



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

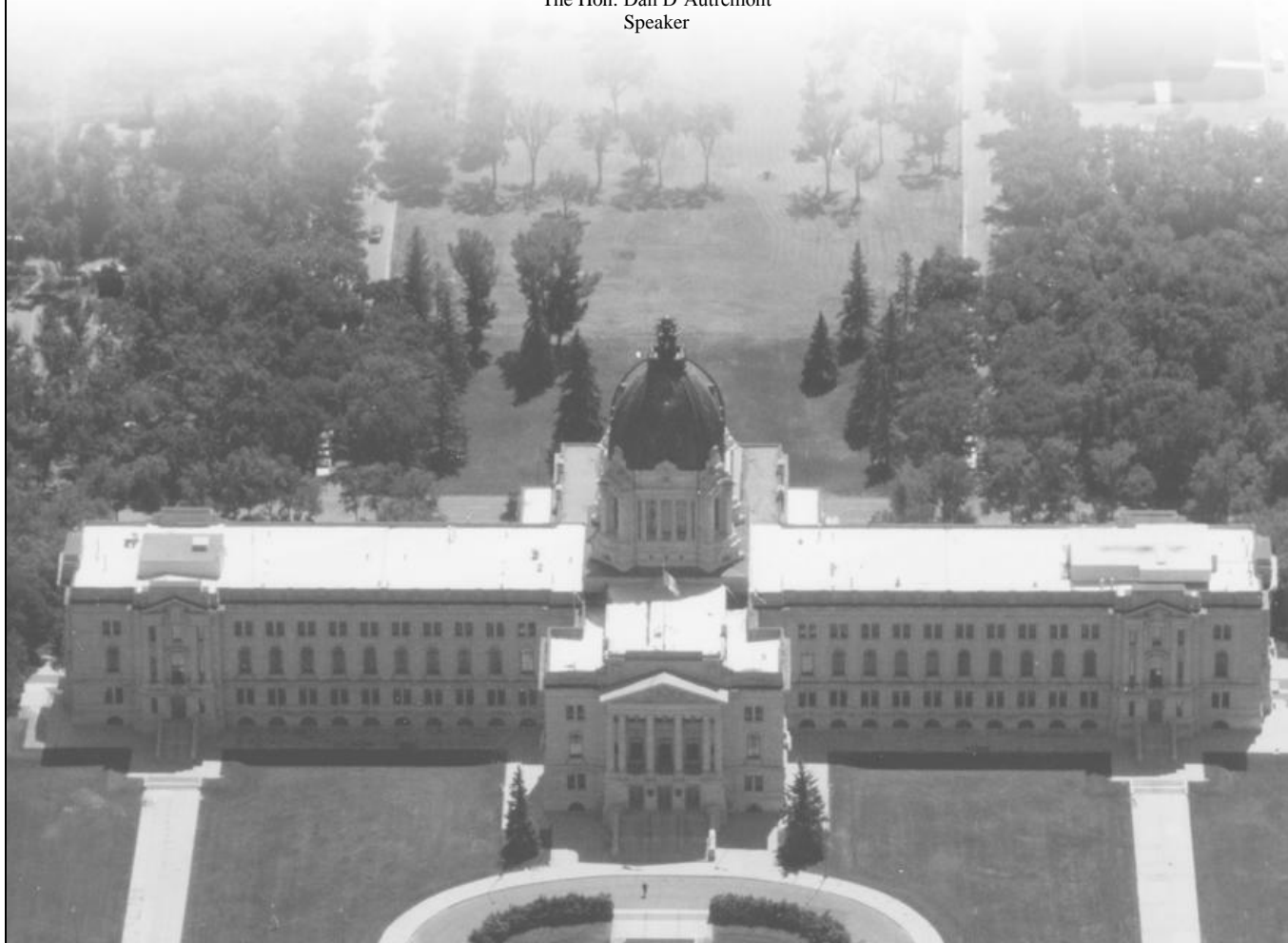
of the

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
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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
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Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
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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
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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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I have the great honour of introducing two very important guests from Deveraux Developments this morning.

Joining us today are Denis Jones, the CEO [chief executive officer] of Deveraux Developments, and Kevin Gelsinger, vice-president of Deveraux Developments. I had the pleasure of joining with these two gentlemen earlier this morning to announce the development of 48 brand new affordable housing units for Regina families.

We are working with Deveraux Developments on the exciting project and it's going to open in the spring of 2014. It's through relationships like this one with Denis and Kevin that's helping more Saskatchewan people access affordable, quality housing.

I'd ask all members join with me in welcoming these two gentlemen to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in with the minister welcoming the folks to their legislature. It's always important whenever we see new and innovative approaches in solving the housing issues that face people in Saskatchewan. So we too would welcome them here to the legislature. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in your gallery I'm delighted to introduce three young Saskatchewan leaders. We have joining us this morning Chris Stoicheff who's the past president of the USSU [University of Saskatchewan Students' Union] and he's also on the board and actually is the Chair of a foundation called the Emerging Artists Foundation, and it plays a really important role connecting artists with corporate and community partners. And so to Mr. Stoicheff we offer a welcome.

He's joined this morning by David Konkin, the past president of STM [St. Thomas More], student president. He studied in McGill and came back to Saskatchewan. We're delighted to help welcome him back. And they're joined as well by Dale Richardson, and Dale was studying down in Alabama. He came back to Saskatchewan. He's doing his master's degree at the Johnson-Shoyama school.

Mr. Speaker, all three of these individuals represent the very best of Saskatchewan students, making a contribution not

simply to their campus but also to our communities. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to help me welcome these fine individuals to their legislature.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Messrs. Stoicheff, Konkin, and Richardson to their Legislative Assembly. I thank them for their leadership in the community — not just student leadership, but moving beyond. Good to see you here today.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise and welcome a great-looking group up in the west gallery from Albert Community School, my neighbours across 7th Avenue. There's a group of 28 grade 7 and 8 students. They're accompanied by teachers and chaperones Deanna Pelletier, Aaron Warner, Karen Willey, Dennis Pepin, Bill Nagel, and Luke Friesen. And I can say not just the students and the great part of the community that they are, but these teachers and chaperones are people that make a contribution not just to the learning and education that goes on at Albert Community School but to the community of north central that is very much appreciated.

So it's good to see them here today. Ta wow. I'd like to say welcome to your Legislative Assembly. I look forward to meeting later on with them, Mr. Speaker. So please welcome these students, teachers, chaperones from Albert Community School to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And to you and through you, I'd like to introduce a member from Regina Walsh Acres constituency, Mrs. Barb Dedi. She's an influential member in the community. She works for Spring Free From Racism. She does a lot of work putting that event on. And she also works for the Regina Red Sox. And I know, I don't think I quite got her vote last time, and I'm going to work hard the next four years to see if I can get it next time. So, Barb, welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Ms. Barb Dedi and Ms. Sharon Pepin and Ms. Barb Dedi's grandniece Colby to their legislature here today. As noted by the member opposite, Barb is somebody who is a leader within our community, does tremendous work for Spring Free From Racism, does tremendous work on a whole bunch of other fronts, including the Red Sox. Certainly Sharon Pepin does as well. And I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in welcoming these community leaders to their Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

While on my feet, I just would like to give a positive shout-out to those students from Albert School, those teachers of which I know many, and thank you for being here today. Thank you for what you do, and looking forward to your bright futures into the

future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seated in the west gallery is a gentleman that's no stranger to this Assembly. And to you and all members that haven't met him, I would like to introduce John Schmeiser, executive vice-president and CEO of the Canada West Equipment Dealers Association, to our Assembly.

He is a good friend that goes back a long number of years. He's a pretty good card player, and we affectionately know him as Johnny Schmeier. He is joined this morning by his very capable assistant, Erin Dueck, who I understand does most if not all the work around that operation.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the Minister for the Economy and welcome Mr. Schmeiser here today, thank him for his work, and to let him know that we won't judge him by his friends. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, if I may, just to add a welcome to Dr. Jones. We are certainly grateful that he is here today — grateful for not only the housing project that the minister referenced but also for his great contribution to quite literally the health of the province, the health of the city, and also his other entrepreneurial endeavours which are creating jobs for families all through the capital city and increasingly right across the province.

I also want to say hello and acknowledge my good friend, John Schmeiser, in the gallery as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you a young gentleman from the constituency of Batoche and my hometown of Middle Lake, Mr. Andrew Schmidt who is seated in your gallery. And he's a graduate of the international studies, and I'd like you all to welcome him to his Assembly. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just noticed in the west gallery a good friend, Murray Cheesman who's visiting us from Wood River constituency. It's not that often we get people from Wood River, but Murray and I go back an awful long way. When the Saskatchewan Party first started we did thousands and thousands of miles travelling together. So I'd ask all members to welcome Murray to his Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very

proud to present a petition today on the cellphone coverage notice, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

To undertake, as soon as possible, to ensure SaskTel delivers cell service in 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 Michel Village and St. George's Hill; 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.

Mr. Speaker, and the people that have signed this petition to bring those cell coverage to all those communities have signed the petition from all throughout Saskatchewan — a very impressive show of support. And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition today are primarily from Patuanak, 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 interest of due diligence. And there is no labour relations crisis to fix and no necessity to rush through this omnibus bill that will likely govern our workplace relations for decades to come. And if it does become the law, working people, particularly young workers, migrant workers, and other vulnerable workers will suffer from a hasty watering down of our current labour standards. Mr. Speaker, 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.

I do so present, Mr. Speaker.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Spring Free From Racism

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, today on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, I'm pleased to highlight a proud tradition that occurs each spring in Regina, one that has been going strong for the past 18 years. Spring Free From Racism was held this past Sunday, when thousands of people came together in our community to celebrate our diversity. I was pleased to attend, along with other members of this Assembly, and am proud to recognize the strength of our rich diversity. This event supports the International Day for the

Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and does so by celebrating and sharing our cultural uniqueness. It's a day filled with cultural dance, festivities, food, and kinship. It's a day I look forward to each year.

The Spring Free from Racism committee was formed in 1995 to take action to fight against racial discrimination. Mr. Speaker, our province is enriched by our diversity. Understanding and respect of our differences gives us strength. It is through knowledge, sharing, learning, and celebration, provided through events such as Spring Free, that will continue to enable important progress — important progress that we must all work towards every day.

I ask all members to join with me in thanking Spring Free From Racism Chair Barb Dedi, the entire committee, partners, and cultural leaders that don't just make Spring Free a success, but make a difference every day in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we recognize the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which is observed annually on the 21st of March.

On that day in 1960, a peaceful demonstration against apartheid in South Africa ended in tragedy. In 1966 the United Nations recognized those atrocious events by declaring March 21st an International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Proudly, Canada was one of the first countries to recognize this proclamation.

We are fortunate to live in a multicultural society where diversity is both a source of great strength and the foundation of our national identity, and can use this day to reaffirm our commitment to fairness and diversity. The first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

Mr. Speaker, let us honour the memory of those who died at Sharpeville, South Africa, and other racist incidents by redoubling our efforts to eradicate all forms of racism and racial discrimination. And above all, Mr. Speaker, we should cherish the rich diversity of humankind and respect the inherent dignity and equality of every human being. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

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

Shift Work Recognition Day

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, March 20th has been proclaimed Shift Work Recognition Day, and this weekend the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour shift work committee is holding the fourth annual Innovative Conference on Shift Work.

The conference attendees will have a chance to learn about the revolutionary shift work optimization protocol, which targets strategies specifically to the worker, their schedule, and workplace. They will learn strategies to improve diet and nutrition, manage stress, schedule transitions, driving and fatigue management, women and family issues, shift work sleep disorder, and negotiating contract language.

Mr. Speaker, almost one-third of Canadian workers are involved in some kind of shift work. Shift work has long been linked to sleep deprivation, which causes a great range of problems including depression and a much greater risk of injury on the job. A 2010 study at UBC [University of British Columbia] found that people that do shift work are almost twice as likely to be injured on the job, and that women are particularly susceptible to problems related to shift work and sleep deprivation.

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

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me today in recognizing Shift Work Recognition Day in appreciation and thanks to all the shift workers here in our province of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Affordable Housing Development

Mr. Docherty: — Mr. Speaker, earlier this morning the Minister of Social Services announced the development of 48 new affordable homes for Regina families. These modern, energy-efficient, multi-unit houses are being built by Deveraux Developments in the Hawkstone subdivision of north Regina.

This \$9.9 million investment is the first announcement under the government's plan to reinvest \$53 million into new housing for low-income families through the sale of government-owned single family units. This initiative will save low-income tenants money, as much as \$100 a month for many low-income families. It will make our social housing system more sustainable, saving taxpayers approximately \$10 million over the next 25 years. And selling the government's single units will create 300 entry-level home ownership opportunities in Regina, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw.

Mr. Speaker, this is the perfect announcement for the day after budget because this initiative is all about balanced growth. In one single initiative we are improving the quality of life for low-income people, helping grow the province by providing more housing, and demonstrating fiscal responsibility by making the affordable housing system more sustainable.

There is no doubt there is more work to do. That is why the Saskatchewan plan for growth included a goal to help build 12,600 new housing units by 2016. Today's announcement

marks another milestone in an effort to keep Saskatchewan growing and improve quality of life for all Saskatchewan citizens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Out-of-This-World Experience

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise today to recognize an out-of-this-world experience that students in my constituency had recently. On March 11th the students at Valley Manor Elementary School in Martensville were able to have a live chat with Commander Chris Hadfield at the International Space Station. As the highlight of the grade 6 science class's unit on space, the students were able to ask the Canadian astronaut questions via a live radio feed.

The 10-minute question-and-answer session with Commander Hadfield was made possible through months of planning by an organization called Amateur Radio on the International Space Station, as well as members of Saskatoon's Meewasin Amateur Radio Society. Radio operators arrived at the school in advance and assembled a wide variety of radio equipment and an antenna on the roof of the school to facilitate the live feed. After the event, students were able to ask the radio operators questions on how this amazing experience was made possible.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in thanking all the individuals that made this inspiring and innovative experience possible for this grade 6 class, science class at Valley Manor School. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Our Village Uganda Worker Receives Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to bring to the attention of this Assembly one very deserving Queen's Diamond Jubilee recipient I had the honour to award recently.

Seven years ago, Terra Lorenz, then Terra Moore, felt the call to go to Africa to help some of the neediest people in the world, mainly children. At 20 years of age, she set off with a Christian mission organization. She found the work rewarding but was called to do more, so she set out on her own.

Terra ended up in the village of Bukaye, Uganda. She came across an orphanage started by Pastor Elizabeth Mwogeza, now very ill. It was on the verge of collapse due to the corruption of a man trusted for finances but embezzling donations.

Children were living in terrible conditions when Terra arrived, just to help over Christmas. Over the past seven years she has come home from time to time to raise funds and awareness and enlist the help of her parents, Terry and Linda, among others, but returns on what is now called Our Village Uganda, where she is the executive director since the passing of Pastor Elizabeth.

Conditions and opportunities have vastly improved for the now over 150 children, but there's much more to do. Terra took her fiancé to Our Village before they were married, to see if it was

the life he wanted. His heart broke for these amazing children. Her husband, Chad Lorenz, will now be travelling with her soon to continue together to give the children hope and a future, to show the love, and be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to applaud the Lorenzes, keep them and the orphans in their prayers, and go to ourvillageuganda.org for more info. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Reaction to Provincial Budget

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise in the Assembly today to recognize just a few of the positive responses for the 2013-2014 balanced growth budget. This budget controls spending and continues to make investment to ensure a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people.

Dennis Coutts, CEO of Habitat for Humanity, said, "We are the envy of the country. I applaud the Government of Saskatchewan for keeping their commitment for more housing to help low-income, hard-working Saskatchewan people."

Louise Schweitzer, executive director of North East Outreach and Support Services stated, "Angel's Lighthouse, a beacon of hope in a moment of despair, will be a reality for women and children in the Northeast suffering from domestic violence."

