



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

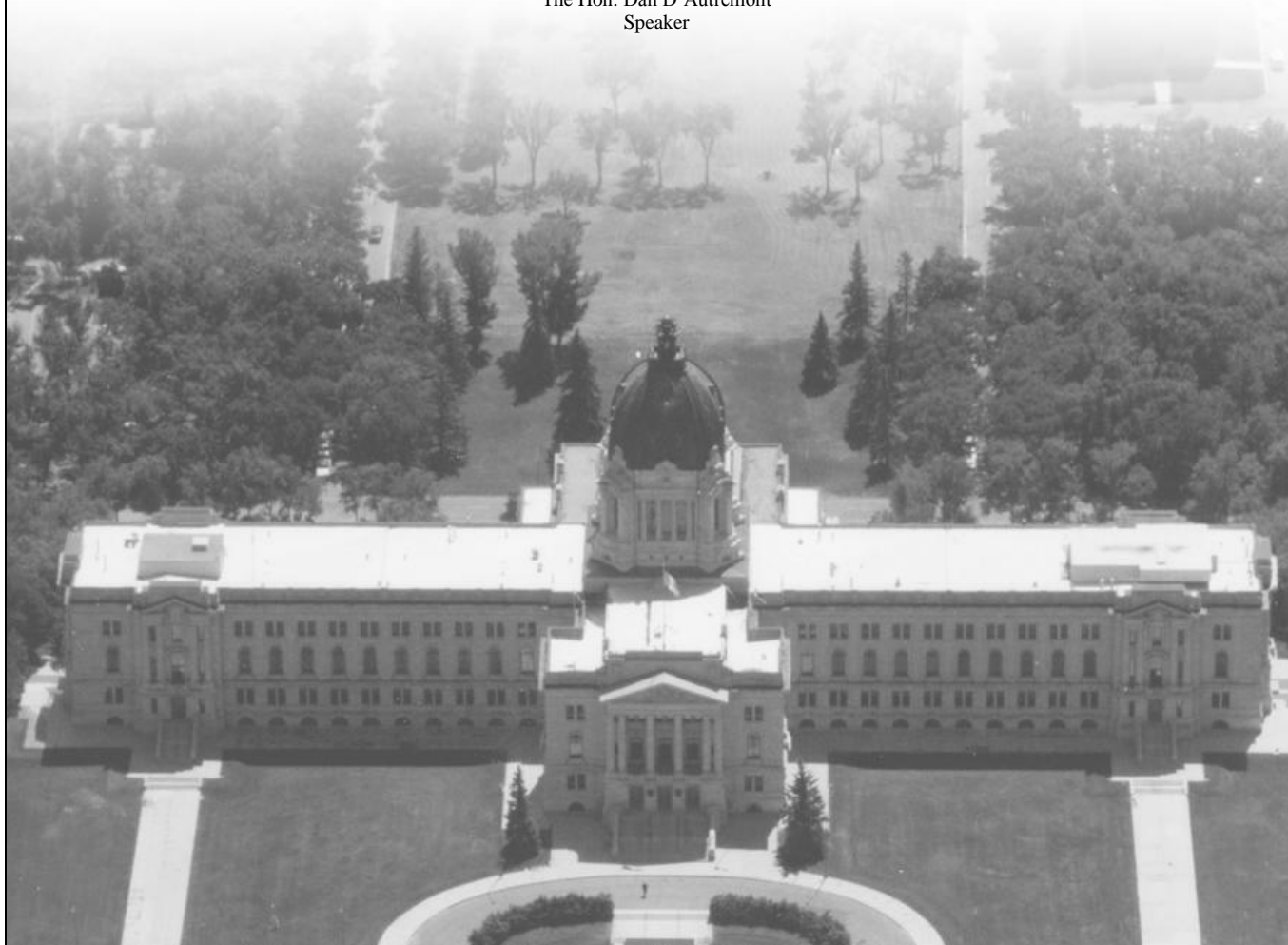
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, in your gallery we have a young lady by the name of Chelsea Valois. Chelsea is well-known in the bobsledding world not just in Canada but throughout the world, Mr. Speaker. And she hails from the village of Zenon Park, which is in the Carrot River Valley constituency, a French village in the constituency of Carrot River Valley. And I would like to welcome or have all members welcome her to her Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I'd ask for leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The Attorney General has asked for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly several visitors in your gallery. They are students at law who are completing their articles of clerkship with the Ministry of Justice and the courts this year in Regina. As many of the members of the Assembly will know, students at law must complete one full year of articles to be eligible for admission as a lawyer with the Law Society of Saskatchewan.

