see you on this weekend. Well he says, grandma, I'm happy to see you because I'm home on the weekends, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And then I realize all the sacrifices of the people in this Assembly, why we are here and what is important. And I'm here to help change the attitude of the province and also to bring positive change for my family and my friends and my family.

And at this time I would also like to thank my CA, Marcus and

Joan for their dedication . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And I believe the members opposite will have their turn to speak. I would like to speak right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would also like to thank my campaign team and my executive for their efforts to bring me here. And as they chirp across, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do believe they'll get their time. I would like my allotment.

First of all, I would like to acknowledge the member from Canora-Pelly for his hours of work put forth for this strong and this very sound budget. It's a budget which signifies and focuses on quality of life for all, a budget that is all about keeping the Saskatchewan advantage. It's a balanced budget about making prudent choices and sustaining valued programs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, working in this building makes one think about accountability and integrity. The code of ethical conduct for members of the Legislative Assembly states, quote:

We believe that the fundamental objective of public office is to serve our fellow citizens with integrity in order to improve the economic and social conditions of all Saskatchewan people.

[16:30]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my speech I intend to prove that this quote is very true by highlighting our government's budget objectives of growing the economy and leading the nation. Our debt is lower. Our province's finances are sound. In fact our debt to GDP ratio is now the second lowest in Canada. Saskatchewan has projected to lead the nation in economic growth and we hope to keep our AAA rating from Standard & Poor's that was recognized just before the new year.

Communities all across Saskatchewan are growing as a result of our province's strong economy. In fact 5,600 women were employed in Saskatchewan in 2010 than in 2008, 5,600 more women, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I came across this statement from John Rockefeller that I would like to share with you: "I believe . . . that the world owes no man a living but that it owes every man an opportunity to make a living." I believe people want to succeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe they want to reach their full potential. Our Saskatchewan attitude and our passion for hard work and continued growth will be the cement that holds together the building blocks of our province. Attitude is a small thing that makes a big difference, and that's our Saskatchewan advantage. No other province in Canada has been able to deliver a balanced budget with a surplus so far this year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, people are coming here because they recognize Saskatchewan is a place of opportunity. A great place to work. A great place to raise a family. Our own family is growing. My daughter Brigitt and son-in-law, Chris De Villiers blessed us with a little girl named Ella, for my mother. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, she was born on the 11th hour of 11, 11, 11. Our Creator is truly amazing. And I feel very fortunate to work and to build a life in this great province.

Saskatchewan people have worked hard over the past few years to establish the Saskatchewan advantage, and we, your

government, intend to do everything we can to keep this province moving forward with a balanced budget.

I see Saskatchewan today with potential for more businesses, more families, more newcomers, and it's important that we continue to build on that foundation of success that has been laid over the past few years. We cannot revert to the old patterns of thinking that kept Saskatchewan a have-not province for so long. With our incredible resource base and our great work ethic, we are just beginning to tap the potential that for years existed just below the surface, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just below the ground — not only mineral wise but in the attitude and in the spirit of Saskatchewan people.

When you give people freedom and choice, they will do amazing things. Saskatchewan is now a place where people can prosper by moving things forward. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Winston Churchill once said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

I believe we are meeting the needs of Saskatchewan people, the needs of the rural communities of the Saskatchewan Rivers constituency that I represent. We are working with municipalities to keep Saskatchewan moving forward, and our budget provides record sharing revenue for Saskatchewan municipalities. This budget will provide 59.9 million in provincial support to municipal infrastructure, the second highest total in Saskatchewan history. We'll also distribute 237.4 million to municipalities in record municipal revenue sharing. Saskatchewan RMs, villages, towns, will continue to grow and Saskatchewan Rivers will benefit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe we have the capacity to make this the best generation in the history of Saskatchewan. If we do our duty, if we meet our responsibilities and our obligations as Saskatchewan citizens, then this generation of Saskatchewanians are going to be the best generation in the history of Saskatchewan and a source of inspiration for others to follow.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I was looking at the municipal revenue sharing, I was looking at all the towns and the RMs in Sask Rivers constituency. I came across Big River town, they will have an increase of 70 per cent; Meath Park, 113 per cent; Candle Lake village, 88 per cent; and the rural municipalities of Lakeland, 183 per cent; and Buckland RM, 202 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is great news for rural Saskatchewan.

