



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

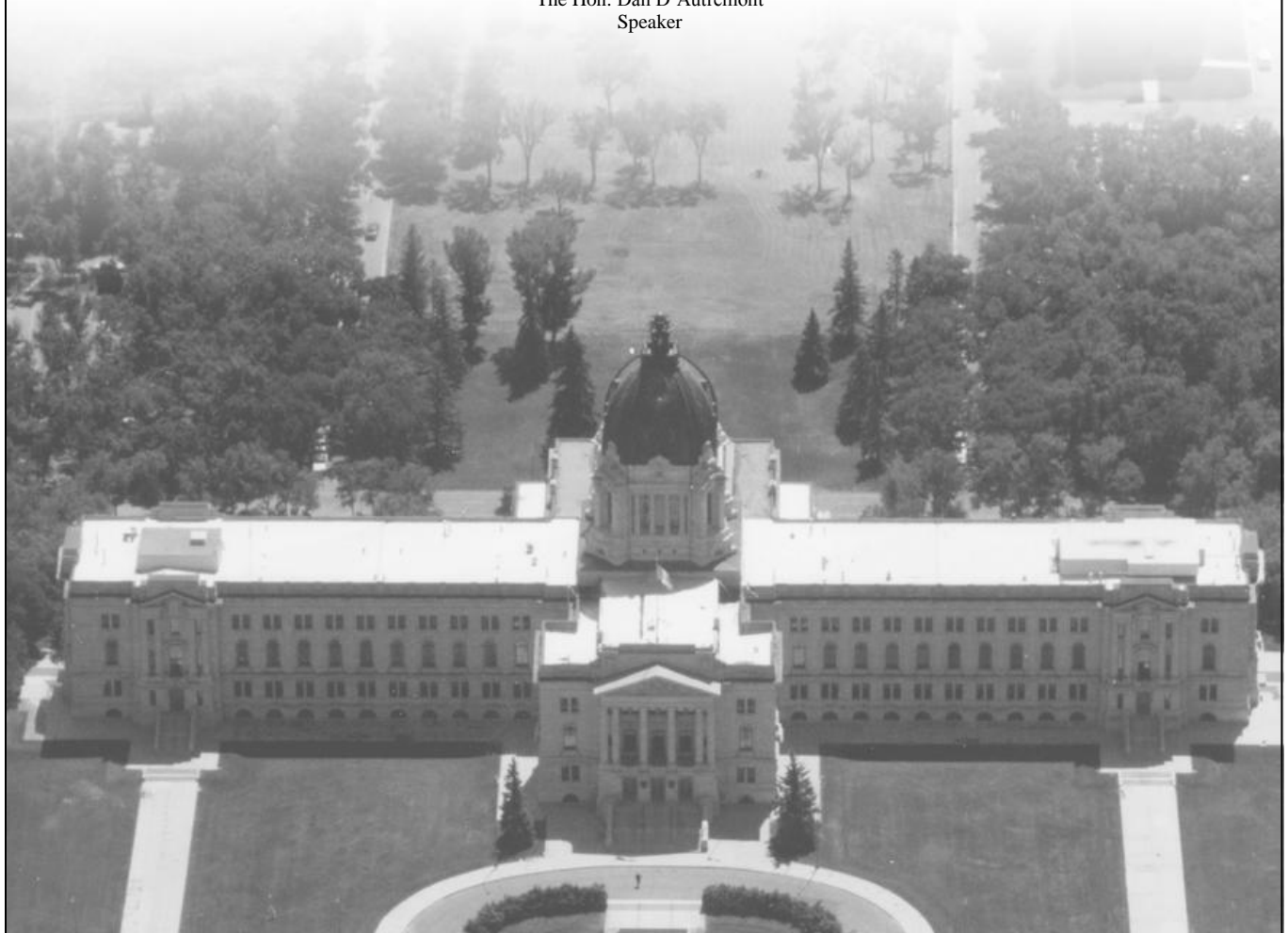
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. 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, 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, Hon. 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, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, 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, Hon. 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, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. 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, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I want to welcome and introduce all of the guests who have joined us today in the Assembly for budget day, Mr. Speaker. There was an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] that I can recall who on days like today would indicate that the stands were full. He may now be the officiant of proceedings for events like today. But we want to welcome everybody that's here, that's joined us in the galleries.

Represented here today are many municipalities across this province, many First Nations across this province, people who are on the front lines of social services and health care, those who are creating jobs and wealth in the province. They're all represented by the people that I can see, and so they're here to hear from the Minister of Finance a little bit later on in the budget. We want to welcome them here, but we also want to thank them for the representative job they do, of all of those people back in their communities and for the work that they do every single day, Mr. Speaker. I would ask all members of the House to welcome our guests to their Legislative Assembly today.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the Premier in welcoming the guests who are here in the Assembly today. It's always a good day in the Assembly when there are people from the province who are here. And we know that the people that are here love Saskatchewan and want the very best for the province. And that's why they're here today, and that's why they're involved in the many ways that they are involved in the great things that go on here in the province.

So I join with the Premier and ask all members to join me in welcoming the many guests that we have here in the Assembly today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I'd like to take this opportunity as well to welcome guests to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. I'd also like to remind our guests not to participate in events on the floor, and that includes applause. As well, please remain in your seats until after the Minister of Finance has presented his speech and there has been a reply from the opposition. Thank you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in reference to cellphone coverage.

And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Undertake, as soon as possible, to ensure SaskTel delivers cell service to the Canoe Lake First Nations, along with the adjoining communities of Cole Bay and Jans Bay; Buffalo River First Nations, also known as Dillon, and the neighbouring communities of St. George's Hill; and also English River First Nations, also known as Patuanak, and the hamlet of Patuanak; and Birch Narrows First Nations along with the community of Turnor Lake, including the neighbouring communities in each of these areas.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are all from throughout Saskatchewan, and the people that have signed this particular page, Mr. Speaker, are primarily from Turnor Lake. And I so present.

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 the reconsideration of passing Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. And we know since the employment Act was introduced in December, literally hundreds of hours of study and comparison have been carried out in the interests of due diligence. And we know there is no labour relation crisis to fix and no necessity to rush through this omnibus bill through that will likely govern workplace relations for decades to come. 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 not pass Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* in this current session before the end of May and to place it on a much longer legislative track to ensure greater understanding and support for the new labour law.

And, Mr. Speaker, people signing this petition come from Regina, Saskatoon, Humboldt, and Watson. I do so present. Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

News Director Wins Lifetime Achievement Award

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in this House today to recognize the recent achievement of a constituent and friend, Mr. Bob Maloney. Bob Maloney of Yorkton was the 2013 recipient of the Radio Television News Director Association's Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the Association of Electronic Journalists. This award was created in 2002 to recognize individuals who have distinguished themselves for outstanding service and continued excellence during the course of their career in broadcast journalism.

Bob was honoured with this award after spending nearly 36 years in broadcasting in Yorkton. He started with CKOS, CICC-TV in 1977 as a young reporter and cameraperson. His

responsibilities have extended well beyond the job he was hired to do. Over the years, Bob was a news anchor, a news director, a master of the commercial voice-over, and an active ambassador on behalf of the television station. Later on in his career, he assumed the role of station manager. Bob has served multiple terms on Yorkton city council, and in the fall of 2012, he retired from his broadcasting career after being elected our new mayor.

He is recognized for his dedication to his community and his selflessness, which is evident in the foundation he has offered to countless young broadcasters starting their careers, many of which are now seen regularly both provincially and nationally after graduating from the unofficial Bob Maloney school of broadcasting in Yorkton.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Mayor Bob Maloney on this prestigious award and thank him for his many years of community service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Creativity in Food Budgeting

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about the importance of budgets, family budgets, particularly the family grocery budget.

The public health nutritionists of Saskatchewan working group recently estimated the cost on average per week for a family of four to purchase a nutritious food basket was \$205. In northern Saskatchewan that same basket of food was \$252 per week. The average rent for a three bedroom apartment in Regina in April of 2012 was almost \$1,200 and \$974 in Prince Albert. Mr. Speaker, a family of four in Regina would need a monthly income of \$2,011 for food and groceries alone. In the North, this same family would need nearly \$2,000 per month for food and rent. The current assistance rates provide well below what families need to balance their budgets.

Dietitians and nutritionists are working with communities, trying to find creative solutions to these challenges. They work with individuals in helping with meal planning, skills sharing, and community kitchens, as well as addressing broader systemic challenges through policy work and research. Mr. Speaker, I challenge all of us to speak with dietitians and nutritionists working in our communities. Listen to the experiences they have to share and work with them to finding lasting solutions to poverty. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League Hall of Fame

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on March 1st, six former Estevan Bruin members were forever cemented in the history books of the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League as the newest inductees to the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League Hall of Fame. These inductees included Ron Dunville, Bruce Firth, Alan May, Terry Simpson, Ray Fehlick, and the late Bill Shinske.