Chris Davison and Jeffrey Crawford have been articling with the ministry since June 2012. Jeffrey studied law at the University of Saskatchewan. He has worked with Parks Canada, and his volunteer activities include being a member of Green Legal and working with Pro Bono Students Canada. Maybe just give us a wave. There you go.

Chris Davison came to us from the University of Saskatchewan as well. He also studied at the University of Calgary to complete a Bachelor of Arts in religious studies. Chris's work experience includes being an assistant student manager with community legal aid services for Saskatchewan inner city, known as CLASSIC [Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City Inc.], and a legal assistant with the Saskatoon city criminal legal aid area office.

Erin Smith and Adryan Toth also join us in the Legislative Assembly today. They've been clerking with the Saskatchewan

Court of Appeal since 2012. Erin came to us from Queen's University. She also studied political science at McGill University. Erin has worked as a summer student with MacPherson, Leslie & Tyerman and has been a member of the Queen's law constitutional review committee.

Adryan Toth studied law at the University of Saskatchewan after completing his Bachelor of Commerce degree. He has volunteered with Pro Bono Students Canada as well as Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City.

I'd also like to introduce Darby Bachynski who is clerking with the Court of Queen's Bench. Darby studied law at the University of Saskatchewan after receiving her Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Regina. Darby has worked for the Insurance Councils of Saskatchewan and has volunteered at business infospace.

Finally, David Zeggelaar joins us in the Assembly today. David is currently clerking with the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan. He studied law at the University of Saskatchewan after completing a Bachelor of Arts in geography at Saint Mary's University in Halifax. David worked as a student manager with the Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City and lived in South Korea for several years teaching English.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce such a strong group of articling students and I wish them all the best in the upcoming year. Members of the Assembly, would you please join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join in on behalf of the opposition to welcome the students at law to the Chamber. I think it's a sobering thought for all of us, and I know the Minister of Justice sees this as well, is when you have very capable, able lawyers who are working for the Department of Justice who are the children of your colleagues. And so I welcome them here and I very much know that you will contribute to Saskatchewan. People often forget the important role of lawyers in making the economy work. Thank you.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to you and through you I'd be remiss if not introducing Ms. Chelsea Valois myself. I had the wonderful opportunity of being a teammate of hers at the University of Regina on the track and field team for three years. She was much better at everything than I was. She won 10 Canada West medals, two CIS [Canadian Interuniversity Sports] medals including one gold medal, and obviously she's representing Canada wonderfully on the world bobsled circuit, Mr. Speaker. She's a great friend of mine and a great friend to Regina, U of R [University of Regina]. She's a great ambassador. She won the President's Award last year and just a fantastic person overall, Mr. Speaker. So to you and through you, I'd like to introduce

Ms. Chelsea Valois.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members today seven adult students in the hospitality tourism apprentice program, and they're in the Parkland College in Melville.

Mr. Speaker, they're in the west gallery today and they're accompanied by their teacher, Carol Wiens, and also their program coordinator, Shelley Cherney. And I would ask members to welcome them to their legislature today.

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 from Melville-Saltcoats welcoming the folks from Parkland College here. Certainly the regional college is a real advantage that we have in the province of Saskatchewan, taking those learning opportunities to the learners. So it's really good to see these graduates here today, or these students, getting those skills to make a better living for themselves and their families and make our economy even stronger and growing ever stronger still. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Welcome these folks to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition in reference to cellphone coverage for the Northwest, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

To undertake, as soon as possible, to ensure SaskTel delivers cell service to the Canoe Lake First Nations, along with the adjoining communities of Cole Bay and Jans Bay; Buffalo River First Nations, also known as Dillon, and the neighbouring communities of 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 and the community of Turnor Lake, including the neighbouring communities in each of those areas.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed the petition have signed this petition from all throughout Saskatchewan. And this particular page, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this page have been primarily from Cole Bay. 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 the proposed Saskatchewan employment Act, introduced in December 2012, is a sweeping rewrite of our labour laws, including but not limited to *The Labour Standards Act*, *The Occupational Health and Safety Act*, *The Health Labour*

Relations Reorganization Act, *The Trade Union Act*, and many others. We know that there are stable labour relations in all sectors running the risk of being thrown into turmoil as a result of Bill 85's sweeping changes. Thousands of represented workers stand to lose their rights to bargain collectively and be represented by the union of their choice. 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. Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Purple Day

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, today, March 26th, is Purple Day, the global day for epilepsy awareness. Purple Day was founded in 2008 by nine-year-old Cassidy Megan of Nova Scotia with the help of the Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia. Cassidy chose the colour purple after the international colour for epilepsy, lavender. Cassidy's goal is for people with epilepsy everywhere to know that they are not alone. For almost 300,000 people across Canada with epilepsy, this day is an important day for recognition and awareness building.