In fact I would like to quote Dave Marit, president of SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities]: "While we saw budget cuts in some ministries and limited increases in funding for others, the substantial increase in revenue sharing for municipalities is demonstrative of the Provinces' appreciation for the growing demands on municipal governments."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sask Rivers is mainly a rural riding, and constituents have been contacting me with very positive comments on the budget. Saskatchewan farm and ranch families are the backbone of our province, and we will continue to be committed to agriculture in this budget. This is the second largest budget ever announced, and this government has had the four largest agriculture budgets in provincial history. I'm so

very proud of that. Record crop insurance coverage of \$177 million and record agriculture research continues to highlight this government's commitment to rural Saskatchewan.

In addition to presenting the fifth consecutive balanced budget, the Saskatchewan government announced 99 million for research and development, the highest amount in Saskatchewan history, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This budget will also continue to fund beaver, rat, and wild boar control programs as well as farm and ranch water infrastructure programs. Also an important 1 million in new funding for international marketing and trade has been allocated. Rural families have been and will continue to be a priority for our government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sask Rivers' rural constituents have contacted me, unhappy with the opposition statements from a CTV live interview. The Opposition Leader quoted:

Well practically there are a number of areas where they could have left money for films, and one of the things they could have done is look at some of the initiatives around agriculture and look at some of the things they've done for municipalities. And I think they forgot how much money is generated in something like the film industry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that's an insult to myself — I'm a rancher — to the other farming families, to rural municipalities, and all my neighbours and friends around the farms where I live. Rural Saskatchewan will not be forgotten under our government.

Infrastructure continues to be a highlight of this year's budget, and during the recent campaign, we promised to invest 2.2 billion over four years. And we are on track to fulfill that promise. Saskatchewan Rivers constituency will continue to see improvements due to that promise. For example, residents between Nipawin and Love will see repaving on their Highway No. 55.

23.5 million will be invested to support economic growth and safety on rural municipal roads from the municipal roads from the economy program. The budget for Highways and Infrastructure is 581.5 million. This will improve a lot of provincial highways. I believe the number is 1200 kilometres, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And the twinning of Highway 11 between Saskatoon and Prince Albert will be completed this year as well, to the gratitude of many tourists entering Sask Rivers constituency from across the province and the nation. Our government makes highways and infrastructure a priority and will continue to repair and improve the Saskatchewan highways system.

We, this government, are committed to major initiatives to ensure the safety and security of Saskatchewan's transportation network. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to put on record a quote from Shantel Lipp, president of Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association.

She said:

Since 2007 this government has demonstrated commitment to dealing with years of neglect of our

highways and infrastructure while at the same ensuring new infrastructure is in place to accommodate our growing economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are, all of us, our government, are keeping the promises we made during the election campaign. We are improving access to health care. Our budget commits 5.5 million increase for the STARS helicopter ambulance program, and to facilitate a rural physician locum pool to improve access to physician care, 1.5 million has been implemented. We are committed, and we have committed 60.5 million for the Saskatchewan surgical initiative, a 50 million increase, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I am very happy to live in Saskatchewan in this time frame. I am very happy to be bringing grandchildren into the province and watching them grow and prosper. To quote the Premier that "The only day better than today in Saskatchewan is tomorrow in Saskatchewan."

In conclusion, I am honoured to be a part of this government working with my colleagues, working together to create a strong and growing province, ensuring all people benefit in Saskatchewan's growth. Most of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very humbled to represent the constituents of Saskatchewan Rivers, and I respectfully wish then to thank them for their continued guidance and their support in moving our province forward. Mr. Speaker, Deputy Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment, but I am truly honoured to be supporting this budget. Thank you very much, sir.

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

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, request for leave to make a statement.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has requested leave to make a statement. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Withdrawal of Statement

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, there was a derogatory remark in my comments. I would apologize and would like to withdraw the comments at this time.

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

Mr. Broten: — I thank the member from Moose Jaw North for his words. Thank you.

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

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

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

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure today to stand and talk along with the rest of my colleagues on this budget. Mr. Speaker, one of the first things I want to do is thank a few people. Of course, Mr. Speaker, the first is my wife Terry who has put up with me being gone a lot. Surprisingly, Mr. Speaker, that also includes Fridays and weekends. Now I know there are some people here seem to think that rural MLAs don't do anything on Fridays and weekends, but I do beg to differ. It seems constituents in the rural areas want to put a face on their representative. Maybe that's why there seems to be a lack of NDP memberships from rural Saskatchewan, or maybe that's just why there's a lack of NDP members, period.