The six men joined previous Hall of Fame honourees from Weyburn, Humboldt, and Yorkton over the last three years. The hall now has 15 inductees.

Mr. Speaker, each of these gentlemen played an integral role in the Estevan Bruins hockey club during their junior hockey career. The Bruins have been an important facet to the community of Estevan since 1957 when the club played their first game. The Bruins have instilled special pride in the citizens of Estevan as they have watched the club and its players grow into one of the strongest junior hockey teams in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating these men, one posthumously, on being inducted into the SJHL Hall of Fame and recognizing their remarkable achievements during their hockey careers with the Estevan Bruins. Thank you.

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

Web Series Selected for Festivals

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to congratulate a friend and former Saskatchewan-based actress and filmmaker, Amy Matysio. Her web series *InSAYSHable* has been announced as an official selection for the HollyWeb Festival and LA [Los Angeles] Webfest. These prestigious festivals showcase the best in web series from across the world.

Mr. Speaker, some members may remember that Amy Matysio recently starred alongside Christian Slater in *Stranded*, which was filmed in Saskatchewan because of the world-class Canada-Saskatchewan Sound Stage.

LA Webfest 2013 will be held March 28th to 31st. The event includes all screenings, workshops, panels, and the elaborate awards ceremony. HollyWeb is scheduled for April 5th to 7th and includes four genre awards with cash prizes.

Amy is the creator, writer, and co-producer of *InSAYSHable*. This is a Canadian-made series and includes director Jeff Beesley, who has worked on other Saskatchewan products like *Corner Gas* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie*. Toronto actress Christina Sicoli co-wrote the show and makes an appearance, and the series was produced in association with Regina's Minds Eye Entertainment.

InSAYSHable is a comedy that follows the life of a thirtysomething employed by a temp agency who can't help but get fired from every job she is assigned to. Every episode starts with a new workplace. Amy has given her reasons for starting a web series as: "Online, the boundaries are limitless. Anyone can connect with it; anyone can go online and watch it."

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of the House to join me in congratulating the incredibly talented Amy on her success. We'll miss her here in Saskatchewan, but we wish her the best of luck as she makes her new home in Toronto.

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

Moose Jaw Salvation Army's 125th Anniversary

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to congratulate the Moose Jaw Salvation Army on their 125th anniversary. This past Saturday evening I had the honour of attending the celebration at the Moose Jaw Salvation Army church as they reached the incredible milestone of 125 years in the Friendly City.

Mr. Speaker, the Moose Jaw Salvation Army is the oldest one in Saskatchewan. In the late 1800s, a young Army officer arrived in Moose Jaw and began services, and it has continued to this very day.

Mr. Speaker, every one of us can look around and see the various service and community groups that the Salvation Army touches. Their commitment to Moose Jaw is unwavering as they instill hope and faith in those that they minister and come in contact with. They are strong and compassionate and constantly inspiring to those around them to look past the busyness of daily life and reach out to those in need. The Salvation Army's stalwart commitment to doing for others is humbling, and for that I wish to thank them.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in congratulating the Moose Jaw Salvation Army on their milestone 125th anniversary, and thanking the staff, the volunteers, and to anyone who has ever donated to this incredible organization. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Batoche.

4-H Hall of Fame Inductees

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last weekend I had the honour of attending the annual 4-H appreciation banquet in Saskatoon. The banquet provided an opportunity to show appreciation for 4-H volunteers and to recognize those individuals who will be inducted into the 4-H Hall of Fame and receive Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medals. These five individuals have worked very hard to increase interest in 4-H and to create programs and projects to engage the youth of this great province. This year's Saskatchewan 4-H Hall of Fame inductees were Irene Dorrance, Mildred Everest, and Morris Kiland. The two individuals who received Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medals were Bernard Kemick and Vi Protz. Mr. Speaker, the efforts of these individuals have helped develop the future leaders of Saskatchewan's agricultural industry.

This event also provided me with an excellent opportunity to reflect on my own experiences in 4-H. Mr. Speaker, I was a 4-H leader for 18 years. So, Mr. Speaker, I have a special appreciation for those who have volunteered to work extremely hard to make the 4-H program in Saskatchewan so successful.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in recognizing the hard-working volunteers who have helped engage youth in the 4-H program.

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

Saskatchewan Grows

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today and draw attention to new population numbers released earlier this morning by Stats Canada. According to these latest figures, Saskatchewan's population grew by over 21,000 people in 2012 to an all-time high of 1,089,807. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan continues to grow. Over the last five years, Saskatchewan's population increased by more than 82,000 people. Saskatchewan's population grew by the second fastest rate among all provinces. Mr. Speaker, this increase in our provincial population demonstrates that our government's growth plan is working.

This growth is a stark contrast to the Saskatchewan from 10 years ago when the NDP [New Democratic Party] used an official government news release to praise themselves for a "dramatic reduction in our out-migration." Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, those days are behind us.

Later today our government will release a budget that addresses both the opportunities and challenges of growth. Our government does not seek growth for the sake of growth. We seek growth in order to improve the quality of life for all Saskatchewan people, and today's budget will take steps to do that, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of this Assembly, I would like to welcome all of the newcomers to our wonderful province and thank them for helping to move Saskatchewan forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Performance of Government and Opposition

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One thing that Saskatchewan people are increasingly realizing about this government is its stubborn approach. Once it has made up its mind, it stubbornly refuses to change course, even when Saskatchewan people overwhelmingly believe that the government has made a mistake.

One such example, Mr. Speaker, is the Premier's decision to put politicians ahead of people by changing the legislation to add three more MLAs to this Assembly after the next election. To the Premier: does he recognize that adding more politicians to the Assembly is not a priority for Saskatchewan people? Will he admit that it was a mistake to add three more MLAs to the Legislative Assembly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we know, the electoral boundary map is redrawn after a census, Mr. Speaker. And if there's been significant population growth, there is the chance that the number of seats will grow in the Legislative Assembly because of the fact that we're basically a representation by population system. And I notice the member

for Athabasca is laughing, Mr. Speaker, even though NDP Premier Allan Blakeney did exactly the same thing. This is what happens when we have periods of growth in the province.

More to the point, Mr. Speaker, I want to just say this: we have made a very basic commitment with respect to additional representation in this Chamber, and that is that it would not come at a net additional cost to taxpayers. Mr. Speaker, this is a government that has reduced the cost to taxpayers of government travel over what happened under members opposite; significantly reduced government advertising over what happened when members opposite were over here, Mr. Speaker. We will make sure that whatever happens in terms of changes in this Assembly happen at no additional cost to taxpayers.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, it will absolutely cost millions of dollars to have more MLAs in the Assembly, and suggesting anything otherwise is simply not believable, Mr. Speaker.

What frustrates Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, is that on the one hand, they're willing to spend millions more on more politicians, more MLAs; and on the other hand, they force cuts at the universities and they force debt onto the universities' books. One example, Mr. Speaker, is the Premier's decision to walk away from the election promise to properly fund the Health Sciences Building at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. Mr. Speaker, we know this has caused major problems financially on campus and is a major prime factor for having the financial crunch that we see on campus right now.

My question to the Premier: will he admit that it was wrong to force nearly \$100 million onto the universities' books, and will he admit that is a central part of the financial problem at the University of Saskatchewan right now?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — My hon. friend will want to be careful with the preambles to his questions, Mr. Speaker. Inside his preamble he said there have been cuts to universities. Mr. Speaker, the campus that he's talking about has received nearly a 40 per cent increase in its operating funds in the first term of this government. It's received an increase of 200 per cent in terms of capital funding on that campus. These are the facts of the matter.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, the Leader of the Opposition, the NDP raised the Academic Health Sciences Building. Mr. Speaker, we will stack our record on that important facility against members opposite any day of the week.

What did they do, Mr. Speaker? In 2003 they released a news release. They issued a press release saying, we're going to build a new academic health science centre. They had probation problems on the campus. This was part of their action, Mr. Speaker. What happened in 2004? Nothing. 2005, nothing; 2006, nothing. It took a change in government for funds to actually flow for that academic health science centre to begin construction, Mr. Speaker. We will get that job done, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier needs to visit the campuses here in Saskatchewan and talk to the sessional lecturers who are facing layoff at the U of R [University of Regina], talk to the staff who have been laid off at the University of Saskatchewan, and talk to the students that are facing increased tuition under the Sask Party government.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the only example of a stubborn refusal to admit a mistake. Another prime example, Mr. Speaker, is the Sask Party's decision to eliminate the film employment tax credit. This decision has forced many Saskatchewan families, hard-working, taxpaying Saskatchewan families to leave our province. Even, Mr. Speaker, when the chamber of commerce recognized that this was a short-sighted decision, we have seen a refusal from the Sask Party government to admit that it was a mistake.