Mr. Speaker, events have already taken place across the province in recognition of this day. Over the weekend the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon, home of the Saskatchewan epilepsy program, hosted an education symposium for family physicians, nurses, residents, and technologists about diagnosis and management of epilepsy. The hospital is also hosting an event for the public today.

The Saskatchewan epilepsy program started with the arrival of Dr. José Téllez-Zenteno to the province of Saskatchewan in 2007. Dr. Téllez and his team have been working together for patients with epilepsy in Saskatchewan. This team of passionate people has been able, in a short period of time, to implement a program with provincial coverage to improve the quality of life for people in Saskatchewan with epilepsy.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that my colleagues in the House join with me in recognizing Purple Day. I would ask that each of us take time out of our day to learn a bit more about this disorder and think about ways that we can reduce the isolation of individuals in our community who have epilepsy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

The Power of Faith

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with pleasure that I

rise in this House to speak about a group of young people putting their faith into action. When word spread among a group of Moosomin and Rocanville young people that a friend's father had been diagnosed with cancer, the students wasted no time in figuring out what they could do to help.

Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, February 27th, Mr. Kevin Whelpton of Moosomin was diagnosed with stage IV pancreatic cancer. These students found out about that diagnosis on Sunday, and by the end of the week, they had fundraising plans in place. The plans included a benefit hockey game, a supper, a silent auction, and a 50/50 draw. Mr. Speaker, in conjunction with these plans, these young people are also selling T-shirts that are titled We Believe in Prayer. Thus far these young people have managed to raise over \$36,000. Now that's real money, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these young people rallied quickly to the cause of the Whelptons because the Whelptons are known around the community as a family who is always there to help others. Therefore it only made sense to lend a hand back.

I would like all members in this Assembly to join me in recognizing these amazing young people who are truly putting their faith into action. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Wind Turbine Project First of its Kind in North America

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to congratulate the Cowessess First Nation on beginning construction on a wind turbine project. This project, the first of its kind in North America, will be located between the Trans-Canada Highway and Highway 33 on Cowessess First Nation land. This project is the result of a collaboration between the Cowessess First Nation and the Saskatchewan Research Council.

What makes this project a first is that there will be a combination of wind turbine and battery storage system installed. The battery will be used to address the intermittent wind in southern Saskatchewan, and it's hoped that the project will help demonstrate that a wind-battery system that can harness wind power and provide a constant, continuous output. The project will be supplying energy in the SaskPower grid through a 20-year power purchase agreement with SaskPower's green options partners program.

Mr. Speaker, the Cowessess First Nation is an example of a strong economic development, and I thank them for sharing the strength and vision of their community with the people of Saskatchewan. This vision for the future is best described by the Cowessess First Nation comprehensive community-based plan booklet, "The prospects of our future generations will grow with determination and the willingness to dream."

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the members of the House join with me in congratulating the Cowessess First Nation on their success. Their creativity and willingness to support an environmentally friendly solution provides us all with an example of how to move our communities forward sustainably.

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

[13:45]

A Celebration of Cultures

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize a very special event that took place in my constituency this past Sunday which I was very happy to attend along with the member for Regina Dewdney. Community Connections, a celebration of cultures, was held at the Glencairn Neighbourhood Recreation Centre in the Regina Northeast constituency, Mr. Speaker. This special event, which was put on by the Glen Elm Library, the Open Door Society, and the Dewdney East Community Association embraces different cultures and brings a community together. Over 350 people came together to celebrate the many different cultures that make up our communities, our city, and our province to participate and take in the array of festivities.

Mr. Speaker, eight different ethnic groups participated in the event which was full of various cultural exhibits, ethnic food and drink, singing, and dancing. It was wonderful to see all the different ethnic groups coming together, Mr. Speaker, and enjoying each other's culture and company under one roof.

I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in recognizing this great cultural event and thanking all the organizations and individuals that came together to make this event in the Regina Northeast constituency possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Little Princess Ball

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Assembly today to speak about the Moose Jaw Health Foundation's fifth annual Little Princess Ball. Each year, Amy Ofstie and her incredibly dedicated committee of volunteers create a fantastic environment for the royal guests to enjoy.