I would also like to thank the CAs in our office — Shelley and Cindy, and of course sometimes Charlene. Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I did not mention Cindy just became a grandmother for the first time of a bouncing baby girl named Taylor Warner. Cindy's starting to look very, very old, Mr. Speaker. In fact she's starting to look like a grandmother. That being said, Mr. Speaker, these women do a great job of looking after the Carrot River Valley office, and I really would be lost without them.

[16:45]

This budget addressed many of the needs and wants of Carrot River Valley. First off, it's balanced. It's balanced on both the GRF [General Revenue Fund] and the summary, so I really don't know what the member from Rosemont is complaining about. On the other hand, maybe I do. Remember last November, when the NDP were promising the world — what was it? — something like 4 billion or \$5 billion in promises. They were coming out with them every day. That must be it, Mr. Speaker. They wanted us to be like Greece or maybe Italy or maybe . . . Well I'll tell you what, I'm not just sure.

But the one thing I am sure of, the people of Saskatchewan didn't want that kind of debt. What the people of Saskatchewan wanted and the people of Carrot River Valley wanted was a fiscally prudent government, a government that could not only balance books but could also deliver on their promises, making Saskatchewan a better place to be. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party is sitting on this side of the House and the NDP is over there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Carrot River Valley is a wonderful constituency — good farm land and farmers, plus lakes, forest, some industry, wildlife, although I'm getting a little long in the tooth for that. It's just a great place to live and raise a family, and I am proud and honoured to represent it. Maybe some Friday and weekend that the member from Saskatoon Nutana has off, she should come up and visit this great part of the province. I should warn her though that be prepared to put a fair number of kilometres on her car if she's going to cover the

constituency because it does stretch more than a few city blocks, a lot more.

Mr. Speaker, let us take a look at what this government is doing to help Carrot River Valley move forward and the province. A new long-term care facility is being constructed in Tisdale, a new school earmarked for Hudson Bay, a new Cumberland College facility in Nipawin, mills reopening in both Carrot River and Hudson Bay, not because of government money being thrown at them, but because these companies see Saskatchewan as a new forward-thinking province. Removal of just about all the education portion of tax on farm land. You know, and there's been so much road construction, so much highway work done in our constituency that it would just take too long to list them all. But I will say that now you can actually drive down the highways without having to use a four-wheel drive truck.

Now the revenue sharing, that one point of the PST that was promised to our municipalities, let's just take a look at what it's done for our towns and our municipalities in Carrot River Valley. In the towns: Tisdale, since 2007 gone up 109 per cent; Arborfield, 90 per cent; Carrot River, 105 per cent; Nipawin, 106 per cent; Hudson Bay, 76 per cent.

And the RMs, with the work that they have to do on their bridges and their roads, they don't have to go begging anymore because Arborfield RM went up 89 per cent. Connaught RM went up 99 per cent. Moose Range went up 57 per cent. Nipawin went up 62 per cent. Tisdale went up 80 per cent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a look at agriculture because our Carrot River Valley is mainly an agriculture area. We do have some industry admittedly, but we have a lot of agriculture. Let's just see what's in this budget for agriculture: 321.4 million to fund crop insurance, AgriStability, and AgriInvest; 11.8 million, a new funding for the federal-provincial Growing Forward programs, including 5.3 million for the beneficial management practices program; 3.5 million for the intensive livestock operations environmental program; 2 million for the wheat genomic research; 790,000 for the farm business development initiative for young farmers; and 210,000 for the grain bag recycling program, which would be fully offset by federal government revenue; 1.3 million to ensure regional access to meat inspection services; 1 million for international market development and trade advocacy; 1 million for the rat control program; 530,000 for the Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to address cases of animal neglect; 500,000 in new funding for the beaver control program; and 250,000 for the Global Institute for Food Security.

Now, Mr. Speaker, these are very important things, very important things in the Carrot River Valley constituency and, as I should say, all across the province.

Now I would like to quote the Leader of the Opposition as he was being questioned by a reporter the day after the budget. The Leader of the Opposition said, and I quote:

Also we're extremely disappointed with what they've done with the film industry because these are young, talented people who have made their careers here, and

who have had the rug pulled right out from under them.