My question to the Premier: will he recognize today that it was a mistake to eliminate the film employment tax credit and force so many families out of this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Once again, Mr. Speaker, watch the preamble wherein the hon. member makes a claim about the U of R. The U of R, over the life of this government, has received an operating increase, I think, of 31 per cent, while inflation over that same time has been 10 per cent. Mr. Speaker, these are the facts of the matter.

So are we going to admit that that increased funding to post-secondary institutions that are three and fourfold greater than inflation are a mistake? No they're not a mistake. It's been part of the growth agenda for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, later this day we're going to hear, perhaps, some more news on something this government has announced, together with creative industries, called Creative Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, it is a holistic approach to those important creative industries in the province. Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to what the Hon. Minister of Finance has to say on this subject.

Mr. Speaker, if, for example, the creative groups in this province like what they hear, I wonder what the NDP will say then. I hope that they will stand in their place and recognize this is a good idea. The same would go for the Arts Board, not knowing obviously what the Minister of Finance is about to say about that particular file.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to move forward with arts. We've increased funding by 30 per cent for that community. There may well be more progress to be heard about in just a few more minutes. We'll wait and see, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — The Sask Party's stubborn refusal to admit a mistake is also evident in the area of employment for First Nations and Métis people. If we want a strong future in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, if we want everyone to be doing well in Saskatchewan, it means extending opportunity to more

and more people.

For months, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the employment numbers for First Nations and Métis people, we've seen the numbers have been stagnant most months or moving in the wrong direction. Part of the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the government decided to eliminate, to cut the Aboriginal employment development program. This is seen by Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, as a short-sighted decision. And economists like Eric Howe, Mr. Speaker, have highlighted how this has played a central role in the poor numbers that we've seen when it comes to First Nations and Métis employment.

My question to the Premier: does he admit, does he recognize that it was a mistake to eliminate the Aboriginal employment development program? And does he see that as a factor, Mr. Speaker, for the poor numbers that we've seen when it comes to First Nations and Métis employment here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago the latest employment numbers came out for the province. Our unemployment rate is 3.8 per cent. That's number one in the country, Mr. Speaker. We've seen some progress with respect to Aboriginal employment in those numbers, some increases — not enough, Mr. Speaker. That's why we've moved forward on the joint task force with the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations]. That's why we've moved forward in partnership with institutions like the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies.

Mr. Speaker, the program that hon. member refers to, notwithstanding what an individual professor may say, if you take a look at the investment and the jobs created, was not working for Aboriginal people in this province. We will focus on education and economic development opportunities. I think we're about to hear more from that as well from the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, an area where we are not prepared to go is a special deal. I know that's where that member's coming from. He would like to see this government announce a special resource revenue sharing deal for First Nations, Mr. Speaker. FSIN called for it today. At least that was his position last week. We're not going there, Mr. Speaker, but we will continue to make progress and more about that in a moment as well.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, businesses, First Nations and Métis people, and the broader public understand, Mr. Speaker, that the AEDP [Aboriginal employment development program] was playing a constructive role, and having its elimination, Mr. Speaker, has been detrimental to employment numbers here in Saskatchewan.

Another area, Mr. Speaker, where we see a stubborn approach, has to do with the funding of long-term care facilities here in Saskatchewan. There's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that families need to have more options and better options when it comes to caring for our loved ones, when it comes to caring for our

grandmas, our grandpas, our moms and dads. We saw, Mr. Speaker, with the Sask Party's project in Saskatoon with Amicus, an approach that cost taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, millions of dollars more than necessary. Even the auditor, Mr. Speaker, said there was no good reason for pursuing that particular funding model. Yet the Sask Party stubbornly refuses to admit that that was a problem, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Premier: will he agree with the auditor, Mr. Speaker, around the comments that there was no good reason for pursuing that particular funding model?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I think there is some stubbornness not to make mistakes on this particular issue but you're going to find it with members opposite. Mr. Speaker, when this party was in office in this province for 16 years, they managed to, at the end of their term, see 1,600 fewer long-term care beds, closed 1,600 long-term care beds, closed 52 hospitals, Mr. Speaker, in rural Saskatchewan, and refused to hire the proper complement of nurses, Mr. Speaker, another area that this side of the House has addressed in just five years.

Mr. Speaker, what has happened since? We've had the announcement of new long-term care facilities in rural Saskatchewan, and yes in urban Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and more to come — \$800 million in health care capital in our first five years of government. That's triple from the last five years of the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, adding more MLAs, increasing debt on our university campuses, cutting the Aboriginal employment development program, refusing the auditor's advice when it comes to funding models, Mr. Speaker, are all examples of the Sask Party government's stubborn refusal to correct their mistakes.

Another example, Mr. Speaker, comes to their approach to budgeting. The Provincial Auditor has criticized what she has referred to as "the creative accounting rules" of the government and the fact that the government is still using two sets of books. The NDP have long acknowledged that it's time to adopt the generally accepted accounting principles that other provinces here in Canada use. But, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party stubbornly refuses to accept that.

My question to the Premier: will he agree with the auditor that now is the time to have one set of books? Will he agree, Mr. Speaker, that it's time that Saskatchewan has a consistent position with the other provinces in the country?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, mindful that I'm sitting right beside the Finance minister, I am prepared to announce that this government will present the finances of Saskatchewan in terms of a summary financial basis. We're also going to present the General Revenue Fund — the operating, the chequing account for the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we're going to follow *The Financial Administration Act* that was passed by the

NDP.

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

IPAC-CO2

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After three weeks of session and for the better part of a year, we've been pushing that government to come clean on its IPAC [International Performance Assessment Centre for geologic storage of CO₂] affair, an affair that includes a conflict of interest, misleading statements, and wasted taxpayers' money.

Despite having three Sask Party appointed directors on the board right from inception, the minister has failed to answer straight questions. That government never shared any of the issues with the public until they were pushed in committee and until further information was exposed through the media. Now that's not accountability.

Mr. Speaker, I've asked this question before, but the minister hasn't been willing to answer it, and it's time for her to finally come clean. To the minister: how many taxpayers' dollars have been wasted in its IPAC affair?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Crown Investments.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the University of Regina was tasked to set up an agency to look into carbon capture and sequestration. Under the management of the university, there was a contract entered into that was sole sourced and there was issues with conflict of interest. All of that has been exposed to the member opposite as well as the public.

When that was discovered, there was a Provincial Auditor report, there was a forensic audit ordered, and there was an independent evaluation of the assets, Mr. Speaker. That member has all of that information.

Going forward, once all of the appropriate steps were taken, IPAC has done exceptionally good work. The contract up to that point was \$2.9 million. There were three partners involved — the provincial government, the federal government, and Royal Dutch Shell.

[14:00]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pretty straightforward question once again here today and not an answer, Mr. Speaker — no disclosure of how much money's been wasted. And the public has a right to know these things.

They also know where these dollars went. The CEO [chief executive officer] of IPAC herself has said that these dollars were mostly waste. Some might remember that she suggested there's computers sitting in boxes, that there were inflated contracts from handshake deals with conflicts of interest for services the minister once claimed were good value for dollar, Mr. Speaker.

If Saskatchewan taxpayers' dollars money has been wasted, someone or some people have benefited, Mr. Speaker. The minister has the opportunity here today to be straight with Saskatchewan people. To the minister: how much was wasted? Who's benefited from those wasted dollars in its IPAC affair? And what's she doing to get those dollars back?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Crown Investments.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — The member opposite again in his preamble is saying things that indeed I haven't said in the past. I didn't say there was value for dollar. What I said was, the evaluation of the assets did show that they had value when they did the work. They were not thrown in the garbage. It was not set up at a garage sale.

However if that member is sincere and this isn't just nothing more than more political spin, then he needs to go out into the rotunda; he needs to say who he is accusing here of personal gaining because the forensic audit says that there is no one that they can identify that personally gained from this contract. So if that member has information that he is keeping secret, he needs to take it to the appropriate authorities.

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

Technology Company and University

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Pretty interesting from the minister who's responsible for taxpayers' dollars that have been described as being wasted, and now no one is provided an answer as to who benefited from it.