And finally, to quote Alan Thomarat, president and CEO of Canadian Home Builders' Association, "The Saskatchewan government's initiatives encourage sustainable growth and continue previous effective investments in the future of our province."

Mr. Speaker, this is just a few of a long list of great responses to our government's balanced growth budget. This keeps the province moving forward. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Support for Education

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The budget that we heard yesterday fails, Mr. Speaker, where perhaps it's most important. It fails our children and the education that they deserve. The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation president, Colin Keess, said, "The budget was much ado about nothing."

Mr. Speaker, teachers know the reality in the classroom. They know what their students need and they know what the Sask Party government should be providing if we're serious about providing the best possible education for our kids. My question to the Premier: why has his budget failed to recognize the huge needs in our province's classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question, though the

premise of the question is just incorrect. The budgets from this side of the House over the last number of years have been there to support education in unprecedented ways in terms of operating, unprecedented ways in terms of huge capital investments over what we saw from members opposite when they sat in these benches, Mr. Speaker.

And significantly last year, and right to the Leader of the Opposition's question, last year when there were enrolment pressures — and by the way, we didn't see enrolment pressures under the NDP [New Democratic Party] because people were leaving the province — but when there were enrolment pressures, what did this government, what did this minister do? We put together a plan and over \$6 million mid-year adjustment — Mr. Speaker, also unprecedented — and dealt with the issue.

The best indicator of past behaviour is future behaviour. We are there to support a robust education system in the province, and we're here to accommodate more students in a growing Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reality facing students, facing parents, facing educators, facing school boards in the province, Mr. Speaker, demands so much more than what we saw in yesterday's budget. The Sask Party government has talked a big talk about reaching high educational standards, but their words, Mr. Speaker, are not backed up with dollars.

The president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, Janet Foord, had this to say: "The targets for which boards are accountable have been mandated by the government. This budget does not provide the resources required to achieve those targets."

My question to the Premier: will he admit that his government has failed to provide school boards with the resources that they need to meet the targets that are actually set by the Ministry of Education?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, there's specific money in this budget, some \$5.9 million, to ensure that we're successful in the student achievement initiative. We know there is already evidence in province that the student achievement initiative will work, that standard-based testing will work. We see literacy rates on the rise in the Chinook School Division because of it, because there are resources for teachers backed up for them to do that work. We see graduation rates increasing in Melfort and area, in that school division and in two others. We see progress for students because of standardized testing, Mr. Speaker, because it is properly resourced. There is a specific item in the budget to resource that particular initiative of the government and members opposite will know that.

They'll also know that over their, over the five years previous to the '07 election, their operating budgets, their operating budgets were 298 million. From our side, 338 million. From their side for the last five years, 160 million in capital. They completely neglected schools in the infrastructure requirements; from this side, \$600 million, Mr. Speaker. That's the record of

the NDP versus this side of the House that has supported education to a much greater extent than it ever received when members sat on this side of the House.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, what we see in the province right now when it comes to pre-K to 12 [pre-kindergarten to grade 12] education are classroom sizes that are too large. What we see, Mr. Speaker, are reduction of educational assistants that make learning more difficult for students. What we see right now, Mr. Speaker, are teachers and school boards doing their absolute best to meet the standards that they want to deliver because they love education but, Mr. Speaker, are struggling because of the resources that are not being provided by the Sask Party government.

If we want to be all that we can be here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, it means providing opportunity to every student, and it means improving educational outcomes for First Nations and Métis students, Mr. Speaker. And this budget does not do enough to improve and close the achievement gap for First Nations and Métis students.

The president of the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] had this to say about the resources provided on that front: "This is simply unacceptable if the goal of eliminating the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student achievement gap is to be realized."

My question to the Premier: why did he bring forward an education budget that fails to have the resources there so that every student in Saskatchewan can succeed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, there is a lot in that question. Unfortunately most of it's inaccurate, Mr. Speaker. There's specific initiatives in the budget with respect to the joint task force we have with the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] where we've looked at pilot projects that are delivering better results for First Nations students. We've added \$3 million in the budget to deal specifically with this issue.

Also in the member's rambling question was sort of the rhetorical thought about whether this province can be all it could possibly be with this particular budget. When you stack up the record of this party with respect to education, with respect to health care, with respect to infrastructure, with respect to the economy, I think that question is answered. The surest way we can ensure . . . The surest way we could see the education system in this province becoming unsustainable and unable to get the kind of support it needs from the legislature is to let that outfit in charge with their \$5 billion election platform that would mean bigger debts for this province, bigger deficits for this province, and less money for education, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I remember 2007 when this government was elected and, Mr. Speaker, it was about hope beating fear. And now we see from these members, Mr. Speaker, we see blaming other individuals. We see a stubborn

refusal to accept responsibility, and we see a belittling of questions, Mr. Speaker, that are about the future of the province: questions that are being brought forward by the president of the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation], questions that are being brought forward by the president of the School Boards Association. And we have the Premier just slough them off like it doesn't matter.

That's not respectful, Mr. Speaker, to the educators in this province that are doing their best for our children. The parents that I speak with, Mr. Speaker, want the best possible education for their kids. They want better classrooms. They want more resources in those classrooms. They want the education that our children deserve.

My question to the Premier: why is he refusing to listen to the concerns from teachers, from parents, and students when it comes to the huge challenges that our classrooms are facing?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I think what this Leader of the Opposition will have in common with the previous leader, Mr. Lingenfelter, is that he is not going to let facts get in the way of his preamble. Mr. Speaker, he stands in this Assembly and says, when are you going to listen to parents and teachers?

Mr. Speaker, last fall when enrolments were on the rise in many school districts, in some school districts across the province, we indicated to those school divisions that because the population was growing, because we had more students, that we would respond. The minister met with those particular school divisions, met with teachers, heard from parents and, Mr. Speaker, what did this government do? This government found, mid-year in a tight budget, \$6.6 million for those school divisions that were experiencing those pressures so we could build the capital that was needed to accommodate them, so we could support teachers in classrooms where it was needed. Mr. Speaker, that's what this government did.

What has his party done over the life of its government, over 16 years on this side of the House? Well they neglected school capital: 160 million over their last five years. Compare that with 600 million from this side of the House. The same is true in operating, Mr. Speaker. Those parents and teachers understand. They know that on that side you get talk in education. On this side you get funding and action.

[10:30]

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

Provincial Budget and Financial Management

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government tabled yesterday something that can be characterized as a credit card budget, something that asks students today to pay for decisions that are going to tie us well into the future and mortgages our tomorrow for short-sighted decisions. It's an irresponsible approach, one we just don't share, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, contrary to the calls of the Provincial Auditor, who's called this government's books misleading and wrong,

this government stubbornly pushed ahead, persisted with pushing forward books that are misleading, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Finance minister: does he not recognize that it's past time, it's time for a change? It's time to fix our books that have been called misleading and wrong by our Provincial Auditor.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, again the comments by the opposition members are factually incorrect. If he takes a look at the document that we presented yesterday, the General Revenue Fund statements which the auditor has been wanting to . . . for this government to focus more on, it's not that we don't do it, Mr. Speaker. It's here. It's here printed for all to see. The summary financial statements are there. They contain every organization that was in the summaries.

And by the way, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has asked for standardization. He should know that across all of the province in Saskatchewan, summary financial statements differ from one province to the next province to the next province. Mr. Speaker, this is a balanced budget in the summary financial basis. It was balanced last year, and it's balanced again this year.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday's budget was nothing but a credit card budget that punts debt onto future generations and is sticking the spending tab onto our students, our children, the next generation. Punting costs onto future generations that include \$2 billion of debt growth in just two years, all while pretending otherwise with his misleading books, Mr. Speaker. Government's own projections . . . so government debt rising to \$10.4 billion by the end of this year.

Mr. Speaker, we know the Sask Party likes their spin and they like their expensive billboards. So my question to the minister: will those \$2 billion of new debt being added through these two years, will that be highlighted on the spring billboards?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let's look at, let's look at the reaction of someone else other than me, Mr. Speaker. Let's look at the reaction of CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce]. I'm going to quote, Mr. Speaker:

Overall, given its relative economic and fiscal out-performance and sterling credit rating, Saskatchewan boasts a strong following in debt capital markets, where its bonds can be expected to continue to trade at a notable premium to more indebted provincial peers.

But the quote goes on, Mr. Speaker:

Saskatchewan's relatively stronger fiscal position means that social programs will likely see proportionately larger investments than in some provinces still in the red. Saskatchewan will also enjoy a fiscal benefit in the form of declining debt charges — a dividend linked to both

earlier debt paydowns and an extremely low interest rate environment.

That's what people are saying about this budget, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this is a budget with rapidly rising debt and an expensive no-money-down, pay-later approach to infrastructure. It's a credit card budget that does one thing: it punts the bill to future generations to pick up an even bigger tab. And it punts a lot of those hard decisions as well — the ones with real consequences in real people's lives — to health regions, to the Cancer Agency, school boards, and universities.

Mr. Speaker, the P3 [public-private partnership] privatization model is really about paying more and paying later. It's a short-sighted, no-money-down approach with huge long-term costs. Mr. Speaker, other than for purpose of budgetary tricks, why would this minister choose a short-sighted approach that has proven itself more costly and ineffective?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Let's get one thing straight here. Is the member opposite questioning the Provincial Auditor and the summary financial statements? The numbers are printed. The Provincial Auditor has referenced these summaries. And the member opposite said this is the auditor's tricks. This is the auditor's tricks that a summary financial document is presented on behalf of the government? I dare say the member opposite better get his facts right.

Because, you know, Mr. Speaker, here's another comment by the Bank of Montreal: "As expected, this is largely a stay-the-course budget. With firm economic growth, persistent surpluses, and low debt levels, Saskatchewan continues to earn its AAA stripes," something that that member would never have been accustomed to.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — From that outrage was discernible, Mr. Speaker, the question of the auditor, Mr. Speaker. And the Finance Minister should know; it's in black and white. The Provincial Auditor has called the reporting of this government wrong and misleading. That's a fact, Mr. Speaker.

But this government's also shirking responsibility. And when they're making decisions, they won't even own up to the consequences of those decisions, pushing those on to others: downloading costs onto post-secondary students and our institutions; telling health regions and our Cancer Agency to find \$54 million in more cuts; telling school boards to simply cram classrooms a little tighter, to cut some more supports, Mr. Speaker, with 350 educational assistants already cut.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government is pretending to make tough decisions when really they're putting them onto others, pretending to tell the story about the finances when they're using misleading books. Why are they shirking their responsibility to be straight with Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple of reactions from people who are very interested in yesterday's budget. First of all, by Christian Braid from the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, and he says this: "Achieving a balanced budget and continuing on a path towards a productive agenda is remarkable compared to other Canadian provinces." One quote.

Second quote, Mr. Speaker, and it's all about school construction, as the member opposite has very little experience in that, Mr. Speaker. And it says this:

"The announcement is excellent news for our division," states Dwayne Reeve, Director of Education. "This basically provides us with the ability to enter the next phase of planning for a new school in Langenberg through the development of a design for the facility. Senior administration, the Facilities Department and the community of Langenberg have already put in many hours to get us to this stage and we are very excited at the prospect of a new school. It is a huge investment in the future of our children," [Mr. Speaker].

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

Technology Companies and University

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Despite that that minister's pretty worked up here today, we do have some other questions for a few other ministers here today as well.

And it is another day, and another shoe has dropped in the IPAC [International Performance Assessment Centre for geologic storage of CO₂] affair of this government. Witnessed by many yesterday in this House, this government refuses to answer straight questions, refuses accountability, and refuses to investigate. And meanwhile alarming information continues to leak.

Today it's been exposed by an investigation by CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] that a mystery private company was set up with potential conflicts of interest, a company called Gen Five, something that raised "serious concerns" by U of R [University of Regina] lawyers in a report. It involves many of the same players embroiled in the IPAC affair, some of the same directors with conflicts of interest in both IPAC and CVI [Climate Ventures Inc.]. It's a disturbing leak, raising more concerns over conflicts of interest for some to potentially gain on the backs of taxpayers.

We've asked a direct question about how much taxpayers' money has been used, who may have benefited from the IPAC affair. We're received not a single answer. Mr. Speaker, why does this minister feel she can deny the answers and accountability that Saskatchewan people deserve?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And day after day we have answered that member's questions. But he

just doesn't like the answers, and that's his problem. And he's demonstrated day after day that he definitely attended the Dwain Lingenfelter school of questioning.

Mr. Speaker, this is nothing more than an unsupported drive-by smear. He is doing this daily. If he truly has additional information above and beyond the forensic audit report — and I repeat, there was a forensic audit report that identified U of R employees that were involved in a contract with Climate Ventures Inc. — and if he has more information than the forensic audit has, and if he has identified someone that personally gained from this, he needs to step outside of this Chamber. He needs to state who it is that he is accusing of this, and he needs to turn the information to the proper authorities, or else it is absolutely nothing but rhetoric.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, there's money that's been wasted. That minister won't provide any answers. We can go talk in the rotunda any day of the week. I'm more than willing to do that, and I have before.

I also will say that there's another minister that won't answer questions. The Minister of Energy and Resources was asked a direct question yesterday about why his ministry in 2008 used nearly \$200,000 of taxpayers' money to fund the start-up of CVI, the tech company that's now embroiled in the IPAC affair. In fact it's at the heart of the conflicts and the waste. And now the controversy over Gen Five involves two of the very same directors that were in a conflict of interest and the costly start-up of CVI.

Taxpayers deserve answers. Seeing as though he couldn't be bothered yesterday to be accountable or to answer the question, maybe he will answer that here today. Why did his ministry spend nearly \$200,000 of taxpayers' money to start up CVI in the first place, and what's he doing to investigate wrongdoing and wasted money resulting from his costly start-up?

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

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, we have been through this for several days, and the answers are all the same. We have funded the university, Mr. Speaker, to do research. That research has been done. In regards, Mr. Speaker, to the 200,000, the university wanted to do some work on what they could do to commercialize the research that they had, Mr. Speaker. The funding was provided for them to do the work on what that would look like for them. They did a report. I believe that their office, their liaison office between industry and the university, Mr. Speaker, has that report. And how they have acted on it, Mr. Speaker, is something that the university has or has not done.

But, Mr. Speaker, that funding was provided to the university to do the work. A report was written. Mr. Speaker, that was the commitment that our government had made. And if the member opposite has questions for the university, I encourage him to ask them for that information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon

Nutana.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In last year's budget the Sask Party cancelled the Go Green Fund, one of the few climate change projects they've ever worked on. They eliminated the program even though it was producing results for Saskatchewan. In yesterday's budget this attack on climate change progress continued. They cut the climate change department in the Ministry of Environment an additional 20 per cent. That's a 73 per cent drop in funding over two years.

Mr. Speaker, only two weeks ago the Premier ranted on to the international media about how "We care about the environment." Mr. Speaker, is this how the Premier shows it? Why is the Sask Party government continuing to ignore the effects of climate change by cutting its funding by 20 per cent more, such a stark contrast to the Premier's public statements?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to take this question on behalf of the government, Mr. Speaker. Certainly this government has done a significant amount of work when it comes to addressing climate change in this province, Mr. Speaker. In fact it's quite ironic to hear questions coming from the members opposite when the David Suzuki Foundation, at the end of that government's time in office, indicated that the NDP orange was turning brown from their lack of environmental policies, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it was in fact this government that in fact introduced and passed legislation to regulate and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Mr. Speaker, the office of climate change will be up and running later this year, so funds will be needed and available in this budget when that office is ready to be created, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Premier wrote to the President of the United States in January he made no mention of climate change despite his latest new talking point and spin, that somehow it's part of his agenda. Perhaps that's a good stone left unturned, Mr. Speaker, because Saskatchewan unfortunately has the highest per capita carbon footprint in Canada. This is not an area of leadership we can be proud of, Mr. Speaker. In fact there's nothing in the budget that would lower this footprint.