This year once again was a feast for the senses with a room transformed into an underwater world. The theme of the Little Mermaid came to life and wowed everyone. The singers, the Royal Disney Princesses, who joined the 400 guests, made it a truly special night out on the town.

The funds raised this year will purchase a new panda bed for the new Moose Jaw hospital. This bed provides a very special microenvironment for newborns in the mother baby unit.

To date, the Little Princess Ball committee has raised over \$80,000 for the Moose Jaw Health Foundation. A record amount was raised at this year's event, thanks to a big help from K+S Potash who donated a generous \$20,000.

I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in thanking Amy Ofstie, all the volunteers who assisted in creating a truly memorable evening for all the little princesses, as well as the community for their generous donations, including K+S Potash.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Focus on Women Trade Show

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to rise in the House today to recognize a great event that I had the pleasure of attending. The Focus on Women trade show took place in Prince Albert March 16th and 17th, which I was very happy to attend along with my colleague, the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

This event was a dynamic trade show and sale that brings exhibitors from a variety of areas together with women of all ages to show them what is new, exciting, educational, and informative.

Mr. Speaker, this great trade show consistently draws crowds of over 2,000 people from the Prince Albert area, and the event drew over 900 people just in the first day. The event was completely sold out to exhibitors with over 90 exhibits at the trade show. The exhibitors had a social on Saturday night which gave businesses and people a chance to network as well as enjoy a great meal after a busy day of selling.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the members of this Assembly join with me in recognizing the hugely successful Focus on Women trade show and to thank all the organizers, exhibitors, and attendees. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Athlete Chases Olympic Dream

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about a young woman who hails from Zenon Park and is quickly becoming a name known to many, both nationally and internationally. Mr. Speaker, I am speaking about Chelsea Valois.

While Chelsea may now be known in the world of bobsledding, she has a history that includes more than that. During her time with the U of R Cougars, Chelsea earned 10 Canada West medals in track and field as well as two Canadian Interuniversity Sport medals which included gold in women's pentathlon.

It was only last year that Chelsea got into the sport of bobsledding, and that year she paired with pilot Kallie Humphries and she became a gold medallist. Since then they have won medals at 6 out of the 10 World Cup events this year. On January 26th the pair won the women's world bobsled championship in Switzerland. In the last race this season, which took place in Russia, they earned a bronze medal. This summer Chelsea will have her first summer of full-time bobsled training to better prepare her for her rigours of the season ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Chelsea on her accomplishments thus far and wish her the best of luck as she chases her Olympic dream of wearing the red and white in

Sochi in 2014. We will all be watching you, Chelsea. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Funding for Universities

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last few days we've seen how the Sask Party government's budget is not doing enough for education and how the attention is not there for kids in the classroom. We've also seen, Mr. Speaker, how the Sask Party government is off-loading funding cut decisions onto health regions and the Cancer Agency to the tune for \$54 million. But we're also seeing negative steps, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the funding of our universities here in the province.

In last year's budget, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government walked away from its promise to properly fund the Health Sciences Building and force nearly \$100 million of debt onto the university's books. And we know now, Mr. Speaker, there are cuts. There are programs being ended, Mr. Speaker, because of the decisions by this government.

My question to the Premier: why did this year's budget do nothing to address, to fix the problems created in last year's budget when it comes to funding for our University of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again the member's preamble is incorrect in terms of the budget and its treatment of health care and education. Yesterday we demonstrated that the Leader of the Opposition himself, when running for the leadership of his party, said he wanted to find more efficiencies within the health care system. I presume that's still his position. If it isn't, he should say that that position has changed like others he apparently held prior to becoming the leader of the party.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to post-secondary education, we see in this particular budget the continuation of support for institutions, support for regional colleges, support for the universities, and historic support for students through the graduate retention plan, through the brand new Saskatchewan advantage scholarship. That's why those who head up our regional colleges are saying positive things about the budget in the media. That's why the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] president is also saying positive things about the budget in the media, Mr. Speaker.

It follows along with the record of this government where we've increased operating funding 52.8 per cent over the last six years. Compare that with the record of the NDP for their last six — 37 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker. Actions on this side will always speak louder than the rhetoric from members opposite.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the \$100 million of debt being forced onto the university's books is not rhetoric. That's clearly known by all people in the province. As the U of S grapples, Mr. Speaker, with soaring debt and insufficient operating funds, it's the students, the faculty, and the staff, Mr. Speaker, who are feeling the negative effects of those decisions.