But the Minister of Energy and Resources has waded into the debacle involving many of the same players here this week. Million dollar lawsuits were exposed this week on a major project in his portfolio with millions of taxpayers' dollars on the line. And if you can imagine, the minister said he didn't even know about the lawsuits that were filed in November until the media exposed them on Monday. And despite that fact and the involvement of millions of dollars, if you can imagine, he said it wasn't a concern to him or that government — a full dismissal of ministerial responsibility.

With taxpayers' money, his ministry funded the start-up of CVI [Climate Ventures Inc.], the tech company embroiled in the IPAC affair. It's at the heart of the conflicts and waste.

Seeing that it's yet to be answered, can the minister explain why his ministry spent nearly \$200,000 of taxpayers' dollars to start up CVI in the first place in 2008, and what's he doing to investigate wrongdoing and wasted money as a result of his costly start-up?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, we've been through this before with the member opposite. We've been very clear with him in the past, Mr. Speaker. This government, the Ministry of Energy and Resources has funded the university in the past. We have funded them to do research, Mr. Speaker. As far as the

university, we feel they've done the research we funded them for.

When it comes to the university, Mr. Speaker, and their development when they want to commercialize, that is a responsibility of the university. The university, Mr. Speaker, commercializes much of the research they do across a very broad spectrum. They enter into contracts with the private sector, Mr. Speaker, to commercialize that research. That is something that this government has not been involved with. And the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, he knows this.

If he wants to know, Mr. Speaker, the details of the lawsuit, he should talk to the parties involved in it — the university and a private sector company, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Saskatchewan has no part in the lawsuit, Mr. Speaker, and that is just the reality of this situation.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The minister maybe didn't hear the question. The question wasn't about the lawsuit. The question was the \$200,000 that your ministry invested to start up CVI in 2008 that's now at the heart of this entire debacle and waste, Mr. Speaker. Three questions — no answers, Mr. Speaker.

Government has a responsibility to protect taxpayers and manage its partnerships, but clearly a disturbing trend is emerging with that government. In its IPAC affair and debacle, the government has displayed no accountability, no answers, no responsibility and in fact has deflected responsibility and pointed fingers at many others.

Mr. Speaker, why has a disturbing leak of information exposed through scrutiny and investigations become the norm for this government of late instead of accountability, transparency, and straight answers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Crown Investments.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — You know, there is one member in this House and there's one party in this House that's pointing fingers with absolutely nothing to back up their accusations. Day after day after day, they have no information. We have a forensic audit, quite frankly, that clearly says that nobody personally gained from the contract with the university and CVI. The member opposite chooses to ignore the forensic audit. He chooses to ignore all of the facts while he spins day after day and makes accusations with nothing to back them up.

Mr. Speaker, I want him to go out and back up his statements because quite frankly we have yet to see any information come from that member opposite. It's unlike the days of the past with the NDP, where we actually had memos. We had memos in our possession where there was elected members in the NDP Party saying that, we're just going to say there is a partnership because the optics look better. Do we all remember SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], Mr. Speaker?

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

Performance of Government and Opposition

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, part of that emerging trend that we see in this government, in this IPAC affair and the debacle, is an unwillingness to admit mistakes, an unwillingness to come clean, an unwillingness to take responsibility and shed light on the issue, leaving many to question what that government has to hide.

We've been pushing on this for the better part of a year. We've brought forward motions in committee to authorize the Provincial Auditor to fully investigate this entire affair. That's been denied by that side. We put forward calls, many calls recently denied by that side. And simply we believe that sunshine is the best disinfectant on an issue like this.

Mr. Speaker, question to the Premier: will he finally do the right thing? Will he show some leadership and accountability and finally today support the call to the Provincial Auditor to fully investigate this entire mess, the IPAC affair and all the related conflicts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, there have been several audits with respect to this particular issue, one by the auditor. The auditor he's referring to is the auditor for the University of Regina, you know, and I don't know why he wants more audits because he ignores them anyway. When the forensic audit says no one personally gained, he burns 12 questions in question period on that same point.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the stubbornness to admit mistakes, do you know what I've yet to hear? I've yet to hear how the natural governing party went down to nine seats, Mr. Speaker. What mistakes do they have to admit to there? Was it their \$5 billion election platform, Mr. Speaker, that would most assuredly have driven this province into deficit and debt? Is it specific policies? When will they stand up and say, we got it wrong? That's why they're over there and, Mr. Speaker, we're on this side of the House.

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

Standardized Testing and Student Achievement

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, while our neighbours in other provinces and friends internationally pull away from standardized testing, Saskatchewan is moving in the wrong direction. Alberta and BC [British Columbia] are both contemplating changes to their standardized testing because they know that tests aren't improving outcomes for students. And now, Mr. Speaker, checking in our school system and talking about improving learning as a whole is a good thing. But tying the hands of teachers and forcing students to meet arbitrary tests won't improve learning outcomes and it won't improve the province's abysmal graduation rate, which has been too low for far too long, especially for Aboriginal students.

The minister's had many opportunities to give a clear answer why his government is doing standardized testing. He's even said the evidence is evident, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: what

evidence does he have that standardized testing instead of actual improved learning opportunities is the way to go for our province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the member opposite for the question. You know, our government is committed fully to the success of all students in our province, every single one of them — northern, southern, First Nation, non-First Nation, French. We're committed to every student.

The student achievement initiative, Mr. Speaker, didn't just come out of the blue. As my colleague said it, we didn't find it in a garage sale. This student achievement initiative is the product, is the result of the provincial panel on student achievement, Mr. Speaker. And one of their recommendations was for the government to conduct a comprehensive and individualized student assessment program for students in our province, Mr. Speaker. We see that as a strategic and valuable investment in the future of our students. And we'll continue to do that and we'll continue to invest in the future of our students, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, the people of Saskatchewan need to understand exactly what the minister is saying here. He's saying he's all for dictating when the school boards should start their classes. And he's saying he's all for telling them how long a school day should be, down to the minute. And he's saying he's all for . . . [inaudible] . . . testing instead of teaching, and yet he won't provide the school boards with the resources to keep class sizes low. It just doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker.

Parents, teachers, students have learning as their priority. Why isn't it a priority for this minister?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. minister for his work with the panel on student achievement. I want to thank the four school divisions we featured in this House earlier this week who already are using standards-based testing, Mr. Speaker.

In my home constituency, in Chinook School Division, here's the evidence. We have kids that were learning 63 per cent learning at grade level. Because of standards-based achievement, because of resources for teachers, four years later the number is 80 per cent.

He mentioned graduation rates. In Melfort where they are using, as a pilot, standards-based testing, we see what? An increase in graduation rates, Mr. Speaker. This is the evidence that we're encouraged by. This is what we'd like to see for the whole province.

Mr. Speaker, our education system has challenges. We want to ensure graduation rates are higher. There are more people living in this province now, so there are more students than ever

before. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it's worth noting that roughly 10 years ago the then NDP government issued a press release, and they said that out-migration . . . The headline was, "Out-migration is now at a slower rate in the province of Saskatchewan," Mr. Speaker. And then the press release went on to call that momentum. Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we call that gravity, Mr. Speaker.

We're interested in seeing growth happen. We know there are pressures in education when that happens, so we will provide the resources necessary. We will improve graduation rates and education results for kids, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TABLING OF ESTIMATES AND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to submit the estimates and supplementary estimates accompanied by a message from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

The Speaker: — Would you all please rise for a message from the Lieutenant Governor. The message is as follows:

The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2014, and supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2013, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly. The Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield, Lieutenant Governor, province of Saskatchewan.

You may all be seated. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

[14:15]

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, colleagues, and visitors, I am honoured to rise today and to deliver our government's 2013-14 budget for the people and province of Saskatchewan. This is our government's sixth budget, and my third as Minister of Finance.

I want to thank my cabinet and caucus colleagues and all the government officials involved in the enormous task of preparing this budget. I also want to thank the groups and individuals who provided recommendations and suggestions on what should be in this budget. I cannot guarantee that you will see everything you asked for, but I can guarantee you, you were heard and your ideas were appreciated.

[14:15]

And I want to thank my family and friends. Throughout the Chamber are many friends and relatives who have travelled from different parts of the province to be here, and I'm

extremely grateful. Seated in the gallery opposite and not on the Assembly floor are my son, Bryce; daughter-in-law, Olivia; and granddaughters, Willow and Scarlett from Yorkton. They are up in the gallery because Scarlett probably would have run over here exclaiming, grandpa, grandpa. Or even though the budget speech will be exciting, the girls might find it quite boring after 10 or 15 minutes and need to leave the Chamber. It's great to have you here in the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, on the floor of the Assembly I'm honoured to have our friends Mark and Cheryl Eskra and their daughter Alexandra. Alex is a student at the University of Regina, and Mark and Cheryl are business owners in Invermay. Mark is a former student of mine, employee of mine, business partner of mine, and of course always a great friend. Thank you to Cheryl and Mark for all you do for us.