When the Finance minister spoke yesterday, he didn't even mention the words climate change or environment. Mr. Speaker, literally there's nothing in this budget about environment or climate change. The world is watching. Why is climate change not a priority for this government?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, that member will know or

should know, or perhaps she could ask her seatmate who was a member of the previous government, why emissions rose 70 per cent under their time in office, Mr. Speaker?

The member opposite says that nothing's being done on this important file, Mr. Speaker. This government has made the investment of \$1.1 billion in clean coal, Mr. Speaker. It is a leading example of how this province is taking a leading role in this important file, Mr. Speaker. We were the government of the day in this province when legislation was passed to regulate, Mr. Speaker, greenhouse gas emissions, something that the members opposite forgot to do in all the 16 years that they were the government, Mr. Speaker. I don't think this side of the House needs to take any lessons when it comes to this file.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, we know this government is working on CO₂ research. With all the news on IPAC recently, we're quite aware of that. However carbon capture technology, which is still in the future, is only one piece of the puzzle. The facts are that this province's greenhouse gas emissions are the highest in the country, and the Sask Party has reduced its emission targets, whittled down its regulations, and cut funding at every step of the way. Climate change will affect our province's agriculture, our resource sector, and ultimately our people and our environment. With all these cuts to the programs that might have made a change, what is this government doing to implement a plan on reducing greenhouse gas emissions?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, you know it's a good day in Health when we spend 42 per cent of the provincial budget, and not a single Health question the day after the budget is released.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite asked what we're going to do on the support file. We're going to do the things that the NDP forgot to do, like pass legislation to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, Mr. Speaker, like invest in technology and infrastructure, like the \$1.1 billion that we're spending in Estevan on clean coal, Mr. Speaker, showing that this province is a world leader in this important file.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter back into budget debate here today and continue some of

my comments from tomorrow. I do want to focus today a little bit more specifically on my constituency and some of the local impacts.

But certainly what we did, have categorized this budget, as is fair, that being a credit card budget that really is asking the next generation to pay for the decisions of today. And it's tying the hands of governments into the future and certainly the next generation to deal with the challenges and opportunities they're presented in the most effective way they can. So I'll get back into the budget discussion that's there.

I do want to at this point in time put a bit of a lens back to my own constituency. And I want to thank Ms. Gloria Patrick, our constituency assistant, who delivers such exceptional service to the people of Regina Rosemont, our boundaries within our constituency. The people who come to her in many cases not because it's the first place that they've come, but often because it's they're at their wits' end and they're frustrated and they're looking for fairness and they're looking for action. And Gloria does a tremendous job of being able to effectively work through what the facts of the matter are, be able to link and liaison with abilities and organizations and ministries to bring about solutions where possible and to do so with a level of compassion and professionalism that is second to none.

So I want to say thank you so much to Ms. Gloria Patrick for the contribution she makes in the lives of our constituents and the effective work she does within my, within our constituency, Mr. . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the member for Carrot River on his feet?

Mr. Bradshaw: — I ask permission to make an introduction, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member for Carrot River has asked for leave to make an introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Carrot River.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for letting me make this introduction.

Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of this Assembly, I would like to introduce, in your gallery, Shelley Meyer and her son Brycen McCrea. Shelley has not only been my CA [constituency assistant] since I was elected, but she has been a CA for 12 years, Mr. Speaker. All of us in this Assembly know how critical it is to have a good CA, and Shelley is one of the best that you could have, if not the best. She even makes me look good, Mr. Speaker.

Her son Brycen is a grade 10 student who not only plays on the provincially famous Carrot River Wildcats football team, but also is an accomplished curler. In his first year of playing high school senior mixed, their team won all their games at NESSAC [North East Saskatchewan Schools Athletic Conference], then

again at regionals. They placed fifth overall in provincials and look forward to bringing home the banner next year to Carrot River in curling along with first place in six-man football.

I would like to ask all members of this Assembly to welcome Shelley and Brycen to their Assembly. Thank you.

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

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.]

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to have a young athlete in the Assembly here today as well, and a fine introduction by the member from Carrot River.

In looking at the budget through the lens of our constituency and the needs and priorities of the families throughout, it's noticeable that there's a lot missing in this budget. And I'm willing to give credit where credit's due, and I've done so in this budget. But I look through with the lens of the hard-working families throughout the constituency — the young people that are starting out in life where they're making that step to post-secondary or working those extra jobs to afford that tuition and to study and to build out a career; those that are buying that first home or working towards buying that first home; those that are renting and are dealing with some pretty tough circumstances, Mr. Speaker, and certainly deserving of better supports and more protection; and those that have their full futures before them. Those are some of who I think of when I look at this budget.

I also think of our seniors, those that have built this province. And in my constituency the unique aspect of our senior population is that . . . Of course we have a fairly significant senior population by way of some of the housing options: Regina Village, Mutchmor Lodge, Benson Manor. And in these facilities people have come from all over the province, from every corner of the province, from rural Saskatchewan, from the Northwest, the Northeast, Southeast, Southwest. And when I sit down and visit with these builders of our province, it's those discussions and that listening that also informs my budget response and how I assess or analyze the budget. And it's in these conversations with those young families and those students; it's in those conversations with our seniors, the builders of our province; it's in those conversations with those hard-working families doing all they can to build out a high quality of life for them and their families that I draw upon when I look at the budget.

Certainly the analysis and critique that I brought to the floor of this Assembly yesterday holds true for my constituency. I think of the education and the needs that exist and the opportunity to support the classroom. And I look at the missed opportunity of this government, the failing of this government on this front,

and what that means for those classrooms whether at Walker or Rosemont or St. Francis, Mr. Speaker, or Martin Collegiate. And those consequences are significant.

When, you know, the Premier and others dismiss today the cuts to the educational assistants, and there was lots of noise from the side opposite when it was raised here today, well, Mr. Speaker, we also had visitors to our Assembly here today, a group of fine students and teachers for whom I had the chance to speak with before coming into the Assembly. And unprompted from anything from me, Mr. Speaker, these teachers made a plea to please provide the resources they need, to please make sure that their classrooms aren't going to be under the strain that they are, Mr. Speaker, and to please make sure that the cuts to educational assistants that has gone on under this government doesn't continue, Mr. Speaker. And that's all of what we need to keep in mind when we're looking about how we're building the future that we all should be striving for.

I also think of the circumstances around child care and the pressures on families. And we need to do a better job of supporting early learning, child care, and those supports and options for young families that are making very difficult decisions, working incredibly hard. And we need to be there as an active partner stepping up to the plate to understand the pressures and realities they're facing and bringing solutions to bear.

I think of the issue when I look at so many of our families. I look at so many of my constituents that are wedged between caring for children but then also caring for parents. And I know the importance of making sure we're doing all we can to invest in home care and making meaningful expansions and supports on that end, and expanding long-term care and supports and making sure we're meeting the needs of, as I say, the seniors of our province, our parents and grandparents, the builders of this province. But also understanding the strain this places on an entire family. And during prosperous times like this with a tremendously strong economy, we need to be taking those steps and making those improvements for the seniors of our province.

And I see it in the lives of too many, where they're denied access to safe care, to a space, many denied access to space. I had a recent story that was heartbreaking, where a senior couple had come to me and had been together for over 50 years and were forced into a long-term care environment, where one of the partners had become quite ill. And a family that had been in Regina their entire life, a senior couple for over 50 years, and the only option that that minister and that government could bring forward, despite my efforts to meet personally and bring forward information, was to send the father, the husband, to Cupar, 45 minutes to an hour away. Separating a couple that had spent their entire life together, Mr. Speaker, while one was receiving a little bit of extra care and health attention.

Well, Mr. Speaker, just two, a couple of weeks later, Mr. Speaker, that man passed, you know, and when I'm thinking of the family that came in to talk with me before and to talk with me after, and to see the heartbreak within that family who expressed to me that quite simply, their father was rather healthy, quite healthy in fact, and it's their adamant belief that he died of a broken heart, Mr. Speaker.

And these are the sad and tragic consequences that no government and no person wants to place upon anyone, and certainly not our seniors. But it makes all too real the tragic consequences that so many are facing, and must inspire us to be making the changes that we should be working towards, making the improvements that we should, taking the opportunity of today, the prosperity of today, and making sure that it's allowing us to build something more meaningful for tomorrow. And certainly on this front, the budget just simply didn't cut it on long-term care and the needs of my constituents.

The aspect of affordable housing and rent is something I'll touch back into as I roll through some of the critiques that I have, but so little attention paid to an issue so critical to so many. And I think of our renters that are facing such vulnerable circumstances — working two and three jobs, many in precarious employment, many that could only dream of having an extra dollar in their pocket at the end of the week or the end of the month, Mr. Speaker, who are facing massive increases to their rent in an unmitigated fashion with no control, no protection, no peace of mind from their government. And it impacts our young families. It impacts those that are starting out in life, and it impacts our seniors who deserve better, Mr. Speaker.

And I know government often gets up and they start touting numbers, the many thousands that they're suggesting that they're building by way of what they categorize as low-income units, Mr. Speaker. Those low-income units are few and far between for one, and the threshold to access these market-driven, low-income units are something that far too many, Mr. Speaker, just can't access. And for government to think otherwise just displays a level of being out of touch with the reality that Saskatchewan families are facing. So certainly this is an area that we need to bring forward better action.

When we look at some of the other pressures, I draw upon the stories and the experiences on our sports fields and in our schools and through our churches and discussing . . . conversations that we have with community leaders and coaches and volunteers that certainly inform how I assess the effectiveness of a provincial budget. And on so many of those measures, this budget falls short.

[11:00]

I know for many it'll be a big concern to understand the debt that's being left for the next generation, the short-term decisions that are being made today for the simplistic purpose of making effective political billboards for the other side, the self-interest of the government, and not the best interests of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. And we'll always stand on the side of the best interests of Saskatchewan people being heard, being represented, and government should certainly be doing the same. And it's disappointing to see more spin and more misleading books on this front.

I recognize that there's other areas that require attention throughout the constituency. There's a lot of pressure that's been placed upon residents of Dewdney Avenue, who have been bombarded with heavy-haul truck traffic by way of rerouting and reorganization of some of our transportation. And despite what seemed at one point to be earnest offerings of

government to work towards providing solutions for those residents, we've been working now for well over a year or two years, Mr. Speaker, to see this addressed, and we see little action. And what it has meant is, it's meant a concern around safety, real safety concerns — big heavy freight moving up and down those roads while kids are moving back and forth to school. And you know, one of the members heckles on something like this, Mr. Speaker. The circumstances and safety concerns are real. They're a significant risk to many and we have to do a better job. And this government needs to start showing some leadership on this file to do a better job of mitigating those safety concerns, rerouting that truck traffic, putting controls in place to make sure that safety's there.

Because in fact it's at the same time, Mr. Speaker, that they're in fact closing a school in the constituency, and I think of Dieppe, that they're forcing many students now to go down that very artery by bike, by foot, by car, out on to Dewdney Avenue with this heavy freight traffic that's causing a lot of safety concerns.

And it's not just a safety concern. It's really, really noisy, Mr. Speaker. It shakes houses. It causes lots of concern, so it's a matter of peace of mind as well. And we're going to make sure that this government keeps this as a matter of attention and something that requires action.

I referenced Dieppe School. Maybe just a note on it. Of course the budgets of this government have caused a lot of hurt in education. They've cut educational assistants, as we've talked about. They've grown class size. They've placed stress on students and teachers and parents who desire the best outcomes out of our classrooms, and they desire a government to be a willing partner. And I think of a school up in my constituency, Dieppe, that sadly had its doors closed last year because of budgetary measures and because of a hamstringing of this government of school boards across Saskatchewan — taking full control over school board funding and then underfunding those very school boards — causing very difficult, hard decisions for those elected members of our school boards who serve honourably and do such tremendous work in our communities and in our schools, but are left with such a difficult circumstance when their hands have been tied, when they've been hamstrung by decisions of this government to impede their ability to best serve their role in service of education.

So when I look at a school like Dieppe I certainly don't fault any decision of a school board, but I certainly lay blame directly at the feet of a government that has taken over school funding, has then underfunded education, and has caused closures like this, cuts in our classrooms that simply shouldn't be accepted and simply aren't in the best interests of communities of students and parents and not in the best interests of building the kind of Saskatchewan that we all desire.

I mentioned earlier the exceptional seniors throughout our constituency. And because of being I guess close to some of the health services, because of as well having a density by way of seniors' housing, we do have a fairly strong presence of seniors throughout my constituency. And I say there's some of the most meaningful conversations are had as sitting down at some of the

social times for coffee and, of course, the household visits or even some of the pub nights at Benson Manor or Regina Village and hearing these stories, these lives of contribution. Whether they built their lives on the farm or whether they built their lives in Weyburn or from all different parts of the province, they've come together and they still care deeply about their province.

And I draw upon those conversations in a significant way because they remember our history as well and they remember decisions of governments previous. And I don't need to get into it all or make that a political statement. They remember the history of our province and I guess how we've become who we've become, Mr. Speaker. And those are important, important for us all to hear. And I'd like to certainly thank the seniors of our constituency for their contributions to our community and their life of contributions to our province. And those contributions are certainly, certainly many.

I know there's a lot of concern as well by many in the very anti-worker agenda of this government. And I hear it from our teachers. I hear it from our firefighters. I hear it from those that are working two, three jobs to try to pay the bills. I hear it from our construction trades. They really have concerns with a government that works in a unilateral way with a heavy hand and that fails to listen to those who are impacted, fails to listen to those who are impacted most by the decisions made today. And those workers that I've cited, whether it's that firefighter or that teacher or that person working two or three jobs to build their life, they too deserve to share in the prosperity of this province. And for this government to push with heavy-handed laws and interventions that actively deny their ability to reap that reward or share in that benefit is wrong, Mr. Speaker.

And we'll stand every day in this Assembly, stand in a strong way for the middle-class families of this province and making sure that we're building a stronger middle class, that it's not going in the wrong direction, that where they're not losing ground in their own economy, Mr. Speaker . . . It's nice to hear the member from Melfort speak up in this Assembly. We rarely get to hear that member speak. He's shouting from across the floor, Mr. Speaker. I do look forward to his chance to provide a speech from his feet as well, Mr. Speaker.

We've looked at this budget and, as I've said, we laid out clear priorities that were important to Saskatchewan people and what we expected out of it. We expected improvements in education. We expected more choices, more spaces in long-term care, and we expected transparency and accountability to be delivered to Saskatchewan people. I'll ask the member from Weyburn just to speak up so I can . . . The members are engaging . . . I couldn't hear.

So on those fronts, this budget misses the mark, misses the mark. They miss the mark. Whether it's on education, whether it's long-term care, whether it's transparency and accountability, this government's clearly missed the mark. And further to that, this government has put forward a budget that brings forward huge debt to the people of the province. Total debt, if you can imagine, is rising this year by \$835 million. In the year that we're closing the books on right now, debt's rising by \$1.1 billion.

Now you'll have noticed that something else is printed on the

expensive, taxpayer-funded billboards of that government, Mr. Speaker, and that's only made possible because of the misleading set of books that this government utilizes to report its finances. And Saskatchewan people deserve better than that. They deserve the true, full state of our finances, the straight goods. And the straight goods are that debt's on the rise and \$2 billion over two years is the record of this government currently, in fact taking debt up to \$10.4 billion in this province by the end of the next fiscal year.

Now even more alarming than that is that they're losing ground on the debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] ratio. And this is your ability as an economy, as a province to afford the debt you're taking on. And you know, we all know what debt did to this province at one point in time, Mr. Speaker, and all people have shared in the sacrifice and the work to work towards improvements on this front. And for a long period of time we saw significant improvements in those debt-to-GDP ratios — our ability to pay for the debt that the government has, our ability to pay for the debt that the people of Saskatchewan owe.