The reporter, and I quote: “Okay, so if there’s more money needed for Saskatchewan filmmakers, where would the money come from out of the budget, in your mind?”

Leader of the Opposition:

Well practically, there are a number of areas where they could have left money for films. And one of the things they could have done is look at some of the initiatives around the agriculture and look at some of the things they’ve done for municipalities.

So there you have it, Mr. Speaker. The NDP would just love to have the chance to throw rural Saskatchewan under the bus again, just like they did for 16 years when they were in power. Mr. Speaker, they devastated rural Saskatchewan. They devastated Carrot River Valley. Mr. Speaker, this will not happen under the Saskatchewan Party government. We work hard for all of the people of this great province of ours, not just a select few.

Mr. Speaker, the 2012-13 budget is about keeping the Saskatchewan advantage — balanced budgets, a growing economy, and government services that are affordable and sustainable in the long run.

When you take a look right here in Canada, other provinces like Ontario face severe choices in the years ahead. That’s the Saskatchewan advantage. This budget is keeping the Saskatchewan advantage by keeping our budget balanced, keeping our spending sustainable — which I know never could have happened under the NDP platform — keeping our economy strong and growing, and keeping the promises we made in the election campaign.

Our overall spending will be held at 4.7 per cent this year, and 3.9 per cent of that increase is in operating spending. The remainder is going to be in capital investments, of which this province was neglecting for many, many years under the NDP. The private forecasters expect us to lead the nation with a 3.1 per cent growth this year and lead again with a 3.3 per cent growth in 2013.

Just today . . . Well not just today but just this last year, we’ve learned that we have grown by 17,000 people, the largest population growth since 1953. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is good news because now what we have . . . And I have said many a time in this House, one of the reasons I decided to get into politics was because of my children. And you know, both of our children, both Morgan and Gina have now finished university. Gina, this is her first year out and she is a schoolteacher in Whitewood, and my son is working within the province also. Both of my children have jobs within Saskatchewan. That’s a lot different than it used to be under the NDP when we used to ship them out to Alberta. The member from across the way is kind of wondering about how that ever would happen, but that’s because we have a Saskatchewan Party in power here.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, in conclusion I would like to talk about how this is keeping our election promises, how this is keeping our budget balanced, our spending sustainable, and

keeping our economy strong. I believe that this budget will achieve all of these goals. And I guess I’ll just keep on talking for a little while longer.

Mr. Speaker, when we take a look at what has also happened within the health care, the \$17 million that we have just had put into cancer research, Mr. Speaker, these are things that this province desperately needs. We have a lot of people with cancer, have had cancer. The surgical initiatives that we are looking for to shorten our surgical wait times, which under the NDP had the longest wait times in all of Canada, we’ve got, I think it was . . . Was it \$8 million? We’re going to be doing 8,000 more surgeries this year to increase our surgical wait times.

We’re also continuing to work on all of our highways, Mr. Speaker, highways that desperately, desperately needed to be worked on in the years that we have seen the lack of work on highways under the NDP administration. Our highways are finally getting so that they are driveable. And the people notice it. I talked to the people in Carrot River Valley and as they go travelling throughout the province to go visit their friends and neighbours, as they’re hauling grain, they have noticed a great improvement on our highways.

One thing for Carrot River Valley alone was the improvement, the nine-month primary highway which makes the farmers, which makes it way cheaper for the farmers to haul their grain on the highways there. Now they can go with fully loaded super-Bs. And for every four loads, for every four loads that go, if they had to go under the old system, which was under the NDP system, it would have been five loads. So this is saving our farmers a lot of money in transportation costs.

But it’s not just that. Even on the safety aspect of it, the highway was redone going from Carrot River out to Pasquia Park, and it was wide where you could pull into the park. Before, it was just a straight line. You came over the Carrot River hill and if there were trailers turning into that regional park, you could have an accident. This is a safety precaution. Our government believes in good highways and good safety.

And speaking of regional parks, there’s a large increase for the regional parks this past . . . Well since we have been in power, the regional parks have been gaining a lot of money compared to what they were getting started at under the NDP.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I strongly support the budget put forward by this government and I do not support the amendment put forward by the NDP. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, I think we’re now at . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Yes. We have reached the normal time for recess. It is now past 5 o’clock and the Assembly, this House stands recessed till 7 o’clock this evening.

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

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