I'm also extremely pleased to have my sister and brother-in-law, Sally and Glen Braithwaite, from Winnipeg. Thank you so much for being here and happy anniversary, your 50th anniversary, this coming summer.

Last but not least, my wife Gail is here. And I can only say thank you for everything you do that allows me to serve the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, for years Saskatchewan was Canada's best-kept secret. Well the secret is out. This year thousands of Canadians will discover the Saskatchewan advantage first-hand.

In fact next month our province will host the Canadian music awards, the Junos, in Regina and Moose Jaw. That event will be followed by the Memorial Cup junior hockey championship in Saskatoon this May. And of course the Grey Cup, our national party, will be held here in Regina in November. All of us in Saskatchewan are confident the Roughriders will represent the West in this year's Grey Cup. Will they win it? We can't say for sure. But there's one thing we do know. With music fans, hockey fans, and football fans set to converge on Saskatchewan, we know the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority will have a good year.

Mr. Speaker, these events will attract thousands of visitors. But in the new Saskatchewan, people aren't just coming to visit. They're coming to stay. They're coming to build a career and a future and a family and a life. And they are coming in numbers that we have not seen since the earliest days of our province. Just this morning we learned that Saskatchewan has grown again — 1,089,807 of us now call Saskatchewan home. That's more people living here than ever before, and it's an increase of 21,000 in the past year alone and 82,000 since the start of 2008.

Last fall our Premier released *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* and set a bold goal — 1.2 million people living in Saskatchewan by 2020. This is a goal that would have seemed unimaginable a decade ago. Today we are right on track to meet that goal.

The growth plan sets an objective of 60,000 more people working in Saskatchewan by 2020. We are on track to meet that goal as well. Employment last month was up more than 24,000 from a year ago. Our province's strong economy and now our entrepreneurs are creating new jobs. And now our

unemployment rate is just 3.8 per cent, by far the lowest in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the growth plan is working. But the growth plan is not about growth for the sake of growth. It's about improving the quality of life for all Saskatchewan people. It's about balance — not only balancing the books but also balancing the priorities of Saskatchewan people. Not only continuing to grow but also meeting the challenges of growth. Not only providing opportunity but also ensuring we protect those in our province who need our help.

Our plan is about balance, Mr. Speaker, balanced growth. And the first thing I want to tell you about this budget: it is a balanced budget. It is balanced in the General Revenue Fund, and it is balanced in the summary financial statements.

And it is balanced in other ways as well. It is a budget that balances the need to control spending with the need to make important investments in key areas. One of those key areas is helping people who need it most. Today we are keeping our election promise by once again increasing support for low-income seniors under the seniors' income plan to \$250 a month, nearly triple what it was when we took office.

The growth plan sets a goal of making Saskatchewan the best province to live for people with disabilities. This budget takes a number of important steps toward meeting that objective. We will increase support by \$50 per month for individuals and \$60 per month for couples under the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program. This budget provides a \$10.2 million increase for community-based organizations that help those with disabilities, part of the \$20 million increase for organizations that provide care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for some of our vulnerable citizens. And we are increasing transit assistance for persons with disabilities by 10 per cent, including a doubling of capital funding for paratransit buses.

Mr. Speaker, this is another group of people in our province that need more help. A few weeks ago, we heard that violence against women in Saskatchewan is double the national average. These numbers are disturbing because they are not just numbers. They represent real women, and they represent real families and lives being torn apart by the devastation of domestic violence. Mr. Speaker, all of us pray for the day that violence against women no longer exists. But until that day comes, we must do more to provide a safe haven for those women and their children fleeing abusive relationships. Today we are increasing operational funding for all women's shelters in Saskatchewan, including facilities in Regina and Prince Albert that have been expanded.

Mr. Speaker, in 1989 a dedicated group of volunteers in Swift Current partnered with the province to open a new transition house in that city. Regrettably that was the last new transition house announced in our province — until today. Our government, through Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, will partner with the federal government and the local community to cover the \$1.3 million construction cost of a new transition house in Melfort. Our government will provide operational support as well to the community of Melfort. I would like to thank and congratulate all the community volunteers in Melfort whose efforts have made this much-needed project a reality.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, this budget is a balanced budget. At a time when most other jurisdictions continue to struggle with large deficits and mounting debt, Saskatchewan's finances remain sound. That said, it's no secret that resource revenues are down. So in order to achieve that balance, our government has to control spending.

This budget does just that with a modest overall spending increase of just 3.1 percent. Well over 40 per cent of each year's provincial budget goes towards health care. So if we are to control spending, we need to control health spending while still providing the best possible quality of care that puts patients first.

We saw a great example of that just a few weeks ago when, through the leadership of Premier Ghiz and our Premier, the provinces got together to co-operate on the purchase of six generic drugs. This co-operation will save our health system \$10 million a year while still providing the prescription drugs that patients need. It's just one example. Those working in our health system continue to find new and innovative ways to manage while ensuring quality care is the highest priority. We thank them for their efforts.

Today there are more doctors practising in Saskatchewan. Today there are more nurses working in Saskatchewan. Surgical wait times are much shorter than they were just a few years ago. These results prove that quality care is not just about spending more; it's about spending smarter.

Health spending is up 3.5 per cent in this budget to a total of \$4.8 billion. Part of that increase is to address demographic pressures. Over the past six years, health spending has risen under our government by more than 41 per cent. And since 2007, our government has made tremendous progress in reducing surgical wait times in Saskatchewan.

We also recognize that more work needs to be done. Our government has set a target of reducing wait times to no more than three months. To help meet that target, this budget includes \$10 million in additional funding for the Saskatchewan surgical initiative, boosting the total so far to more than \$70 million.

Including the surgical initiative, this budget provides a \$131.5 million increase, four and a half per cent more overall compared to last year, to our province's regional health authorities for operating funding. This boosts health authority funding to more than \$3 billion in 2013-14. Health authority increases include: nearly 45 million to cover operating increases and cost increases to drugs and other medical supplies, 29 million to help address pressures attributable to population growth, 4.3 million to establish collaborative emergency centres and enhance other innovations to improve primary health care, and \$2 million for an innovative home care services pilot project for seniors here in Regina.

This budget also provides a net increase of nearly \$12 million, up 8.6 per cent from last year, to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. Funding for that important agency has been increased by more than 90 per cent over the past six years.

This budget also includes an additional 1.5 million to extend the rural doctor locum pool by an additional four to five doctors,

and \$250,000 for a rural physician recruitment incentive program to attract and retain more doctors in rural Saskatchewan.

This budget also provides significant funding totalling nearly \$164 million for health care capital investments, including 86.5 million to begin or continue construction of 11 long-term care facilities and \$50 million for the Moose Jaw Union Hospital replacement.

And this budget provides \$350,000 more — 400,000 in total — to expand Alzheimer's First Link services. This is a seven-fold increase compared to last year.

Mr. Speaker, as you recall last year, I had the honour of introducing the STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] air ambulance service in Saskatchewan. Since that time, STARS has responded to 220 calls from people in our province. In fact last year in my constituency, the mayor of Canora's son was airlifted from Yorkton to Regina after sustaining critical injuries in a motor vehicle accident. Today this young man is healthy and very appreciative that this service is available to rural Saskatchewan. This year our government will again provide a \$10.5 million in funding to STARS, matching the amount provided last year to help the residents of our province when they need it most.

Mr. Speaker, our government is also providing additional support to Saskatchewan's elementary, high school and post-secondary students. Pre-K [pre-kindergarten] to 12 operating funding is up 2.3 per cent in this budget compared to last year — a total of nearly \$1.8 billion. Funding includes a boost of 17 million to address enrolment increases, as well as 2.4 million more for a total of 3.5 million to cover rising enrolments at independent schools.

[14:30]

More than \$20 million, an increase of nearly \$600,000, to support 15 new pre-K kindergarten programs for a total of 301 pre-kindergarten programs in Saskatchewan.

And this budget includes nearly 120 million for school capital projects, including more than 18 million for the next phase of capital construction in Hudson Bay, Leader, and Martensville. This also includes nearly \$2 million to begin the planning for new projects in Langenburg and Gravelbourg.

Mr. Speaker, I need to also say a few words about how we fund education in our province. As you know, a large portion of K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] funding comes from the education property tax. So here again, we need to find balance. We need to balance the need to properly fund our K to 12 system with the need to keep taxes as low and affordable as possible. Just a few years ago, this system was badly out of balance. Education taxes were far too high and there were property tax revolts throughout the province.