And so it's of concern to many — I know many that have gone through this budget have noted this to be a significant concern — to see a reversal in that trend and to see an actual increase to the debt-to-GDP ratio, a worsening of the position of our ability to support the debt we're taking on. And this during very buoyant times within our economy. It's particularly troubling. When your economy as a whole is growing and your GDP, that side, the fraction is growing or the denominator's growing, it's unfortunate to see a government outstripping it with debt growth and causing us to step into a trend that certainly isn't a trend we can sustain into the future.

It's the same sort of trend we see in the debt-to-capital ratios of our Crown corporations and a direct consequence of this government. Over the past five years, we've seen over \$2 billion drained and stripped from our Crown corporations to cover off spending of this government. That dividend is a reasonable measure from a Crown corporation that can afford it. But if dividends are being stripped and transferred across for spending and simply borrowed on the Crown side, our Crown corporations — borrowed by way of debt and then transferred across — that's not sustainable. It's not in the best interests of anyone.

And of course we know the consequences of this are many: (a) it undermines the Crown corporations which don't just have a rich history in this province but are pretty key to our future in building out the modern economy that we work towards, the modern economy that must include strong, private, profitable private companies and a strong, thriving Crown sector. And this side of the Assembly, the other side, the government seems not to understand that formula. They seem to, in fact in a rather new way, seems rather committed to directly undermining that Crown sector, that very important part of our economy and very important tools in meeting the challenges and opportunities of people in communities all across Saskatchewan. And that's something that's disappointing to see for many.

The Crown debt as well comes at a direct price, direct cost to Saskatchewan people, certainly by way of potential service. And I know sometimes if individuals are suffering from inadequate access to power or predictability on these fronts,

there's concerns on those fronts. But we all pay for it by way of ratepayers through our power bill or through our other utility bills that we face.

So for this government to continue to strip the Crown sector, to pull dividends or claim dividends that are simply borrowed money in the Crown sector, comes at a direct cost to our Crown corporations and certainly to the people of this province who remember the broken promise of just a couple years ago, or a year ago, where this government came forward at budget day and said they had a balanced budget, and of course then it wasn't. The auditor verified it was a deficit later in the year.

But they also said on budget day that they weren't going to take any money from SaskPower, Mr. Speaker, not a cent. And they did it with great fanfare. They made that commitment. And I, as the Finance critic, actually supported that in a very solid way and said, we'll support good work where good work exists and not taking a dividend is the right choice from SaskPower. Needless to say, it was only a few months later and getting close to the end of the fiscal year and this government was in a budget crunch, and they stuck their hand right into the piggy bank once again of SaskPower and raided it of \$120 million, of dollars it needed to invest in services, dollars it needed to meet the needs of consumers, and something that's come at a direct cost with a big power increase to many. And there's some heckling from one of the members about dividends, and I'll go through this. I'll go through this one more time.

A dividend, a dividend is an appropriate, is an appropriate expectation of a Crown corporation, but not if that money's borrowed money on our Crown corporations. And now I hear the Premier actually heckles in here and says something about 150 per cent. He needs to understand the difference when a dividend is being transferred that's earnings and a dividend that's being transferred that's all debt on the back of the Crown corporations.

Yes I think the Premier should also probably take note and think back to years like 2009 when his government actually, actually went in and grabbed \$755 million from our Crown corporations. That's their record. That's their record. I'd urge members opposite, if they choose to heckle, they should do some research on this. I urge government to go back and find the last time a government took \$755 million in one calendar year. I'd urge government, because that occurred in 2009 under this government, and I'd urge them to go back and just look at when that may have occurred last time.

[11:15]

So our Crown corporations are of concern. Our Crown corporations are of concern, and they're being undermined; they're being raided. And that's of concern to Saskatchewan people. And that's a concern to all of us.

We also see that we need to be doing a better job of skills training and apprenticeship, and going at this in a real aggressive way. We've really missed an opportunity over the past few years during a time of an exceptionally strong economy to make the kinds of gains we should for all Saskatchewan people, and certainly our First Nations and Métis people are included on that front. And the absence of a

meaningful program or aggressive action on skills training and apprenticeship is something that's been lacking from this government all the way through.

I've spoken about the lack of affordable housing being brought forward by this government. And in fact what they're actually doing is taking steps backward, selling off affordable housing units that have been purchased by Saskatchewan people over generations past and now selling off those units and giving up one of the most effective tools that they had — taking in this year almost \$20 million into their books, raking that in from the sale of these affordable housing units that we need, and not replacing them with something that fills the gap.

We see nothing by way of the film tax credit or the film economy that's so important to Saskatchewan, something that was a major mistake of this government, something that's hurt families, hurt our economy, and something that we've been calling upon to be reinstated. And it's more than just its economic place. It's about who we are as a province and our cultural well-being and our quality of life.

We see in this budget no mention of labour, the working people of this province, despite its heavy hand in aggressively overhauling labour legislation with selective hearing, only listening to one side of the equation and a select few, and dismissing the thousands and thousands of workers across this province who work hard every day to build their lives in this province.

We see inadequate dollars put forward as far as flooding and for PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program]. In fact when we have a high snowpack, one of the highest snowpacks we've had in years, and a high water table that's of concern, this government didn't see it in itself to find a budget line to adequately and responsibly lay out provisions to respond to potential damage or to mitigate that damage. And now let's hope that damage is minimal or doesn't exist, but certainly the conditions are a concern and a worry.

I notice that while this government can't keep a promise within education or to students or can't keep a promise around maintaining our Crowns, what they can keep is a promise towards a corporate income tax cut for the largest corporations, Mr. Speaker. Now they say, oh we're going to defer it this year, but trust us, we affirm our commitment. I find that interesting, Mr. Speaker. At a time where debt's being added up, where government's scrambling and selling off assets, where they're cutting in the classroom, and causing significant hurt for families across this province, where their interests lie and where their commitments lie is to give away \$200 million a year at a time where we need those dollars to be invested back into where they matter — building healthier, stronger communities, in our classrooms, to balance our books, to leave a bit of a legacy for future generations. And I'm all for strong corporations, profitable corporations. That's important. And they're doing quite well in Saskatchewan right now. This is the wrong time to give away \$200 million, sending it largely outside Saskatchewan.

I also recognize some of the cuts to the ethanol industry in this province without any consultation with those operations, with little impact understood by government. And those producers,

those operations certainly deserve better. They deserve to fully understand the decisions of government. And certainly in the coming weeks, we'll be analyzing and understanding what this means for those operations. And I hope government understands those implications because those are important employers and investments in Saskatchewan.

It's also interesting to see the cut to the labour-sponsored venture fund that occurred. They're cutting the investment in our province, the capitalization that occurs from these funds, and effectively taking away a very large investment in our province that plays a very important role in business succession in this province. It also plays a very important role by way of employment and generating taxes back to the province by way of GST [goods and services tax] and PST [provincial sales tax] and income tax and corporate taxes. And to cut the labour-sponsored venture funds is an interesting choice of this government, one that I don't support.

I also don't support what they're doing where they're starting to monkey around with how those funds can be invested, Mr. Speaker. And I know the shareholders across Saskatchewan probably have some questions of this government about its decision to unilaterally decide how the investments that they've chosen to make, that are in part there to secure their retirements, Mr. Speaker, why this government thinks they can come in — after they've purchased in by way of a prospectus, by way of conditions and terms, and for this government to come in and to dictate terms around those investments. Now we'll have more to talk about that in the coming days and weeks, and there will be more consultations on this front.

But you know, I guess I'll just say there's a lot of hard-working people in this province that are doing all they can to take care of their family today and save a little for tomorrow and hope towards a retirement. And those funds are an important tool to many in this province. Many individuals have kept a schedule and invested every year as part of their RRSP [registered retirement savings plan] or in some cases borrowed dollars to make sure they can make that contribution. And they're locked in of course with that investment for eight years. And for a government to think that it can come in and dictate terms on that investment, changing the scope of those investments and monkeying around with the kind of return they can expect, is something that all hard-working people in this province should be — and I know are — questioning as they learn of it.

We're certainly concerned with the continued sell-off in this province, the broken promises to preserve our Crowns. Now we see of course our Crowns being undermined, but even our profitable Crown corporation being sold off in ISC [Information Services Corporation] deriving . . . taking away dollars from this government to meet the needs of Saskatchewan people, taking away \$15 million a year in a dividend that's appropriately paid to make those investments back into services in this province is now being denied.

And my question to the government is, through these kind of short-sighted decisions, where do they think they're going to have the dollars to make these investments if they're selling off the assets, the profitable assets we have here today? And of course I talked about the senseless sell-off of affordable homes and public land that we have as an important tool to respond to

challenges.

When I look at the Agriculture budget, I see nothing but cuts throughout it, Mr. Speaker. And I know our Ag minister, he went up to Whitehorse and he then came out of there and he seemed to, you know, suggest that he was disappointed with the decisions made of the federal government. I thought, this is good. I'm glad he's standing up here. But what we've noticed now, because AgStability and AgInvest are cost-share programs, is that even though the minister was either upset or pretended to protest, he was all too willing to simply let his budget be cut because of the cost-sharing arrangement and do nothing to fill the gap within his own spending. So this year we see tens of millions of dollars that are taken directly out of producers' operations by way of cuts of this government and certainly of the federal government as well. We'll be watching the federal budget here today, Mr. Speaker.

Last year in agriculture, agriculture was hammered by the federal budget in last year's budget with meat inspections being pushed on to the province, with our shelterbelt being put up for sale, with community pastures being punted on to the province. And what I did notice that was also absent in this budget was any sort of a meaningful plan to put forward some support for those community pastures and the solutions that many are looking for.

And also no plan, no leadership to take our shelterbelt, that actually predates the establishment of us as a province in 1905 — developed in 1903 — and showed no leadership to step forward to ensure that this maintains it as a public good into the future. And I suspect we have willing partners in our neighbouring jurisdictions who are ready and willing to work with this province towards making sure that that shelterbelt, that tree nursery, continues to serve the entire region, certainly our province. And I'm always mesmerized as I drive across the province, looking at that transformation that has occurred across our prairie landscape as a result of that historic investment in the program many years ago, Mr. Speaker. But it has huge value to the future.

I look at changes to introduce pooled pensions, and some of this is reasonable. That being said, it's all voluntary, Mr. Speaker. We need meaningful provisions and improvements for Canada pension at a time where old age security's being cut. We need to make sure we're addressing income security in a way that impacts all. And certainly the Canada Pension Plan is the most efficient, most effective tool to going at that. It's pan-Canadian. It's portable. And this government's unwillingness to be a strong advocate on the national stage is something that certainly hurts Saskatchewan hard-working families and the income security they deserve. But it's a detriment to all Canadians that we can't work together on such an important file.

So I welcome the pooled pension changes, but they will impact some people, Mr. Speaker, but not all people and not enough people. In fact only a few will be able to participate in those programs. We need to do a better job of providing stronger income security for all Canadians and all Saskatchewan workers and retirees. And certainly the Canada pension is that important tool.

We also noticed throughout the budget that there's a lot of

money for executive government, for all the executive functions of ministries. And there's a real trend there. I noticed it stood out in a galling way in health care where they're actually asking the health agencies or health authorities and the Cancer Agency to go out and cut \$54 million in services and programs and care across our province, punting on, as I've said, Mr. Speaker, those difficult decisions that impact real people in a real way onto other levels of government, but also other agencies like the Cancer Agency.

And when I see then on the other side that this government's actually beefing up its expenditure in a big way, almost 20 per cent, in executive management in health, that's interesting. So more money for the top of health care, Mr. Speaker, less money for the delivery on the front lines, and cuts for many, and leaving the hard work of this budget to be done by many others. Those are some of the concerns I've stated.

I stated, of course, my concerns by way of the cuts to our environment — something that's critical not just to our quality of life, that's critical to life itself. It's about acting now to protect our environment for future generations, and the fact we see cuts to dollars who are already too few to address the challenges of climate change are a large concern.

The huge burden that's being passed along to students in our pre-K to 12 system is unacceptable. Just the same, the massive increases in tuition and the debt that we're passing on to post-secondary students is a challenge for many, and making learning inaccessible for far too many across this province, which hurts their future and it hurts our economy.

Our universities are in disarray with a debt burden that's been placed upon them by this government. Our communities are looking for meaningful action by way of an infrastructure plan, something that wasn't in our budget yesterday. And of course something that'll come as a direct cost to all Saskatchewan people by way of property tax increases, that will result from not properly supporting those changes, is supporting the growth in our communities, Mr. Speaker. So there's some of those concerns.

I've already put on the record some of the stuff I liked in the budget. There wasn't . . . I mean, I wish I would have been able to support more that existed there. There were some small investments that were made into home care. That's good. We need to do more. I support some of the investments into shelters. That's good. That being said, the need is huge and we need to understand the entire need in making sure we're addressing the challenge in a meaningful way. I certainly support the investment made into First Link and Alzheimer's. It's a good investment. We'll certainly give credit where credit is due.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, Mr. Speaker, as a province. We have a lot of work ahead of us as the official opposition to listen to Saskatchewan people, to discuss their thoughts and ideas as it relates to this budget. I thank so many for the emails, for the messages that have come in, the questions they want asked. I urge them to get an understanding of this budget.

We know unfortunately that because of the choices of this government, there's more pain to come. And that's where I

know many individuals sending emails in to me from all parts of Saskatchewan — the North, rural Saskatchewan, urban Saskatchewan — all parts have concern and anxiety around what the impact will be on the services they depend on in their neighbourhood, in their schools, in their health services, or the cost that will be borne directly by way of this budget. So I thank Saskatchewan people for their interest and their care on those fronts. I urge them to make sure they're sharing with us as they see some of those impacts occurring in their communities, to make sure that we can give voice and do all we can to be the advocate for their issues, Mr. Speaker.

[11:30]

And I guess I would just touch on before closing that it, you know, there's a lot of concern about this budget being nothing more than punting responsibility down the road, kicking costs onto the next generation, onto the kids. It's this concept of a credit card budget, not supporting education, and compromising the futures of young people on that front, entering into tricky, costly, risky new funding schemes, private schemes to deliver infrastructure that cost us far more through the long term; provide a level of uncertainty around that infrastructure — something that comes as a big consequence to future generations.

And of course future generations and all people should be concerned about the growing debt trend in this province, the \$2 billion over the past two years. And not just the fact that the debt's growing. Maybe people should be more concerned that their government's unwilling to be straight with them about it, that this government does all it can to manufacture and manipulate and spin a different story to print on their billboards but has less care, less focus, little care and little focus on the true and real financial state of this province, and reports our finances in a way that, as our Provincial Auditor has stated, is misleading and wrong, Mr. Speaker.

So we laid out priorities when we came into this budget in health care and the classroom, in long-term care and transparency and accountability. Certainly this government missed the mark on those 0 for 3, Mr. Speaker. And I can say that, you know, a lot of people are questioning that how, when Saskatchewan's economy is doing so well, how is this government failing to make the gains it should? How are they failing to take advantage of that opportunity and making sure that it's making improvements in the lives of Saskatchewan people, making improvements in the financial state of this province? So those are the rightful questions I'm hearing from Saskatchewan people about this disconnect of about how well our province is doing, and then sort of this pay-more, get-less budget and approach from this government.

And there's questions then that are brought about the ability of this government to manage that strong economy in a principled way that derives benefits for Saskatchewan people, and certainly we question that.

So this is a credit card budget. It borrows from our future, asking our kids to pay for it, and kicking responsibility down the road. And because it's hard on services that the middle-class families rely upon and all families rely upon such as health care and education, and fails to be transparent, we will not be

supporting this budget. I will not be supporting this budget and at this point in time I will move the following motion:

That all the words after “that the Assembly” be deleted and the following be added:

disagrees with the government for tabling a credit card budget that pushes costs on future generations, hurts health care, fails students in schools, rolls back the clock on environmental progress, denies transparency, and relies on short-sighted privatization schemes.