In 2009 our government fulfilled our campaign promise to fix the broken education property tax system, and in doing so we delivered the largest property tax reduction in Saskatchewan history.

Now, four years later, we had another important decision to make. 2013 is a reassessment year, and as a result of our strong and growing economy we have seen property values in Saskatchewan increase by 67 per cent. While this is great news for property owners, it also means those same property owners would have faced dramatic tax increases if we had left the tax rates at current levels. Our government wasn't going to let that happen. So in order to offset the impact of the huge increase in property values, today we are lowering the education property tax mill rates to keep the impact of reassessment revenue neutral overall.

The new mill rates will be 2.67 mills for agricultural land, down from 3.91 mills. 5.03 mills for residential property, down from 9.51 mills. We will go from three tiers of mill rates on commercial property to a single rate of 8.28 mills. And we are creating a new category of resource property with a rate of 11.04 mills.

Of course some people will still see property tax increases, while others will see taxes decrease based on the relative assessed values of their properties. Overall the impact of the reassessment will be revenue-neutral. But as the Premier told SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention last week, this may need to change in the future as we work to achieve the right balance between education funding and affordable taxes.

This budget also provides the Ministry of Advanced Education with nearly \$788 million in annual funding, an increase of nearly 9 per cent compared to last year. Since 2007 our government has increased funding for post-secondary education by more than 40 per cent. This year's funding to Advanced Education includes: more than 448 million in base operating funding for Saskatchewan's universities and federated and affiliated colleges, an increase of 2.1 per cent; nearly 150 million in operating funding for Saskatchewan's technical institutes, a 3.1 per cent increase; and over \$27 million in operating funding for regional colleges, an increase of 2.1 per cent.

Our government is also working to make education more affordable for Saskatchewan students. We are providing almost \$20 million more to advance these three initiatives and other direct student supports this year. This will boost funding to more than 117 million including: more than \$63.9 million for the graduate retention program, an increase of over \$12 million; \$34.5 million for the Student Aid Fund; more than \$7 million for the Saskatchewan advantage scholarship, an increase of nearly 3 million; over \$6 million to establish the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings; and \$5 million for a number of other provincially funded scholarships.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also provides more than \$25 million for post-secondary capital including: over 16 million of maintenance capital, 1 million to support the planning and design development phases of the Trades and Technology Centre project at Parkland Regional College in Yorkton, \$4 million for continued construction of the new Southeast Regional College in Weyburn. In total this budget includes over \$16 million in funding that will go toward the Health Sciences facility's capital and operating costs at the University of Saskatchewan. In addition, Mr. Speaker, a \$10 million grant

through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation will be invested in a new student residence at the University of Regina.

This budget also provides significant funding to help train Saskatchewan's future doctors and nurses, including 17.8 million to support postgraduate physician training seats, an increase of \$2 million; more than 14 million, an increase of over 2 million, to continue the 690 registered nurse training seat expansion; and \$21.5 to continue the implementation of 100 medical undergraduate and 120 medical residency seats, an increase of 2.9 million from 2012-13.

Our government is also providing an increase of more than \$1.5 million compared to last year's budget, over 21 million in total, for the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission to purchase an additional 300 training seats. \$1.5 million more is being provided to begin to eliminate the wait-list for adult basic education.

This budget also provides increases to support the plan for growth commitment to build on promising programs that assist First Nations and Métis students to pursue jobs and educational opportunities. Work-readiness employment development is receiving a \$1.5 million increase, boosting annual funding to nearly \$25 million, in part to accelerate essential skills training and to increase employment opportunities for First Nations and Métis people through the northern career quest program, the Saskatchewan industrial trades and employment partnership, and the inroads to agriculture careers program.

We are also providing a half million dollar increase overall for the skills training allocation, including \$150,000 for the aircraft maintenance engineer training program at the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology. In addition, the provincial training allowance is receiving a \$900,000 increase, bringing total annual funding to more than \$30 million.

As we see more people come to Saskatchewan from outside our borders, helping our province grow and our workforce expand, it is important we help our new neighbours get a good start. That's why an increase of 1.5 million, more than 9 million in total, is being provided for immigrant settlement support programming. And, Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to advocate for an expansion of the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program which helps bring skilled immigrant workers and their families from around the world to our great province.

A highly skilled, well-trained workforce is key to achieving our goal of 600,000 people working in Saskatchewan by 2020. As we work to build a skilled labour force, we're continuing our focus on one of Saskatchewan's distinct advantages — a young and growing Aboriginal population. We are stepping up efforts to engage Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan's economy and labour force. We will ensure that in the coming years, First Nations and Métis people have every opportunity to become a major component of the growing Saskatchewan workforce and economy.

To succeed, we need to enhance education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis people. That means more support for Aboriginal students and training programs. It means more support for initiatives recommended by the joint task force on improving education and employment outcomes which

our government has undertaken in partnership with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. In this budget, our government has dedicated \$3 million in new funding for initiatives to respond to the joint task force's recommendations which will be made public in the weeks ahead.

Mr. Speaker, this budget provides \$184.8 million, an increase of 10.8 million or 6.2 per cent from last year's budget, for targeted program funding from our government's ministries for initiatives that benefit First Nations and Métis people. This support is over and above our government's spending that benefits all Saskatchewan people.

Moving forward, our government's focus will be more funding for education and training programs with a proven record of success as well as the funding of new programs that are clearly dedicated to achieving results. One of the real success stories in terms of northern and Aboriginal employment has been our province's uranium industry. Close to half of those employed in Saskatchewan's uranium industry are Aboriginal. However in recent years, uranium mine expansion has been discouraged due to the royalty regime and more attractive taxation policies in other uranium-producing countries.

In this budget, we are moving to addressing that barrier to growth in the same way the government introduced a successful new potash royalty structure a few years ago that resulted in major expansion and employment opportunities. Today our government is looking to duplicate that success through changes to modernize our uranium royalty structure which we believe will lead to new expansions, new investment, and new jobs in the North, particularly for First Nation and Métis people.

Mr. Speaker, our government continues to move forward on the children and youth agenda. This budget includes a total increase of \$12.1 million for the priorities of the children and youth agenda including the child welfare review and increases for programs addressing fetal alcohol syndrome and autism. This brings support from all areas of government to these most vital initiatives to over \$290 million. We are providing an increase of almost 6.7 million for the organizations that provide child and family services.

In the last five years there were 33,000 new housing starts in Saskatchewan, 65 per cent more than the number built during the previous five years. Last year alone there were nearly 10,000 housing starts in our province, the largest number since the 1970s. As well in 2012, rental starts hit 1,072. This is more than the rental starts in the years 2002 to 2009 combined, but we need to do more in order to meet the housing demands of a growing province.

This budget continues our government's commitment to invest \$344 million in 12,600 new affordable housing units by 2016. This year's commitment includes: \$10 million investment in the proposed students' residence at the U of R, construction of 1,300 new rentals under the rental construction initiative with funding of \$6 million, development of 240 new home ownership units through the affordable home ownership program with funding of 1.2 million, support for 70 secondary suites with funding of \$1 million, construction of 40 new homes through Habitat for Humanity by doubling the current funding from 1 million to \$2 million, repairs to 275 existing affordable

housing units to keep them viable with \$3.2 million in funding through the Saskatchewan repair program, and construction of 140 new government subsidized homes with \$5 million under the federal-provincial cost-shared rental development and capital rent subsidy programs. This budget also provides nearly \$4 million more to cover increased use of the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, food safety continues to be a priority of our government. This budget provides 1.5 million, a \$250,000 increase, to ensure adequate resources for provincial meat inspection as well as \$3 million for the first year of Saskatchewan's seven-year, \$15 million commitment to the Global Institute for Food Security.

And in the area of water security, we've established the Water Security Agency, bringing together government's core water management responsibilities. And we will be increasing funding to the rural water control program by \$500,000 to \$1.2 million.

Mr. Speaker, our growing economy allows us to invest in the arts and creative industries. This budget provides a 5 per cent increase to the Saskatchewan Arts Board, bringing annual funding for that organization to \$6.8 million in support of funded art organizations. This budget also provides \$5 million to the new Creative Saskatchewan's investment program to support growth and development in the areas of music and sound recording, film and television, digital media, visual arts, publishing, crafts, theatre, and dance.

We are also providing \$100,000 in new funding to match the city of Regina's commitment to support operations at the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] Heritage Centre. And this budget provides \$50,000 in new funding to support the development of a military history project to help promote and safeguard Saskatchewan's proud military heritage.