I move that motion. And that motion will be seconded by my good friend, and one heck of a voice for the North, Mr. Speaker, and for all of Saskatchewan, the member from Athabasca. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The motion moved by the member for Regina Rosemont, seconded by the member from Athabasca, is:

That all the words after “that the Assembly” be deleted and the following be added . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Both sides.

disagrees with the government for tabling a credit card budget that pushes costs on future generations, hurts health care, fails students in schools, rolls back the clock on environmental progress, denies transparency, and relies on short-sighted privatization schemes.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . He needs to stand up. Seconder goes first. I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that we have the opportunity to speak about this particular budget. I want to make sure that the people of Saskatchewan understand what this budget means.

But before we go there, Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that I basically advise the people, the young people. And I noticed today we had some young business people here, and I believe they're still in the galleries, Mr. Speaker. What's important from our perspective as an opposition is that we encourage the young people that are out there that have a great knowledge of how business should work, have a great knowledge of what deficits are about, have a great knowledge of how to manage a business or in this case how to manage the economy of Saskatchewan. And the reason I'm going to be explaining all that, Mr. Speaker, in a modern, relevant economy, Mr. Speaker, you've got to have three or four key, key ingredients to make sure that you have the positive benefits for the future generations to enjoy. And I think a lot of the business people that may be here today would understand that, Mr. Speaker.

From our perspective, the Premier spoke about history, Mr. Speaker. He spoke about the history of the NDP. And what's the most amazing thing about the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, is their history began in 1991, when they talk about the NDP taking over government in 1991. And for many young

people out there, many young people, 1991 was so long ago and they may not remember the importance of what the NDP had to deal with. But before 1991, before 1991, Mr. Speaker, I want to know who was in power prior to 1991 because the Saskatchewan Party doesn't want to acknowledge anything that happened before 1991, Mr. Speaker. And why? Let me tell the people of Saskatchewan why the Sask Party or the conservatives across the way do not want to talk about pre-1991 when the NDP took over government, Mr. Speaker.

The reason why they don't want to talk about it, the reason why they don't want to talk about that, Mr. Speaker, is because Saskatchewan was roughly fifteen and one-half billion dollars in debt, Mr. Speaker, when the Conservatives under Grant Devine left this province fifteen and one-half billion dollars in debt, Mr. Speaker. So the NDP came along in 1991, Romanow and the most, the most . . . Mr. Speaker, you can hear the conservatives chirp across the way because history will show and history will always show that in 1991, based on the budget that we're having here today, that the Conservatives racked up fifteen and one-half billion dollars billion in debt for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And some of them are sitting over there saying, oh I wasn't there. No you weren't there, but many of your colleagues and many of your conservative cousins were there. And now all of a sudden in 2001 we come or 2013 we come along, and now they're talking about the history that they want to gloss over of how the NDP didn't do a lot of things that they wanted to do, Mr. Speaker.

The bottom line is, the bottom line . . . And the business people are here. The business people are here. When you're busy paying \$3 million a day in interest, a day in interest, just to service that debt, never mind paying down the debt — \$3 million a day in interest alone, Mr. Speaker — when you see your budgets each year, when they eclipse your total contribution towards debt and of course paying the principal and the interest on that debt, when that interest on the debt alone is twice the size of your Education budget, Mr. Speaker, how in the world could you manage and rebuild a province left in such ruin by the Conservatives?

And, Mr. Speaker, the most amazing thing about that, Mr. Speaker, is that the NDP did do that. The NDP did rebuild the credibility of Saskatchewan overall, alongside of the people, Mr. Speaker. Alongside of the people — it's very important to note that.

So when we sit here and we listen to the Premier talk about history, the biggest thing that people notice, and I tell a lot of young people, every time the Saskatchewan Party talks, they talk about 16 years that the NDP ruled this province. And what happened before those 16 years, Mr. Speaker? I'll ask the young people: ask the question of any Sask Party MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] what happened prior to 1991 when the NDP took over. Who brought this province to its knees? Who almost bankrupted this province, Mr. Speaker? It was the Conservatives, Mr. Speaker.

And you know what the worst part of this all, Mr. Speaker? Sitting here listening to their . . . as they try and rewrite history for their own political purposes, Mr. Speaker. I sit here and I

listen to them yap about the NDP's 16 years in power, but the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, it was the NDP and the people that rebuilt this province. It was not the Conservatives or the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. No way, shape, or form did they have anything to do with the economy today. They in fact tried to kill off Saskatchewan with that debt before 1991. And who saved the day was the people of Saskatchewan alongside the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

And when we talk about the 16 years that the NDP were in power, it took us 14 of those 16 years to clean up your mess. That was the problem, Mr. Speaker. It took 14 years to clean up their mess, Mr. Speaker. And when the NDP alongside the people started rebuilding the economy, started building hope, Mr. Speaker, along come the conservatives and say, oh look what we're doing now. You almost killed off, you almost killed off the province, and now you're returning, claiming credit for the economy that the private sector, the NDP, and the people of Saskatchewan created, Mr. Speaker. They had absolutely nothing to do with the booming economy today, but yet they're benefiting from that economy because they're claiming that they created this economy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what's really disturbing to us on this side of the Assembly is we can't for the life of us understand the logic of the conservatives. And the business people that might be here today, they look at that, and they may look at how they've managed the economy pre-1991 saying, well this spreadsheet's awful. They have more money going out than you have money coming in. How could you sustain a province or a business like that?

I would encourage the people across the way and many young people to study the history, Mr. Speaker. Study the history and see how in fact it was the NDP under Romanow, under Premier Romanow at the time that helped rebuild the province alongside of the people.

And today, Mr. Speaker, you see the most important point I would raise, the most important point I would raise — whether it's the minister of Industry and member from Kindersley who sits here and pretends to know the economy and pretends to think he can develop the economy, Mr. Speaker — when the heavy lifting and the hard work was to begin, along came Premier Calvert and many members like Eldon Lautermilch out of Prince Albert, people like Eric Cline out of Saskatoon, people like Maynard Sonntag out of Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker. I sat within the NDP benches, and I watched these people perform. And there was many others, Mr. Speaker, that worked very hard.

And what happened, Mr. Speaker, what happened is this premier and this government of the day, Premier Calvert and company, they started working with the resource companies saying, look, let's figure out how we can strengthen the economy. Because I remember Premier Calvert saying, you know, we cannot have a social agenda without first having a successful business experience. And, Mr. Speaker, that's when we started working on the economy, Mr. Speaker. And all of a sudden everybody knew that Saskatchewan was going to boom. Everybody knew that Saskatchewan's turn was coming very, very quickly to fruition in terms of being a booming economy.

So what happened is after we slew, after we had slain the deficit bill that the conservatives across the way created, we then had to turn around and rebuild our Crown corporations. We then had to turn around and look for partners, investors, the business community to help us stimulate the economy. And all that work began in 2001, Mr. Speaker.

I can remember the day almost to the day when the headlines in *The StarPhoenix* saying, "Saskatchewan's star is rising." "Saskatchewan's star is rising." And I think all the funding or the people that were involved would . . . analyzing, analyzing Saskatchewan's credit rating, analyzing Saskatchewan's investment climate. All of a sudden they saw that the NDP and the people of Saskatchewan were ready for that investment and that this would make a significant or create a significant opportunity for the business communities all throughout the country and the world. All of a sudden they're saying, Saskatchewan's star is rising — 2001. And, Mr. Speaker, guess who was in charge. It was the NDP. It was not the Conservatives. It wasn't the Sask Party. They weren't even born yet, Mr. Speaker.

And the worst part is, the worst part is we sit here. We sit here, us nine NDP MLAs along with our membership base. We sit here and we say, well you know, what happened here?

What happened here was the worst thing in the world: that we sit here and we listen to the conservatives talk about how they created the economy and how they're balancing the budget. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the economy, the worst thing that the right wing can say today, the worst thing they can say today, Mr. Speaker, is they can say that they created it. And they did not, Mr. Speaker. And that's the worst thing today to tell the right wing folks.

[11:45]

You can brag all you want about the money you have, which we're now seeing is gone. You can talk about all the business opportunities coming to Saskatchewan, the population base. But there's one small factor, one small, nibbling problem that the right wingers across the way have. Mr. Speaker, they didn't create that economy. They merely inherited that economy. That's a significant difference, Mr. Speaker. They inherited a booming economy. They inherited population growth. They inherited money in the bank. The atmosphere was great in the province. All it was, Mr. Speaker, all it was was timing. All it was was good timing that the Saskatchewan Party took advantage of.

And now, Mr. Speaker, they're trying to rewrite history. They're trying to forget about their post-1991 years when they almost killed this province off. And now they sit up every day bragging about some of the money they spend or some of the things they've done when, Mr. Speaker, all they have done, all they have done, Mr. Speaker, was inherit all that great news and all that good work on the backs of many good people in Saskatchewan including the labour movement, Mr. Speaker, including the people of Saskatchewan that really pulled up their socks and done all the hard work, Mr. Speaker.

And let history show, let history show that the Conservatives almost killed off the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker,

had almost killed them off before 1991. And the people of Saskatchewan said, we had enough of that show. We want them out of there. They got tossed out, Mr. Speaker. And along came the NDP under Romanow that had to rebuild our province. And, Mr. Speaker, to this day, to this day I think the great injustice done to Premier Romanow was he never had the opportunity to show what he could do as premier because he was so busy cleaning up the Conservative mess left behind by Grant Devine and those people over there, Mr. Speaker.

That was exactly what I think the most tragic thing that I can think about when we talk about Romanow is he never had the opportunity to build the province of Saskatchewan that he had envisioned as a premier because he was so busy paying off billions of dollars in debt. And, Mr. Speaker, he showed a lot of leadership in that particular aspect and the history of Saskatchewan, and he never had that opportunity to show what he could do.

And to this day, Mr. Speaker, I sit and think about what Romanow could've done for our province besides cleaning up the Conservative mess. And that's the worst part of it all, Mr. Speaker, is that would be his legacy — which is a great legacy because he had a great team. People like Eddie Tchorzewski, you know, rest his soul, he'd done a great amount of work. Eddie had done more work with this province than the entire Sask Party caucus today, Mr. Speaker, 49 of them. And I would say that there's one man that really helped Romanow out at the time, and that was the Finance minister. And he worked hard to rebuild the credibility of this province.

And today you see all that hard work, whether it's economic planning or whether it's slaying that deficit monster or whether it's paying down debt, Mr. Speaker. All that hard work is for naught, because once again the conservatives are back. The conservatives are back, Mr. Speaker, and they're making a mess of all kinds of things. They're making a mess of everything, Mr. Speaker.

I look at this budget. I look at this budget, Mr. Speaker, and once again we're going back into debt. We're going back into debt — \$2 billion more in debt over a two-year period. And, Mr. Speaker, I say today to the people of Saskatchewan, when the conservatives across the way, the Saskatchewan Party across the way, start talking about debt, Mr. Speaker, let us remember pre-1991 when the Conservatives almost destroyed this province, almost killed us off. And now, Mr. Speaker, they're back, enjoying the economy that they didn't create, they had nothing to do with, and now they're putting us back into deficit again, back into debt again, Mr. Speaker.

Now we sit here and we say, my goodness. No matter how hard they try to rewrite history, you cannot escape from your historical wrongs, Mr. Speaker. You almost killed this province. I'm talking about the Saskatchewan Party under the conservative rule. You change your name and, voila, 16 years later, oh we're new people. Well now this budget today reaffirms to us that they haven't changed their habits, Mr. Speaker.

And not only are they putting this province back into debt — \$2 billion in two years — now we're seeing they're even selling off the Crowns. They're selling off the Crowns. And those

Crowns, Mr. Speaker, actually helped save Saskatchewan when the NDP were rebuilding. The Crowns were an essential part of our rebuilding strategy. Well the conservatives are back to put us more into debt, the conservatives are back to . . . Last time, last time Saskatchewan and the NDP were able to rebuild the province because they could use the Crowns as extra income, and the NDP did do that, Mr. Speaker. And now they sit here and they say, well if we put this province back into debt, is what the conservatives say, we better not even allow the NDP back to rebuild. So let us kill off the Crowns. Because they want to do that, Mr. Speaker. They want to kill off the Crowns. No matter what they say over there, with the Premier musing about the future of the Crowns, that is their objective, Mr. Speaker.

The third thing that's really important is the working people, the working people in our province. The people that maintain our streets, the people that protect our children, the people that teach our youth — people all throughout the province, Mr. Speaker — those are the working men and women that helped rebuild the province after the Saskatchewan Party almost killed us off in 1991. And one of the things that's really important is that now they have gone to war with the working people. They have gone to war with the working people.

And what you see now, Mr. Speaker, the fourth component is they want to simply trash the environment, Mr. Speaker. We've seen evidence of that today.

So you look at what the Saskatchewan Party's doing: (a) they're putting us more into debt with this budget — \$2 billion more into debt, Mr. Speaker. Secondly, they're going to war with the working people, trying to destroy the working base of our province that took years and years to build. Third, Mr. Speaker, is that they're not allowing the Crowns to flourish. If they're not selling off the Crowns, they're sucking every penny they can out of the Crowns to try and appear like they're balancing their books, and they're failing at that, Mr. Speaker.

And the fourth thing is they're actually compromising the environment, Mr. Speaker. They're compromising the environment. And that is something that the people of Saskatchewan simply are saying, that's plain silly. You shouldn't be doing . . . shouldn't be compromising environmental protection for the sake of trying to bring some of your insider friends to do more damage to our land. We need to have that balance. That's what the people of Saskatchewan are saying, Mr. Speaker.

Now you look at the history of the conservatives or the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. Any business student, any business student, any businessman looks at their track record, very quickly they'll realize that these guys couldn't manage their way out of a wet paper bag, Mr. Speaker. They do not have the skill, the vision. They're very tied to their ideology, which I think, Mr. Speaker, in the long run is going to create some significant problems for the people of Saskatchewan.

And as the New Democratic opposition, we want to make sure people in Saskatchewan hear this message and hear the message loud and clear that the Saskatchewan Party, under the conservatives, are back. They're back. They're putting us back into debt. They're compromising the environment. They're selling off the Crowns. And they've gone to war with, gone to

war with the working people, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't make any sense. Does that make for smart growth? Absolutely not. It doesn't make any sense at all, Mr. Speaker. But that's exactly what they're doing.

And in the process, and in the process, one of their other fine pieces of work, Mr. Speaker, led by the minister of Justice at the time, was to add three more MLAs, add three more MLAs. And what that process is, Mr. Speaker . . . And they'll gerrymander the constituency boundaries. They're doing that already. And their whole trick, their whole trick here, Mr. Speaker, is to try and rejig their constituencies so they could get three more seats and trying to retain power. Retain power for what? To kill off our province, Mr. Speaker, to kill off our working people, to kill off our Crowns, and to kill off our environment. And on this side of the Assembly we don't support that one little bit, Mr. Speaker, not one little bit.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party opposition . . . I would encourage the business people, the students or people that are involved with business, to study this conservative block over here, to study them, to look at their history and see what exactly, what exactly have they done, what exactly have they done.

And I notice the Minister of Highways chirping from his chair, Mr. Speaker. He can't get the P.A. [Prince Albert] bridge right. He's messed up that file. He can't get the northern roads strategy in place. He's messed up that file. And now when we have an opportunity on some economic corridors in the city here, and he's going to mess up that file as well, Mr. Speaker. So don't worry. We've got some really good information on the Minister of Highways, and he's going to have a lot of explaining to do as we go down this path here as to how they've messed up the opportunity that they simply inherited off the NDP, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what we told him not to do.