Mr. Speaker, another way to improve the quality of life for Saskatchewan people is to provide more options for their retirement income. Saskatchewan has been supportive of the federal government's efforts to strengthen Canada's retirement income system through the introduction of pooled registered pension plans, or PRPPs. In order to make PRPPs available to all Saskatchewan employees and the self-employed, our government will introduce *The Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act* in 2013.

Saskatchewan's PRPP legislation will mirror federal legislation with modifications as necessary to align with existing provincial pension rules. As with the federal legislation, PRPPs will be a voluntary option for Saskatchewan employers, allowing them to choose whether or not to offer a PRPP to their employees. Our government will also be introducing legislation that will create the opportunity for the Saskatchewan Pension Plan to become a PRPP provider.

Pension discussion, Mr. Speaker, reminds me of Gail's questions about my retirement and when I might be able to do something about that list of things that have been postponed for years. It's almost easier to deal with the growth of the province

of Saskatchewan than it is to deal with the growth of that to-do list. Sorry, dear.

One of the biggest challenges facing a growing province is addressing its infrastructure needs. Our government is meeting that challenge. We have invested 4.9 billion in infrastructure since 2008. And with an additional \$847.5 million in this budget, we are investing close to \$5.8 billion, close to double what was invested from 2002 to 2007.

The growth plan calls for an additional \$2.5 billion investment in infrastructure over the next three years. We are on track. This year's capital plan invests 847.5 million, an increase of 7.6 per cent or \$59.8 million over last year, for schools, post-secondary facilities, hospitals and long-term care facilities, highways and roads, municipal infrastructure, parks, and other provincial government buildings and facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report that we're ahead of schedule to meet our government's commitment to invest \$2.2 billion in highways and transportation infrastructure over a four-year period. This budget includes more than 168 million to repave at least 280 kilometres of highways as well as upgrade an additional 75 kilometres to a higher standard; nearly \$142 million for preventative maintenance on provincial highways and bridges; more than \$63 million for economic corridors, projects such as the Regina west bypass, the Estevan bypass, the Highway 10 passing lanes, and completion of the Highway 11 twinning initiative; more than 49 million for bridges and culverts, including over \$14 million for the St. Louis bridge near Prince Albert; more than 49 million in winter maintenance as well as safety maintenance activities such as mowing, drainage, and pavement marking and illumination; and more than \$33 million for rural and urban municipalities to help improve and maintain their road systems.

Our government is also extremely proud of our record when it comes to building schools. We have funded more than 40 major school projects and hundreds of smaller renovation and repair projects since 2007 — a total capital investment of close to \$600 million.

School enrolments are continuing to grow in most of Saskatchewan for the first time in many years, so we need even more new schools. And we need to look at innovative ways to get those schools built and opened as soon as possible. If we only used the old funding formulas to build new schools, we simply will not catch up. That's why we're moving toward an innovative approach in the construction of groups of some of our new schools potentially as P3s [public-private partnership], as P3 projects under SaskBuilds.

Saskatchewan is growing like it never has before. SaskBuilds is all about bringing innovation to the infrastructure needs of Saskatchewan, whether it's schools, highways, or hospitals. We will look at all of the viable options to achieving our infrastructure needs, and P3s, public-private partnerships, will be an important option as we move forward.

This budget is providing \$6 million to SaskBuilds to review the financial viability of the following P3 opportunities: the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, Regina's southeast bypass infrastructure, and SaskBuilds will be examining the

financial viability of constructing a number of new schools through a bundling approach.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also provides clear direction for the future use of the Growth and Financial Security Fund. Beginning this year, the fund will retain a security portion of just over \$500 million for unforeseen events outside of government's control as outlined by the Premier in the plan for growth. The remainder of the fund, this year about \$182 million, will be designated as the growth portion of the fund for future infrastructure projects and debt reduction. The money in the fund will not be allocated to any specific projects until the impact of the potential spring melt of this year is known. This money will be available to cover flooding costs if necessary.

Our commitment to partnering with municipalities continues. This budget provides \$362 million in direct provincial support to municipalities, a 5.7 per cent increase from last year. Importantly it's a 49.6 per cent increase from 2007-08. That's just over \$120 million in additional support. This includes just over \$264 million for municipal revenue sharing, equal to the revenue from one full point of the PST [provincial sales tax]. That's an increase of more than 11 per cent compared to last year, or \$27 million.

Since 2007-08, revenue sharing to municipalities has more than doubled. In this spring session, Mr. Speaker, our government will also introduce amendments to *The Planning and Development Act* to help us plan in various areas of our province that are growing quickly.

This budget has \$250,000 in new funding for regional planning authorities, which will help cities and nearby rural municipalities work together so that all Saskatchewan people in cities, in surrounding towns and villages, and on our farms to be able to continue to benefit from growth.

In addition this year, funding for the municipal roads for the economy program is increasing by \$2 million to 25.5 million to help build and repair the roads that sustain our rural economy.

Saskatchewan is well placed because we produce what the world needs — food, fuel, and fertilizer. 2012 was a record year for Saskatchewan in terms of exporting international goods. And a renaissance is underway in the agricultural industry, historically one of the pillars of Saskatchewan's economy. The growth plan calls for a doubling of the value of exports by 2020 and a 50 per cent boost in agriculture and food exports and an increase in crop production by 10 million tonnes. This budget includes support for international engagement, trade missions, market development, and advocacy.

With the goal of boosting exports and building competitiveness, our government is providing Innovation Saskatchewan with annual funding of over \$28 million, more than a three-fold increase compared to the previous year. That funding includes a \$19 million increase for a total of more than 22 million for the nuclear research and development strategy. Funding for this strategy includes over \$16 million for a cyclotron, with the goal of producing medical isotopes in Saskatchewan and \$5 million for the Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation at the University of Saskatchewan.

We are also providing nearly \$1.9 million more this year for a total in excess of 3.3 million to Innovation Saskatchewan for the Saskatchewan Advantage Innovation Fund. This includes \$1 million for enhanced oil recovery, \$890,000 for SpringBoard West Innovations, and \$500,000 for International Minerals Innovation Institute. As exemplified by the cyclotron and our nuclear strategy overall, we're looking for innovation to accompany new investment.

Mr. Speaker, to help ensure our ongoing competitiveness in the agricultural sector, this budget provides nearly \$407 million to the Ministry of Agriculture. This includes more than 198 million — a \$21 million increase — to fund crop insurance, which includes record-high coverage levels of \$194 per acre on average. Mr. Speaker, this budget's allocation to crop insurance is the largest ever.

[15:00]

Agriculture funding also includes more than \$70 million for strategic initiatives through the federal-provincial Growing Forward 2 framework — an increase of 25 million over the previous framework. This budget will provide a record high \$27.7 million for agricultural research — an increase of over 7 million. This includes the \$3 million to fund the Global Institute for Food Security. For the first time ever the budget includes \$1 million for irrigation bridge rehabilitation to support the long-term growth of irrigation in this province.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is about growth, and this budget is about balance. In recent years, deficits and debt have once again become the norm across Canada and around the world. But during this time, there is one place that chose not to go down that road. There is one province that has balanced the budget every year — year after year. We have also reduced the debt, and we remain committed to reducing the debt a further \$400 million by March 31st, 2017.

This is not simply an accounting exercise. It means real savings for Saskatchewan people. Reducing the debt by \$3 billion since our government took office has resulted in accumulated savings of \$600 million in interest costs. Six hundred million dollars — money that in turn was used to build roads and schools, to lower taxes, to increase support for low-income individuals, and to invest in training and education for our young people. That's why balance is important.

Now to get there, you may have to make some difficult choices. You have to control spending, and that means some groups in our province will have to get by with a little smaller funding increase than they might have hoped for. Sometimes decisions have to be delayed. Our government remains committed to reducing the business tax rate as outlined in the plan for growth, but that reduction will not start this year. It will start when it is affordable and sustainable within a balanced budget.

This budget will also raise the tobacco tax and liquor markups. Cigarette taxes will increase by 4 cents a cigarette with the same increase per gram on other tobacco products effective midnight tonight. And liquor markups will increase about 3 per cent effective April 1st, 2013. In order to achieve balance, we continue to reduce the size of government. We are on track to achieve our four-year target of reducing the public service

workforce by 15 per cent, more than 1,900 positions, including 600 positions in 2013-14. This will result in cumulative annualized savings of \$198 million over four years.

Mr. Speaker, this budget comes at a remarkable time in our province's history. Our province is growing at its fastest pace in nearly 100 years. Our economy is leading the nation and creating jobs at record pace. Saskatchewan is the place to be.