And, Mr. Speaker, in their wisdom and tied to the ideology, the Saskatchewan Party/conservatives are back. And they're back in full force. Mr. Speaker, \$2 billion more added to our debt, \$2 billion more, Mr. Speaker.

Now look at the budget. And you don't have to take our word for it. Don't take our word for it. Let's take the words of the Provincial Auditor, the Provincial Auditor who says their books are wrong and misleading. Those were her quotes, Mr. Speaker. Those were her quotes.

And now let's see what some of their other Conservative colleagues, the other Conservative colleagues have said. And I want to quote here who said what on the Saskatchewan Party budget. Mr. Speaker, this was the quote: "Most debt and deficits are buried." First quote. Second quote: "Saskatchewan has massive debt." Now, Mr. Speaker, who said those statements? It wasn't an NDPer. It wasn't anybody in the opposition. It wasn't even the auditor, Mr. Speaker. Who said those was the Deputy Premier of Alberta, the Deputy Premier of Alberta. A Conservative is saying that these conservatives in Saskatchewan have massive debt.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if Alberta can tell Saskatchewan conservatives you have massive debt, then somebody must be telling the truth, Mr. Speaker. And I would suggest, I would

suggest that the Conservatives in Alberta have a bit more ability to lead than the Saskatchewan Party. Because from our perspective, Mr. Speaker, from our perspective, they have critiqued it from a distance, and what this individual has said, the Deputy Premier of Alberta, the Deputy Premier of Alberta has said that Saskatchewan has massive debt and most of the debt and deficits are hidden.

That's what he said. They are hidden, Mr. Speaker. They are absolutely hidden. And that's the point that we're trying to raise today is that the debt that is being created as a result of this budget, Mr. Speaker, are being hidden.

Now what I'll point out, pre-1991, pre-1991, at least Grant Devine's Conservatives, at least they told us they were going into debt because we could see the debt rising. The most amazing thing about these new conservatives, Mr. Speaker, is they're punting down that debt down the highway. They're saying, oh no, we're not into debt now. But I can almost guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, if one were to analyze this from the perspective of who's paying, I'll tell you today: our children and grandchildren will be paying those bills for the next 25 and 35 years under these P3 deals to build roads and schools and hospitals, Mr. Speaker. The private sector is going to be building those roads, and I'll tell the people of Saskatchewan that it'll cost us money. It'll cost us money in the long run for interest and for doing the work, and this Saskatchewan Party is simply punting down those expenses to our children and to our grandchildren.

So the next 25 to 35 years, I can almost guarantee you that 90 per cent of us in the Assembly today 25 years from now when this bill is finally paid off won't be here, including me, Mr. Speaker. We won't be here. But what do they care, Mr. Speaker? They don't care. And that to me decries a lack of leadership, Mr. Speaker, and people of Saskatchewan ought to know that.

So the point is don't try and run away from your history. You have a very poor history in how you managed the province of Saskatchewan, very poor. And secondly is don't try and claim credit for an economy you have absolutely nothing to do in creating, that you simply inherited all that great opportunity.

And one of the things that I find really funny and amusing, Mr. Speaker, when the NDP left office, we left \$2.5 billion in the bank for the Saskatchewan Party. And what did they do, Mr. Speaker? Six months later they put that money onto the debt. And then they said, oh look at us; we're paying down the debt 40 per cent. I can remember the Premier putting out billboards. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's what they had in the bank when they assumed government, and now you fast forward five years later. Guess how much they're putting us back into debt? \$2 billion.

So what they've done, Mr. Speaker, is they have really tried to fool the people of Saskatchewan by doing these kind of activities. And everybody that's part of that process ought to be ashamed. They should be coming forward and explaining and being very accountable to the people of Saskatchewan how they have mismanaged the economy, how they have not been able to manage the boom for everybody's benefit, and how they've created more problems than ever for Saskatchewan. And these are long-lasting problems, Mr. Speaker.

I can remember, I can remember us having discussions in cabinet when we were talking about some of the bills left behind by Grant Devine. Some of these bills that were left behind, Mr. Speaker, we were paying these bills 12, 13 years after 1991. I can remember 2003, paying a bill that the Conservatives left us. Now how many more years, how many more years do we have to pay, Mr. Speaker? We are still paying it. We are still paying it.

[12:00]

Now during the election, during the election, people of Saskatchewan said, oh well, we're tired of hearing about the debt. We're tired of hearing about the deficit. Well guess what, Mr. Speaker? That was the conservatives across the way. That's all they kept on saying. We're tired of hearing about the debt. We're tired of hearing about the interest payment. That's all we hear from you NDPers. Well, Mr. Speaker, we were tired of paying it, never mind hearing it, Mr. Speaker. We were tired of paying it.

But the problem is we had to do what was necessary to rebuild the economy and to rebuild Saskatchewan's credibility from a financial perspective, and we had no help and no advice coming and no solutions at all coming from the Saskatchewan Party or the conservatives, Mr. Speaker. From my perspective, Mr. Speaker, I looked at this budget, and already we see that old habits are hard to die. Mr. Speaker, old habits are hard to kill off. And once again the conservatives are back. They're back, Mr. Speaker. They're back. They're going to war with the working people. They want to sell off our Crowns, Mr. Speaker. They want to compromise the environment.

And what's happening now, Mr. Speaker? They want to put us back into debt with this budget. They want to put us back into debt with this budget, Mr. Speaker. And from our perspective, that's not what Saskatchewan deserves. They ought to be fair to the people of Saskatchewan. The people of Saskatchewan should learn and listen from their historical mistakes that the Conservatives had made and really analyze what is happening today, Mr. Speaker, what is happening today.

And today, Mr. Speaker, the NDP want to be relevant. They want to be modern. They want to be encouraging investment. They want to make sure that we work with our working people. Because there's only four or five basic rules that you have to follow when you develop a successful, vibrant economy. Number one is you've got to have people that'll work. You have to have the labour force. And this is where I think the working men and women in our province ought to gain some of their respect.

The second thing you have to do is you have to have people invest in the province. And I think from the NDP's perspective, absolutely we think it's really, really important that we attract investment because we're rich in all the resources, Mr. Speaker. We're rich in all the resources. We want to attract that private investment, Mr. Speaker.

The third thing is the people of Saskatchewan expect you to protect the environment. You don't want to see lakes being destroyed. You don't want to see wildlife or whole tracts of land destroyed. You want to make sure that you have that

balance that the people of Saskatchewan deserve, Mr. Speaker. That's what's really important.

And the fourth thing is you want to have a very, very good productive set of Crown corporations, Crown corporations that can provide you with the necessary power or water that's really regulated well and monitored well to make sure that Saskatchewan's interests are always maintained.

And all through these four or five pillars that we talk about within the NDP as what we think is smart growth, none of these pillars are being adopted by the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we see the mess we're having today with this \$2 billion debt. It is happening all over the place, Mr. Speaker, and that's something that's really important.

Now what I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, is that under this credit card budget is the North was forgotten. Northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, of which me and my colleague from Cumberland represent, we have such a beautiful part of our province. A lot of people don't know that the geographical centre of Saskatchewan is 75 kilometres north of Prince Albert.

So if you imagine the size of our province, of how rich the North is, and we always say in northern Saskatchewan, we're very rich. We're very blessed. We're very happy people in terms of what the good God has given us in terms of a beautiful piece of land, the ability to hunt, fish, trap, and do all the traditional things that our ancestors have done.

And, Mr. Speaker, we also enjoy things like jobs at the mine site, and we also enjoy the training that the mining companies offer us. And we continue building our hopes and dreams to our children. That's what the North wants.

But you look at how the North has been treated overall, Mr. Speaker. The Premier talked about this budget opening up the doors for the North. So we all sat here on budget day anticipating that there'd be something exciting like perhaps a road strategy. Mr. Speaker, there was none. None of that was ever spoken about when it comes to northern Saskatchewan.

The only reference that the Sask Party made when it came to northern Saskatchewan was that we're working with the uranium companies. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a given. You have to work with the uranium companies. And over the years . . . And I tell a lot of people that when you see the Sask Party just simply talking and not doing anything for northern Saskatchewan people, then the people become very angry.

And what happens when that anger becomes to a point in particular, I'll use a particular example of our highway system, of our highway system in northern Saskatchewan. The people that drive on some of those highways, they get very angry, Mr. Speaker. You know why they get angry? Because they see uranium trucks hauling out the yellowcake, hauling out all the resources out of our North and banging up the roads on their way out, from hauling out all the resources, of which we have to travel on, Mr. Speaker. So when they get angry because the government isn't doing anything, and some of that anger spills over to the corporations that are operating in the North, they get angry about that stuff. And, Mr. Speaker, all of sudden the corporations are saying, why are people angry with us? That's

because they see the resources being extracted and no benefits coming back in.

So once again this budget shows that the Saskatchewan Party look at the North as a place to simply suck as much as they can out of the North, every penny they can out of the resource base out of northern Saskatchewan, and try to get away with not putting anything back. The same principle that they treat the Crowns, they're treating the North, Mr. Speaker. And the people of the North have had enough. I think a lot of people are going to get more and more angry, Mr. Speaker. And they ought to listen to the northern people when they ask for basic things like decent schools, decent housing, decent roads, things like cellphone coverage, which we talk about every day here. And that's all they ask, Mr. Speaker.

And what does Saskatchewan get in exchange for all that? They get billions of dollars over the years out of northern resources, out of the gold sector and, Mr. Speaker, the forestry sector, the tourism. There's all kinds of opportunities in the North. And I say to the people of Saskatchewan this: we certainly hear you in the Assembly. The Saskatchewan Party hears all your concerns. People are not very . . . They're not shy about voicing their concerns. They're going to be voicing their disagreements more and more and more.

And their message to the Saskatchewan Party, and I think a lot of the mining companies are hearing this and I can almost guarantee you — I'm not privy to any discussions with Cameco or Areva or any of these other companies — but I can almost guarantee you that these mining companies are telling the Saskatchewan Party government, you better have a northern agenda when it comes to roads or cellphone coverage. You've got to do something here because the people are getting angry at us because of the Sask Party's inability to help northern Saskatchewan out despite the incredible opportunities that the northern part of the province provides to many people in southern Saskatchewan and to the province as a whole.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I prefaced my comments by saying the North is rich. The North is rich. We've got a beautiful piece of land, and there are literally billions of dollars taken out of the North, Mr. Speaker — uranium mining, like, gold mining, tourism — the list goes on. As to the incredible opportunity that the North provides to the whole province, the North is pushing far above their weight in terms of contributions to the provincial economy as a whole. I can almost guarantee today when the minister or the Premier is talking about 44 per cent of the people that work at the mines are from the North, Mr. Speaker. We're proud of that. We want to see that number build.

But the other 55 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Guess where they're from? They're from Prince Albert. They're from Saskatoon. They're from all throughout the province, Mr. Speaker. They're from all throughout the province. So they all go to work at these northern mines. They've created an incredible economy in the North. And, Mr. Speaker, nobody's arguing with the fact that we want to create opportunity for all.

And the point is the North is willing to share their wealth and their resource opportunity with jobs for many, many people. And all we ask for exchange from this government or for any government is to at least afford the region in which you've

taken out all these resources decent roads, decent schools, and decent services to help build the economy, such as cellphones and schools and training programs, Mr. Speaker. That's all they're asking. They're not asking for the moon.

And what happened once again? The Saskatchewan Party, in their archaic thinking, look at the North as a place they can simply take out all the resources and not put anything back. And, Mr. Speaker, that action is going to create problems for the Saskatchewan Party sooner than later.

And I know that the mining companies are getting angry with this government. And I know that the mining companies are telling these guys, do something. Because what happens if this government doesn't start doing anything, Mr. Speaker? The peace in the valley that's created over the years under a smart growth thinking is going to be gone, Mr. Speaker. People in the North are going to get angrier and angrier and angrier. And some of that anger's going to spill over to the corporate sector. And is that good for the provincial economy, Mr. Speaker? Absolutely not. It's not good.

Do we want to see that industry hurt? And in the long run, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what's going to happen if the Saskatchewan Party does not wake up to meet the needs of northern Saskatchewan people. Because I'm telling you right now today that one of the first volleys, one of the first fires or volleys across the bow of the Saskatchewan Party and the Conservative government overall was the Idle No More effort, Mr. Speaker.

The Idle No More effort, Mr. Speaker, is going to really inflame a lot of groups and organizations and say, look, the Idle No More movement really created . . . woke up a lot of the Aboriginal community and they started fighting back.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we're going to see 10 times that effort when the people of the North finally stand up and say, we've had enough of this disrespect. We've had enough of this non-action by the Saskatchewan Party government. We're going to start standing up and we're going to start telling the government you'd better start doing things, otherwise there will be major problems in the future. And as an MLA, I don't want to see any of that activity, Mr. Speaker, because a lot of my people, my constituents' livelihood are attached to the mining sector. We want to see that continue, but in a sustainable, thoughtful, respectful way, Mr. Speaker, not the way the Saskatchewan Party treats the North.

And, Mr. Speaker, when they made an announcement on highways in northern Saskatchewan, there was one highway mentioned, Mr. Speaker, and that was the highway between two mines. Now you look at the investment, the private sector doing that, we don't have a problem with northern development, Mr. Speaker. The uranium mining industry is exciting for northern Saskatchewan.

But I'll go back to, the historical perspective is, who developed that mining sector in the '70s, Mr. Speaker? It was the NDP. It was the NDP that bought the North, Mr. Speaker, under the then MLA Fred Thompson, he ushered in a new era of development for the North. And the uranium companies were part and parcel and partners of that effort with the government

of Saskatchewan of the day, which were the NDP. So when the Sask Party get up and the Premier gets up and says, oh you guys are against uranium development — absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. Why would he say something like that that was factually incorrect? Who ushered in the uranium development in the North? It was the NDP, Mr. Speaker. So we're not going to take no lessons from anybody in terms of trying to develop the North.

And the simple thing at the time, Mr. Speaker, at the time under the NDP, they asked for decent things like decent roads. And I remember the road being paved. And now it's such an incredible opportunity for the people of our area, and who led that charge was Mr. Thompson. So I go out and I make that statement again today: that people of Saskatchewan respected that man for years for what he'd done.

And there's no question today that the message remains the same, is you cannot continue to take resources out of northern Saskatchewan without putting anything back. And you've got to figure that out, otherwise it's going to create more problems for that government down the road, Mr. Speaker. It's going to create major problems, and not only for that government, Mr. Speaker. Because if there's a disruption because the anger over spills and the corporations get involved, you're going to disrupt an environment for good investment. You're going to disrupt jobs and opportunities for people in southern Saskatchewan. And then what, Mr. Speaker? We have an opportunity to send some of the resources to China and, Mr. Speaker, I think people applaud that effort because we want to see the industry flourish.

But what happened, Mr. Speaker, is that there's roads that are being used in the North. I talked about the roads today. What would happen, Mr. Speaker, if the road that's being used to haul yellowcake, and all of a sudden these roads aren't up to standard, Mr. Speaker? The roads aren't up to standard. And I think one of the things, one of the things that's really important is that if the roads aren't up to standard, Mr. Speaker, what happens if there's a spill? What happens if there's a massive accident that involves a truck hauling hydrochloric acid to the mine or hauling yellowcake out?

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know these roads are not built to industrial standards. We know that. I've travelled these roads. I've travelled many roads in the North and even Pinehouse's road, Mr. Speaker, the community that's working very closely with the mining sector. And I applaud that effort. I applaud that effort. But, Mr. Speaker, what happens if there's a spill? What's happens if there's hydrochloric acid spilled on some road near the community of Pinehouse or at Beauval?

Last year I provided a bunch of petitions to these guys, the Sask Party guys, to fix the main road going through Beauval because that's one of the main routes that people are hauling a lot of dangerous chemicals. And, Mr. Speaker, the mayor has asked us to fix the road. It's only a 7- or 8-kilometre stretch that he's asked to fix the road to make it safe for the people of Beauval because there's all kinds of trucks flying by there, hauling things in and out of the mines. And he's worried that there'll be problems.

Now never mind, never mind those two examples. There are

examples all throughout the province. Let's go even to Prince Albert, which is a direct connect to the North. They have been asking for a new bridge. And, Mr. Speaker, I remember the Premier going there and alluding to the fact that P.A. needed a new bridge. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's all he said. There was no commitment whatsoever. And I think the people of P.A. deserve better than that because you don't just go to a function and say, you guys need a new bridge. You've identified the need. You've also got to provide the solution. You don't simply identify the need.

And that's the point that I would say to the people of Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Party is so eloquent at identifying problems when the people of Saskatchewan are asking for clarity on solutions. And that's where the leadership ends, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Party is so adept at blaming others and pointing fingers at everybody else except themselves. They stubbornly refuse to accept responsibility as a government on many fronts.

And you look at this budget, Mr. Speaker. They're telling the regional health authorities we need \$60 million; you guys figure it out. Well, Mr. Speaker, and the same goes with the Cancer Agency. We need all these cuts, but we're not going to do them. We're going to give you guys less money and you guys figure it out.

[12:15]

Mr. Speaker, that's not leadership at all. And from our perspective, I say to the people in Saskatchewan that the Conservatives of the '80s that almost killed off this province, at the very least the 15 and a half billion dollars we had in debt. We could actually pick up a document, Mr. Speaker, and we could actually read it. We could actually see that the Conservatives in the '80s were putting us into debt.

Now the conservatives are back, Mr. Speaker. They're back. And the reason why they're back, Mr. Speaker, is it's all about timing. And they hijacked the agenda, Mr. Speaker. But that's fine. That's fine because people of Saskatchewan will certainly learn. And they'll learn about the history of debt that the conservatives have put this province under, Mr. Speaker. They'll hear about the North being forgotten. We're seeing the evidence they're starting to sell the Crowns. They're looking at the privatization through a process to P3s which are costly, costly, costly. They're looking at this credit card budget as another example of their inability to govern and to manage.

You look at the \$2 billion increase in our debt over the next two years, Mr. Speaker. And to the people of Saskatchewan, I can tell them we're heading back into debt. The conservatives are back, and they're once again attacking the working men and women. They're attacking the Crowns. They're not concerned about the environment, Mr. Speaker. And above all else, above all else, Mr. Speaker, they're not being truthful and accountable and transparent to the people of Saskatchewan.

When our own Provincial Auditor, who's independent . . . She's not a Sask Party person. She's not an NDP person. She's an independent member of this House. She does her job, and she criticizes the Saskatchewan Party for presenting two sets of books — one for the public and one for themselves. And, Mr.

Speaker, her analogy of how they manage the budget of Saskatchewan, and the words that strike out wholeheartedly from her perspective as a professional person, is that they're wrong and misleading, wrong and misleading, wrong and misleading. That's not the NDP words, Mr. Speaker. That is the Provincial Auditor's words about how the Saskatchewan Party has been managing this budget.

And we're not done yet, Mr. Speaker. We are not done yet. We have a lot of comments on this particular budget. They're going to be tons of presentations by my colleagues as to how this particular government has ignored, has ignored the basic principle of running a good solid business is that you've got to have more money coming in than money going out. You can't compromise the assets that you have; you can't sell your house because you have to pay a bill. Mr. Speaker, you've got to learn to manage these assets well. You've got to learn to protect your investments. You've got to learn to make sure you have the proper environment, and I give tons of examples today. And you've got to know what you're doing. And, Mr. Speaker, I say again that the Saskatchewan Party simply do not know what they're doing.

Now I'll point out my earlier comment about the fact that some of the P3s that they're undertaking, some of the P3s, all they're doing is punting that debt down the road. Like, the Deputy Premier of Alberta is absolutely right. We have huge debt, Mr. Speaker. And the debt is hidden and so is the challenges of the P3. All that is hidden. They don't show that in this budget. So the Deputy Premier of Alberta is saying, Saskatchewan has massive debt and Saskatchewan's hiding their debt. Now he's a Conservative, a fellow conservative. You would generally think that they'd help each other but somewhere along the line, these conservatives in Saskatchewan got it wrong.

I think, Mr. Speaker, people of Saskatchewan are going to start paying very close attention to exactly what the Saskatchewan Party's doing. And as much as they're rehashing old announcements here today, they're rehashing old announcements, the fact of the matter is you look at how they have selected the people to be part of cabinet, Mr. Speaker. There's nobody north of Saskatoon in this cabinet. And you wonder, why is that? The North is such a rich opportunity. Nobody from Yorkton, nobody from Meadow Lake, nobody from North Battleford, nobody from P.A. Those are vibrant parts of our economy. They're huge cities. And shouldn't anybody in the North warrant a cabinet posting, Mr. Speaker? And that's my point about the North in general, that the North is being forgotten.

And when you forget and ignore and turn your backs on some crucial areas of this province, it's going to spell trouble, Mr. Speaker. It's going to spell trouble in the long run. And what we in the NDP want to make sure is that people know that there is an option, that there is an opportunity to make sure that Saskatchewan does things right, Mr. Speaker. And that opportunity is coming up in a couple of years, and it's called an election, Mr. Speaker.

But the Sask Party know this. The Sask Party know this. And that's why they've gerrymandered a new process to create new MLAs, why they put this photo ID [identification] stuff. It's all about voter suppression tactics, Mr. Speaker. That's all it's

about.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan will see right through that. They'll see right through that, and they'll say, okay, conservatives, enough of that activity. We tried you guys. You guys had a great opportunity. You had a great inheritance party. You blew all your wad, though. You blew all the cash. Now all of a sudden you're going to start seeing your friends disappear on you.

You had such an excellent opportunity. You had such a great start because you had the money in the bank that the NDP left you. You had a booming economy. You had a growing population. You had optimism. You had investment. You had this great opportunity. And they blew it, Mr. Speaker. They blew it.

You know why, Mr. Speaker? Because they're tied to their ideology. They don't make any common . . . they have no common sense on how to do things. Number three, they went to war with the working people. You shouldn't do that. Number three, they're ignoring crucial areas like the North, like P.A., like Meadow Lake, like North Battleford. They're ignoring all these regions, Mr. Speaker.

And what's going to happen is I think you're going to see a collapse very soon of that particular government because right now there's a massive amount of confusion over there. And Mr. Speaker, from my vantage point, the confusion is that half of them don't know what's going on in terms of how this debt's going to hurt us.

And the other problem we have, Mr. Speaker, as a result of their privatization agenda, as a result of their P3s, as a result of their P3s, Mr. Speaker, 90 per cent of us in this room will not see some of those bills attached to P3s paid off in our lifetime. And that's the sad reality of this budget, Mr. Speaker. We are transferring that debt on to our children and on to our grandchildren. And that's not a good conscience to have. At the very least, the pre-1991 Conservatives, at the very least, they stood up and said, here's our debt. And they showed the people of Saskatchewan.

These new conservatives are hiding that debt, as expressed by the Deputy Premier of Alberta. They're hiding that debt so the children and grandchildren that we enjoy today, they'll be paying off that debt, Mr. Speaker. And to me, that's my point. And my most valid point is, why would you do that? Why would you do that to the children and grandchildren of our province?

We went through this exercise in the 1990s already. We went through all this. We had the pain of rebuilding the economy. We had the pain of paying back the banks and reclaiming the banks. We went through all that already. Why are you coming back to put Saskatchewan people through that? And it's not so much Saskatchewan people today, Mr. Speaker, but Saskatchewan children and Saskatchewan grandchildren who'll be paying off the debt left behind by that Sask Party government through these P3 exercises.

They ought to come clean. At the very least, they ought to come and tell the people, be accountable and transparent, say, okay

we're building a road through a P3 process and here's the cost going to be for the next 25 years. Total cost is X amount and total cost for the 25 years of interest is X amount and all the management fees and the maintenance fees X amount. They have to come out and get the figures right down to the penny, Mr. Speaker. And this description of what the costs will be for years to come will never be afforded by the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, because it's all about their insiders and their friends, of who to give these special sweetheart deals. And once again the NDP will be forced to come back and clean up yet another conservative mess.

I tell the people of Saskatchewan, we don't have to afford another 10 years of mismanagement, Mr. Speaker. We don't have to afford another 10 years of myths and untruths when it comes to being accountable about our books. The Provincial Auditor says they're wrong and misleading. The Deputy Premier of Alberta is saying that they're hiding all this debt, Mr. Speaker. So you don't have to take the NDP's word for it. Take a totally neutral officer of this Assembly's word for it, or take the colleague from Alberta's word for it. He knows or she knows that this year's budget is hiding debt. It is punting the responsibility of paying some of these P3s down to the backs of our children and grandchildren, and that's not a very pleasant sight.

So from the business perspective, Mr. Speaker, from a business perspective, these guys inherited a thriving business. They inherited a thriving business. And right away they went to war with their employees — not a good thing to do. And right away they compromised on environmental protection on that business — right away, Mr. Speaker, not the thing to do. And right away they started trying to privatize certain sectors of this business. Mr. Speaker, the business was thriving because the sectors were working together, such as the private sector, the Crown sector, and so on and so forth, Mr. Speaker.

So they inherited a thriving business, Mr. Speaker, one that they didn't create. And that must really be problematic for a lot of conservatives because they go around claiming the Saskatchewan economy is doing great; everything is fine. But the only problem is why don't they say, but we didn't create it; we inherited this booming economy? Because they did, Mr. Speaker. That's the fact. They inherited it.

And what's really problematic for conservatives across the way is now they know they're messing it up. Now they know they're messing it up because they couldn't manage it properly. They can't manage the growth properly, Mr. Speaker. They cannot even manage our books properly. And no matter how many times they yap and try and interrupt my discussion here today, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is the conservatives have never done anything good for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They never will, and their history will always repeat itself. Their history will always repeat itself because their ideology, it really begins to trump common sense, Mr. Speaker.

So I'll say this at the outset, that I know it's very difficult for many families and many regions and many organizations that were left out of this budget, people like education — education where we're talking about portables, you know, portable school classrooms, Mr. Speaker, and where they're talking about teaching kids in the classroom, where the only option that the

Minister of Education has offered to the education institutions and to the education of our children is standardized testing. That's what he's offered. Standardized testing is not even useful as a distraction from the fact that they're not funding our schools properly and supporting our kids properly, Mr. Speaker.

I notice as well, Mr. Speaker, if you look at some of the challenges overall when it comes to engaging a lot of the people when we talk about sharing the benefit, a lot of people are saying, well if Saskatchewan's booming, the economy is going great and everything is really good, why aren't certain regions benefiting? Why are we going \$2 billion more into debt? There's a disconnection from people. They're trying to figure out, how does that work? How come when we pick up the paper every day and we read that things are going well for Saskatchewan, and yet we see a budget that has \$2 billion more added to the debt? We see portable classrooms in place of nice schools, Mr. Speaker. And we see roads that continue to deteriorate, Mr. Speaker, and we see people's hope fade.

And, Mr. Speaker, the last thing that the Saskatchewan Party can mess up, and I hope it never happens, is I hope they don't start putting in an environment in which business is not encouraged to come here. And I see a lot of evidence of that, Mr. Speaker, just by the way they're treating people overall. And the North is a good example of how the people up north have simply have had enough. Either this Saskatchewan Party government starts delivering benefits to the North or we will see some major, major challenges in the future when it comes to northern resources being extracted.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm encouraging people in the North. I'm encouraging the mining companies. We appreciate both. We both have to exist in the North. We both have to co-exist. There are many good people that work in the mines and I support the mining sector 100 per cent. I support the mining sector because of the great opportunity that they create.

But, Mr. Speaker, the mining companies don't build roads; the Government of Saskatchewan has the obligation to build roads. And the northern mining companies don't have to build schools; the Government of Saskatchewan has to build schools. And, Mr. Speaker, even when it comes to cellphone coverage, Mr. Speaker, the mining companies are helping out, helping out certain communities. I know that. But the problem is, is other communities will want help as well. So do the mining companies start getting into that? Well, Mr. Speaker, the corporations, the mining companies pay taxes and royalties and the workers pay taxes to this government. So shouldn't this government have some obligation to the North when it comes to roads, schools, and things like cellphone service? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, absolutely. But they steadfastly refuse to deal with the North and, Mr. Speaker, that is going to create a lot of problems in the future.

So I'll point out today that from our perspective, the NDP have watched the Saskatchewan Party the last five years, we're totally unimpressed with their ability to manage our economy, to manage the province as a whole. From the business perspective to managing a successful business entity that they inherited, they get a big fat F, big fat F for lack of vision, lack of ability, and lack of managerial style, Mr. Speaker. They simply did not know what they were getting into.

[12:30]

I'll go back to my earlier point, Mr. Speaker, that we look . . . As the NDP, we talk about smart growth. We talk about smart growth in the sense that we have to make sure that part of the work to attract investment into our province doesn't necessarily only end at royalties, it also ends at making sure you have a good labour force, to making sure that you have peace in the valley with different players and different organizations in which area you're going to work in. You've got to be able to say that, with all integrity, that environmental stewardship is important to that company, to this government, to the people. It's all got to be co-existing. It all has to be copacetic, as they say.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think what's really important is I don't think the Sask Party get that at all. They don't get that in any way, shape, or form. So I think between their history of debt — they can't escape that; they've forgotten about the North; their privatization agenda, selling off the Crowns; their credit card budget, punting that debt down to our children and grandchildren; the \$2 billion increase in our debt over the next two years, well, Mr. Speaker, I say to the people of Saskatchewan, the conservatives are back. They're back.

And now it's up to all of us to not let them make the same mistakes that they made in the '90s where it'll take the NDP another 16 years to clean up their mess, Mr. Speaker. The NDP do not want to clean up any more conservative mess. They want to be able to build on a vision of hope and a vision of co-existence, a vision of where we all share in the benefits, a vision where the private sector is modern and engaged, a vision where the Crowns are strong and vibrant, where our families are strengthened all throughout the province, not just insider friends and people that the Sask Party know. We've seen evidence of that time and time again.

So, Mr. Speaker, at the very least when you look at the history of the NDP premiers, whether it's Romanow that never had the opportunity or Calvert that built the economy, our next leader, the member from Saskatoon, we ought to give him the . . . We ought to afford him as New Democrats and people who believe in that vision, at the very least, the ability to do things exciting for the province without worrying about debt all the time and to be able to build on the successes of people like Premier Calvert and recognizing the challenges that Premier Romanow had when he was in office.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have a lot more information that I want to share. But again I'll go back to my final comment on this particular bill, what the Provincial Auditor said about the Sask Party's management style — wrong and misleading. The Deputy Premier of Alberta, a Conservative, who said, "Most debt and deficits are buried." And also Saskatchewan has "massive debt." So the Conservatives in Alberta are warning the conservatives here. The Provincial Auditor is warning the conservatives here. The NDP are warning the conservatives here. The people of Saskatchewan are warning the conservatives here. And, Mr. Speaker, they still stubbornly refuse to listen to the people and that stubbornness is going to cost a lot of political capital come next election, Mr. Speaker.

What I'll tell the people of Saskatchewan is the NDP are

modern; we're relevant. We're not going to destroy the economy; we're going to help build it, Mr. Speaker. After all it was the NDP alongside of the people that really built the economy to begin with. And I will tell people every time the Saskatchewan Party member says 16 years of NDP rule, remember what we always say: what happened before 1991? What did the NDP inherit? They inherited fifteen and a half billion dollars from the Conservatives in debt. What the conservatives inherited from the NDP in 2007 was two and a half billion dollars . . .

The Speaker: — I would like to remind the member to refer to the political parties by their proper names, not by names that are not elected in this legislature.