At the same time, it is important that we meet the challenges of a growing province. We need to invest in infrastructure, and we are. We need to shorten surgical wait times, and we are. We need to support our students and create an educated, well-trained workforce, and we are. We need to do more for people with disabilities, for people with lower incomes, and we are. We need to ensure better training and more opportunities for First Nations and Métis, and we are. We need to control spending, and we are. We need to balance the priorities of Saskatchewan people. We need to balance the opportunities and challenges of growth. We need to balance the budget, and we are.

We know there's more to do, Mr. Speaker. However I am pleased to be able . . . I am pleased to table a budget that does all of these things and more, and that keeps Saskatchewan moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Greystone:

That the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

I so present.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Greystone:

That the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, it's my honour to respond briefly to the budget tabled today. Our response is informed by listening to the people of Saskatchewan. The priorities that NDP MLAs hear from middle-class families all over the province are the things I want to focus on here today, although I'm sure Saskatchewan's common sense people will have more to say in the days and weeks to come.

I'm pleased to be joined here today in this Assembly by community leaders from all across our province — leaders in our municipalities, First Nations and Métis leaders, business leaders, educational leaders, working men and women, many good friends, and family. Thank you so very much for

attending.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP has been absolutely clear on what this budget needed to contain. Quite simply, we called for improving education to support our students in classrooms, recognizing they're under great strain and pressure.

We called on government to support our parents and grandparents, seniors across Saskatchewan, through more choices and more spaces in long-term care. And we called on the government to be transparent and accountable, to put forward one set of books, to cut the budgetary manipulation and spin and to comply with public sector accounting standards, to listen to the call of the Provincial Auditor and to provide Saskatchewan people with the straight goods on their money, the full and true state of our province's finances. They deserve nothing less. Unfortunately, the NDP is disappointed to say that the Sask Party is 0 for 3 in satisfying these common sense priorities.

I would add the budget had another major concern that we need to talk about. What we have here is a credit card budget. The Sask Party is now turning to expensive, risky P3 privatization schemes for infrastructure, which is kicking the can down the road, passing the buck to future generations, and a plan that is sure to catch up with Saskatchewan some time soon. Whether it's in education or costly P3s or debt, the Sask Party's mantra seems to be, just let the kids pay for it.

In education, classrooms are bursting at the seams, but we've had refusals from the Sask Party to cap class sizes at a reasonable level. Some teachers are actually forced into teaching students in hallways and in staff rooms. Three hundred and fifty educational assistants have been cut by that Sask Party government, eliminating supports for the most vulnerable and impacting all students. Schools that require renovation because of safety issues like asbestos haven't been fixed, and communities that need a school haven't been helped.

This budget fails to address these challenges. The new money it coughs up is for areas like testing instead of teaching, Mr. Speaker. That government is stubbornly pushing ahead with its own standardized testing agenda despite the absence of common sense or evidence to support its short-sighted plan. Students, teachers, and families deserve better.

As for long-term care, too many of our parents and grandparents have to wait for a dignified long-term care space. For many, the right space never becomes available. For some, the space they get is away from their hometown, sometimes away from family, often separating couples. The stories are heartbreaking.

This budget makes modest steps in home care, and we want to thank the government for that. But the support is merely a fraction of the work that's required. This budget should have created more choices and more spaces in long-term care. It failed to do so. Failing to provide long-term care doesn't just impact our parents and grandparents, but it creates a backlog in our hospitals. While seniors wait in hospital wards, the ripple effect means patients wait longer in emergency rooms, and it delays surgeries.

The long-term care projects mentioned in this budget are recycled, rehashed announcements, announced a full four years ago in 2009, still not complete at this point in time. Many of the people that are here today will have been here for that budget when they were announced.

As for transparency, Saskatchewan people deserve nothing short of the straight goods, the full, true state of our finances. Once again, that's being denied. The way this government reports our finances is improper, out of date with accounting standards, out of line with every other province, acceptable nowhere else in Canada. The reporting has been called "misleading" and "wrong" by our Provincial Auditor. Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party stubbornly insists on using misleading books, using misleading books and numbers in their boastful spin and PR [public relations], including in today's speech.

This budget lends itself to the same sort of budget manipulation, games, and spin we've seen from this government in the past, despite on budget day every year, each and every year, the Finance minister standing up and claiming budgetary balance. The reality when the public accounts have been tabled, when the books have been closed, is that this government has run three consecutive deficits, a fact that has been verified by our independent Provincial Auditor.

We've learned that the government's annual song and dance on budget day doesn't reflect the reality of our finances. This side of the Assembly will take solid books and a sound budget over expensive, misleading, boastful billboards and ads and spin any day of the week, Mr. Speaker.

The official opposition is disturbed that while Saskatchewan's economy is doing well, the Saskatchewan Party government can't seem to manage to do the same. With this budget, debt is growing nearly \$2 billion between this year and next — \$2 billion in just two years, Mr. Speaker, of debt growth. Debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] ratios are going in the wrong direction. And again the Sask Party's paying for this on the credit card, and the kids, the next generation, will be picking up the tab.

Once again the budget raids our Crown corporations. The fact is Saskatchewan's best economy will need both modern, profitable, private companies and strong Crown corporations. The members opposite seem to have a surprising renewed disagreement with that.

The NDP is also disappointed to see that other specific actions we've called for in the budget are missing. We've called for the reinstatement of the film employment tax credit with an equal or better program. Alas, instead of the government admitting that it made a mistake while gutting the film industry, the Sask Party has stubbornly doubled down, announcing the elimination of SaskFilm too.

We've called for the reinstatement of the Aboriginal employment development program and action, meaningful action on Aboriginal education and employment. I see some funding for Aboriginal skills training, and we're going to have a very close look at that program. Certainly we're willing to support positive steps if they're there. But the benefit of the AEDP must be replaced and enhanced to make up for the years

of damage done to First Nations and Métis employment and lost opportunity since the Sask Party eliminated that program.

Now there is a silver lining. We're pleased to see that the NDP's specific request for funding for the First Link program for Alzheimer's patients and their families will see some funding. This is a good thing. We're also supportive of some of the new shelter funding. I know recently in meeting with shelters in Prince Albert, they shared with me that they were forced to turn away over 2,000 women last year alone. That's an investment we need to be making.

[15:15]

I've talked about our great disappointment with this budget's failure on health care, on pre-K to 12 education, and on transparency. But there are a number of other areas that are also of concern. For example, \$1 million has been slashed from efforts to stem climate change, efforts which were already too few when action is needed now to protect our natural environment for future generations.

Post-secondary students are facing massive tuition hikes and universities have been left in a debt crisis. There's no infrastructure plan for growing communities, which is short-sighted and will come as a direct cost to property tax payers, homeowners, and businesses. There's little to address affordable housing despite that government's wrong-headed sell-off of affordable homes that will rake in millions of dollars this year alone.

There were major cuts in agriculture, including tens of millions of dollars taken directly from producers. The Conexus Art Centre had its funding cut in half. And there are many, many more concerns and cuts, with more consultation and analysis to do.

It's fair to say that the official opposition will continue to examine the budget in the coming days and weeks. We'll be listening to Saskatchewan people and their thoughts and their ideas. We'll keep in mind the scrambling that went on to prop up the budget, that we see the selling off of assets including affordable homes, public land, and the selling off, the privatization of a Crown corporation — ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] — a profitable, dividend-paying Crown corporation.

And we'll also keep in mind the wasteful priorities of this government: spending millions of dollars on three more politicians; spending nearly \$100,000 of taxpayer money to warn taxpayers that the government had created a bad budget; spending on expensive ads, PR, and spin; spending on more costly, private schemes in ministries and our Crown corporations; spending on extravagant hardwood flooring in the Premier's office while telling Saskatchewan's middle class to expect less and get ready for more budget pain.

Simply, Saskatchewan people deserve better. Mr. Speaker, because Saskatchewan people deserve better, the NDP will not be supporting this budget. In the coming days and weeks, we'll be working hard to listen to and stand strong for families and communities all across Saskatchewan on the issues that really matter. We'll have more to say on this budget tomorrow, a more

detailed analysis and critique. It has been my pleasure and my honour to join debate here today.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I move that debate be now adjourned.

The Speaker: — It's been moved by the member for Regina Rosemont that the debate now be adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Resumption of Budget Debate

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That debate on the motion that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government be resumed on Thursday, March 21st, 2013.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

That debate on the motion that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government be resumed on Thursday, March 21st, 2013.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — Before I place the question on adjournment, I want to first say thank you to our guests who have joined us here today and for your co-operation in observing the rules of the Assembly.

I would now like to extend an invitation to our guests to join the members for a tea in the Legislative Library to your right as you exit the Assembly and in room 218 to the left as you exit.

At this time I will place the question. The Government House Leader has moved that this House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House now stands adjourned to 10 a.m. Thursday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:20.]

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