Mr. Belanger: — So, Mr. Speaker, I guess I would point out that I am very pleased to second the amendment by my colleague, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's really important that the people out there know that we are going to continue bringing forward the issues that we think compel the people of Saskatchewan to pay very close attention to what the Saskatchewan Party's doing. So I guess my final comment I would make, Mr. Speaker . . . I have a lot more I'd like to say but obviously time is of essence here. So I want to point out that I'm pleased to second the amendment made by my colleague. So I will be voting for the amendment made by my colleague from Regina Rosemont, and against the main motion.

The Speaker: — The debate will carry on concurrently. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Greystone.

Mr. Norris: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm not certain whether my colleagues are that pleased to have me stand up, or just to see a bit of a break in the action on the other side. I did have a request from our guest, Mr. Speaker. It was the first one of its kind that I've received, and they were wondering if a Page was around and could bring them blankets and pillows because they were just beginning to settle in for that filibuster.

Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to stand and speak directly in support of this balanced budget. I'm honoured to second this budget motion. Likely it will be the only balanced budget in Canada. And I know, for colleagues on this side of the House, we support the work and the efforts of our Minister of Finance and Treasury Board members, of course of our Premier and cabinet and for everyone on this side because we know the significance of this balanced budget.

I'm especially honoured to stand up today on behalf of the people of Saskatoon Greystone. It's a special riding in the province. We would all feel that way about our respective constituencies. It runs along Boychuk and then turns down Taylor, back on Munroe, and then runs along 14th, along campus to . . . it doglegs back up on to 8th Street. And the geography is important, Mr. Speaker, but we know what's most important — each and every one of us do in here — regarding our constituents. And within Saskatoon Greystone there are vibrant families, working families, and a whole broad range of people that reflect the very best of Saskatchewan — seniors and working, community-minded families, including military and cadet families.

Greystone is home to students and remarkable teachers, academic, legal, journalistic and communication leaders, cultural and entrepreneurial leaders, people who serve their community in a number of fashions, people in the trades, and builders, doctors, specialists, a broad range of health science professionals, including nurses, firefighters, police and security officers, a range of civil servants, just to offer an initial list.

Saskatoon Greystone is made up of extraordinary volunteers, of athletes, and sports fans, fans of the Riders, the Blades. You know the Blades are going to be hosting the 2003 MasterCard Memorial Cup.

An Hon. Member: — Winning it.

Mr. Norris: — And as my colleague optimistically says, and certainly they've been able to demonstrate that, here we have every confidence in their success.

We have people that participate in swimming, in martial arts, cycling, in golf, and a number of other endeavours.

We're also home to leaders of and ambassadors and proponents for a whole suite of cultural and creative initiatives in the arts, endeavours that are increasingly enriched by the cosmopolitan blend of languages, cultures, and foods that are on display in our many schools, our parks, within our restaurants and stores. We're a home to among the most vibrant parts of 8th Street, among the most vital of commercial arteries in the province.

In short, Mr. Speaker, the residents of Saskatoon Greystone are engaged. They're active. They're attentive and articulate contributors to this province, to their city, and to their community. They're appreciative of our past, focused on our future, including the vital contributions that our First Nations and Métis people continue to make for our shared future — a future, Mr. Speaker, that the constituents of Saskatoon Greystone are helping to shape. And they pay particular attention to the deliberations, the debates, and the decisions arising from within this Assembly, for which I am grateful to listen to them, to learn from them, and to appreciate their input.

I hesitate to highlight one couple, but I'm obliged to. Their familial duties have likely expanded here in the last few weeks. Their smiles have likely broadened. They are the parents of the Leader of the Official Opposition, to whom I offer my congratulations in the hope that we provide him an opportunity to undertake his work for a very, very long, long time in that role. All kidding aside, Mr. Speaker, I wish the Leader of the Official Opposition congratulations and extend that to his entire family.

The reason for this extended or detailed description of Saskatoon Greystone, which I think is reflective on a number of ridings across the province, is that there's a new energy that's apparent and evident in Saskatoon Greystone, just as there is right across the province. That energy manifests itself in a number of ways, if you want, in a number of indicators.

We can think about the population that's just been announced — nearly 190,000 people in Saskatchewan — a figure that was unfathomable just a few years ago. We can also think about having the lowest unemployment rate in the country of 3.8 per

cent, with the knowledge that there's more to do especially within key areas and for key communities. I'm thinking specifically about First Nations and Métis people. But these help to capture a sense of the energy and activity across the province.

There's another way of expressing that and that's been summarized recently in a new book called *The Big Shift: The Seismic Change In Canadian Politics, Business And Culture And What It Means For Our Future* by Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson. They say of Saskatchewan . . . Ibbitson of *The Globe and Mail*, Bricker who's a pollster with a great and varied background regarding public affairs. They say the province of Saskatchewan, and I quote: "has reversed years of population decline and is growing again robustly." They go on to say, "Saskatchewan used to share with Manitoba a sense that it was in the midst of a long period of decline," and continue to say, "although both provinces are doing better, Saskatchewan is doing much better."

Mr. Speaker, this is significant. How do we begin to explain this change? Some will point to the significance of the resources that we have inherited, like governments past. And we know the significance of those resources to our future today and to future generations. Others will speak about the evolution of global markets, whether we think about the rising middle class in China and India, in Indonesia and Bangladesh, to name but a few. Still others will highlight — and rightfully so — the character and quality of Saskatchewan people, that adding value and sharing opportunities at home and around the world reflects our very best. And of this there can be no doubt.

But we also get a sense from feedback that we've received from people that public policy matters, that government and governance matters, that the state can facilitate or inhibit growth and it can help to shape the results; that is, the benefits of that growth and where they flow.

Recently in an article in the esteemed journal *Policy Options*, Dr. Greg Poelzer, Sr., has offered this about the orientation of governance in Saskatchewan today:

Although more supportive of private enterprise than the New Democratic Party, the Saskatchewan Party is guided by a strong attachment to community and socially responsible development.

It's one of reasons, Mr. Speaker, that this budget matters. It does matter that it's balanced, especially when we look across the country.

There's also a significance in this budget in its connection to *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*, a document entitled *Vision 2020 and Beyond*, produced and published last year by our government, led by our Premier, produced in large measure based on feedback that we received from constituents in Greystone and right across the province.

[12:45]

This budget has a very solid foundation. That's not an opinion. It's something that simply we're offering and repeating. Dr. Michael Atkinson, the executive director and professor at the

Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy highlights this connection between the two documents. He said in yesterday's *StarPhoenix*:

... the government's plan for growth, which was released in the fall, is likely to be a "blueprint" for any budget initiatives and that the budget will be "completely consistent" with the growth plan.

In that plan for growth, an important component that helped to inform its content and the contours of that document was a statement that reminds us that we're not simply focusing on growth for growth's sake, but we're trying our very best to address a fundamental question about the purpose of prosperity, an eternal question. The document reads, the purpose of growth is to secure a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people of which there are six core activities that as a government we will work to undertake to foster economic growth and to address the challenges associated with growth: investing in infrastructure; educating, training, developing a skilled workforce; ensuring the ongoing competitiveness of our Saskatchewan economy; supporting increased trade; advancing Saskatchewan innovation; and "ensuring fiscal responsibility through balanced budgets, lower debt, and smaller, more effective government," Mr. Speaker, this latter point being a fulcrum upon which the other points rest. That's why this budget is so significant.

As our Minister of Finance stated clearly yesterday, this is a balanced budget. Mr. Speaker, Steve McLellan of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, the CEO, said yesterday, yes, we are overall very, very pleased. Quite frankly we are still one of the only provinces in the country that have a balanced budget, and we can't forget about the significance of that.

That means there's a General Revenue Fund pre-transfer surplus where revenue exceeds expense of \$64.8 million and a summary financial statement surplus of \$149.8 million. And the treasury board worked to ensure that our expenses increased modestly, that our investments were focused and purposeful. Year over year we will invest more than eleven and a half billion dollars into various programs and initiatives. This investment is up \$346.6 million or 3.1 per cent from last year's budget.

Mr. Speaker, I thought what I'd do is focus on some of the quality of life investments that this budget offers, offers to the people of our province, offers for a way of ensuring that we're balancing the budget and balancing priorities. Not surprisingly, given the scope and scale of the health care budget, it seems appropriate to start there. Our health budget is about \$4.8 billion. It will go up \$161.7 million — that's a 3.5 per cent increase — and it will occupy about 42 per cent of our expenditures.

What's important in this are some of the details. Mr. Speaker, we see that there is an \$11.9 million net increase in the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency funding for a total of \$150.7 million. We know how significant this is, Mr. Speaker, because we know how significant the work of that centre is and how it's appreciated by people right across our province.

There's new money for expanding the Alzheimer's First Link

services. There's \$131.8 million increase, or a 4.5 per cent increase, for our regional health authorities for their base operating funding for health care and staff and other associated operating costs. There's an additional \$10 million for a total of more than \$70 million for the Saskatchewan surgical initiative to reduce surgical wait times, something that our government works and certainly, through our very talented minister, we continue to make real progress on.

Mr. Speaker, from Health we can turn our attention to Education, and we can see the significance of our Education budget. It's \$1.7 billion, an increase of \$107.5 million. There are some items, Mr. Speaker, that are worthy of highlighting here that in such a large budget could easily be overlooked. But when we think about \$100,000 to provide access to online talking books for people with perceptual disabilities, we're speaking to people right across this province and trying to ensure that we're enhancing their quality of life.

We can think about a \$17 million increase to support the forecasted school enrolment increases. We know how vital these are as our population continues to grow. And as we've said, we understand that there are challenges associated with growth, and at the same time these are the challenges that we're willing to roll up our sleeves and help to address, and these new dollars will assist in that.

Mr. Speaker, we also see new child care spaces, 500 new child care spaces, and we also see that there are 15 new pre-kindergarten programs, Mr. Speaker — new dollars to support young students at very, very formative stages and ages of their development.

We also see the \$5.9 million to initiate a new student assessment program. And, Mr. Speaker, this is important, as the Premier's highlighted today. The members opposite will attempt to draw us into a discussion that there's some kind of dichotomy between teaching and testing. And, Mr. Speaker, what we're really focused on with these resources is to ensure that students succeed and that student success continues to increase in the new Saskatchewan. That's absolutely vital.

Mr. Speaker, from Education, we can turn to post-secondary education, and we know how significant post-secondary education is within the province. We can think and see that there are now \$117.4 million in student supports, an increase of \$19.6 million or 20 per cent for our post-secondary students, helping to ensure that there's greater accessibility and affordability for our students.

Mr. Speaker, we also see that there are new dollars, 4 million new dollars, for the University of Saskatchewan's health science facility. And that's absolutely essential for us to reinforce and to highlight.

We also see new dollars so that we can enhance the number of nurse practitioners that are being trained in Saskatchewan. We see that money continues to be invested to help ensure that we're increasing the number of medical residency seats, and we're able to move forward on commitments not simply on those medical residency seats but also on the medical undergraduate seats.

Mr. Speaker, our commitment to post-secondary education has been and remains significant. We see, Mr. Speaker, that young people in Saskatchewan are being encouraged to study in Saskatchewan, to succeed in Saskatchewan, to stay in Saskatchewan, and through incentives like the graduate retention program, help ensure that they can then put their contributions back into Saskatchewan. That makes a lot of sense. And it stands in stark contrast to where we were about a decade ago when, as we saw and heard yesterday, the news release from the then-governing NDP was about ways of slowing the out-migration. Today we are celebrating the growth of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to highlight a few aspects. I'd like to turn to work that our Ministry of Justice is doing. And we see that within this ministry, again quietly but importantly, especially when we think about ways to help combat and overcome domestic violence, there is \$7.6 million, including an \$800,000 increase in operating support for women's shelters across the province, including a new transition house — the first one in more than two decades — in Melfort, and to support expansions that have occurred at existing facilities in Regina and in Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, from a news release that was issued yesterday by the North East Outreach & Support Services group, to quote Louise Schweitzer, "With this announcement comes a new era for the North East in combating domestic violence." These dollars go directly towards those that are in need within our communities, Mr. Speaker, and that is vitally important for us to continue to maintain a focus on.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to draw attention to the arts and creative industries. Mr. Speaker, this is vitally important because it also draws its own commentary. The commentary, Mr. Speaker, has certainly been led by members opposite. But I hope that they will give some pause and see other responses because we see in the budget a \$5 million investment to provide to the new Creative Saskatchewan investment fund to support growth and development in the creative industry sector. I'll quote from Mr. Chris Stoicheff, who tweeted, "As Chair . . ." and I quote, "As Chair of the Emerging Artists Foundation, very pleased to see the Government of Saskatchewan invest in Creative Industries." Mr. Speaker, we know how important that is.

We also see, Mr. Speaker, where the members opposite have perhaps missed the mark a little bit in some of their initial analysis. And so from Saskatoon Riversdale, the member opposite has suggested that regarding these new funds, that is \$5 million, I quote, ". . . It does nothing for the economy, and that's the bottom line." This comes from an article entitled, "Budget allocates \$6.5M for Creative Saskatchewan fund." Mr. Speaker, regarding this new fund and these dollars, I think it's at best premature for the member from Saskatoon Riversdale to draw such a stark conclusion. And instead of helping to ensure that the debate and dialogue remains constructive, she's simply written off not simply the money, Mr. Speaker, but those artists and all those that endeavour to succeed with this significant and substantial government support.

If that wasn't her intention, I think she needs to clarify that, Mr. Speaker, because it certainly appears that she has written off not

simply the money, not simply the economic benefits that would come out from the work in this creative sector and others, Mr. Speaker, but perhaps unintentionally she has also spoken about the work of those artists that will participate and benefit from this kind of investment. I hope in the coming days we can get some clarification of what she meant with the suggestion that ". . . It does nothing for the economy, and that's the bottom line."

Mr. Speaker, we also know that there are a number of other investments that the budget makes that are absolutely worthy of discussions and deliberations, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to make sure that one of the areas that we highlight is the overall \$184.8 million, a \$10.8 million increase in targeted funding from government ministries across government for First Nations and Métis people including a \$3 million fund that's going to be in place as we receive the joint task force within the coming weeks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It now being after the hour of adjournment, this House stands adjourned.

[Applause]

The Speaker: — I know people are anxious because of the roads to get going, but I didn't realize it would be so popular for adjournment. This House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Draude	2835
Forbes	2835
Norris	2835
McCall	2835
Steinley	2835
Wotherspoon	2835
Boyd	2836
Wall	2836
Kirsch	2836
Huyghebaert	2836
Bradshaw	2843

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Belanger	2836
Forbes	2836

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Spring Free From Racism	
Wotherspoon	2836
International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	
Parent	2837
Shift Work Recognition Day	
Forbes	2837
Affordable Housing Development	
Docherty	2837
Out-of-This-World Experience	
Heppner	2838
Our Village Uganda Worker Receives Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal	
Ottenbreit	2838
Reaction to Provincial Budget	
Merriman	2838

QUESTION PERIOD

Support for Education	
Brotten	2838
Wall	2838
Provincial Budget and Financial Management	
Wotherspoon	2840
Krawetz	2840
Technology Companies and University	
Wotherspoon	2841
Harpauer	2841
McMillan	2842
Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions	
Sproule	2842
Duncan	2842

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

Wotherspoon	2843
Belanger	2850
Norris	2859

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier

President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd

Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Kevin Doherty

Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. June Draude

Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Health

Hon. Donna Harpauer

Minister of Crown Investments
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority

Hon. Nancy Heppner

Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for the Lean Initiative

Hon. Ken Krawetz

Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Russ Marchuk

Minister of Education

Hon. Tim McMillan

Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Trade
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Don McMorris

Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds

Hon. Don Morgan

Minister of Advanced Education
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Jim Reiter

Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations,
Métis and Northern Affairs

Hon. Lyle Stewart

Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell

Minister Responsible for Corrections and Policing

Hon. Randy Weekes

Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Gordon Wyant

Minister of Justice and Attorney General