And just yesterday we learned of 100 layoffs in the next few days, coming shortly at the University of Saskatchewan. And the university administration recognized that this is the fallout from last year's budget, Mr. Speaker. So we can understand why people in the university community, students, people in the province are concerned about what the impact will be from this year's budget when it comes to our universities and the financial crunch that they are experiencing. The 100 staff that are laid off, Mr. Speaker, provided services to students and ensure that the university runs smoothly and efficiently.

My question to the Premier: with the negative fallout from last year's budget still being felt, cuts happening in the next few days, Mr. Speaker, what does he have to say to the students, to the faculty, to the staff who are deeply concerned that he didn't do enough in this budget to address the problems created in last year's budget?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the record of the government, the record on members on this side of the House is quite simply this: a 52.8 per cent increase in operating budgets for the universities over the last number of years since the term of the government started, Mr. Speaker. That compares quite favourably with the 37 per cent that members offered when they were on this side of the House. It compares favourably with the cuts that came from the NDP [New Democratic Party], in '97-98 most recently, Mr. Speaker, at both the U of S and the University of Saskatchewan. These are the facts.

Mr. Speaker, while the British Columbia government is cutting their post-secondary funding by \$46 million over the next three years, while Quebec universities are told to cut 124 million by April, while Alberta's cutting \$147 million — a 7 per cent cut to the universities — we are increasing operating dollars.

Universities have been asked though to find efficiencies, notwithstanding these significant increases in operating revenue that the Leader of the Opposition wants to ignore. We want them to find efficiencies just as members on this side of the House are finding efficiencies so that we have more resources for students, so that we have a sustainable post-secondary system through the future, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, when the Premier talks about finding efficiencies on that side of the House, this was the government, this was the Sask Party that came forward with the plan to add three more MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], Mr. Speaker, to the Assembly. That's not exactly efficient in my view.

If the Premier thinks everything is perfect on campus, Mr. Speaker, I think he needs to speak to more people on campus.

He needs to speak to the faculty members. He needs to speak to students who are concerned about the quality of education that they are receiving and that they will be receiving in the years to come.

On the issue of cuts on our campuses on budget day, President Timmons had this to say:

It's tight. We're a lean institution. We are below average in admin costs for our campus, significantly below the national average, so every time we need to do this it gets harder and harder.

Mr. Speaker, we see cuts occurring now on campuses, and we know because of this Sask Party government's budget that more cuts will be coming. My question to the Premier: it's their budget, it's their government that is insisting on cuts at the U of S and the U of R. So what specific cuts would the Premier like to see on campus, and can he guarantee that students' education will not be compromised in that process?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear. Is the hon. member, is the Leader of the Opposition saying that this side of the House, the government members on this side cut the budgets to the universities? Because if that's what he's saying, it would sort of be the latest in a string of examples where the hon. members are not necessarily coming forward with the facts of the budget because it doesn't fit their rhetorical objectives, Mr. Speaker.

The truth is quite the opposite. The truth is that we have seen the most recent in increases to their operating budgets of the universities in this province, Mr. Speaker. The University of Saskatchewan president said this on budget day:

Representing the U of S, I have to say I am very pleased with this budget. At a time when the province has lots of priorities to address, lots of issues with infrastructure, when universities throughout Canada are finding themselves in pretty bleak situations, yet again this government has signalled their support for the entire sector and for the University of Saskatchewan.

Yet again, Mr. Speaker, we'll take the word of the president of the U of S over the new Leader of the Opposition.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, staff are being laid off. Programs are being eliminated, and this is under the watch of the Sask Party government.

We're seeing a common theme here, Mr. Speaker, where the Sask Party government likes to give decisions about funding cuts to other organizations. Yesterday we saw, with health regions and the Cancer Agency, how the government is insisting that the health regions find cuts. And we see, Mr. Speaker, that for Saskatoon and Regina, that the health regions are actually starting the year in the red, each with a deficit of about \$25 million. And we know on the campuses, Mr. Speaker, that the financial crunch will continue to snowball

under the decisions being made by the Sask Party government.

My question to the Premier: just like our health regions, both the U of S and the U of R have already made cuts, so how on earth does the Premier expect further cuts to occur that will not affect the quality of the education delivered by faculty and received by students here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — We demonstrated yesterday that the Leader of the Opposition went running for the job to be leader of the New Democratic Party, campaigned on efficiencies. He campaigned on cuts, as he would describe them, in health. Here's what he said again. This is the Leader of the Opposition now when he's running to be the Leader of the Opposition: "More efficiency will be built into the public health care system. Our focus needs to be on establishing a more efficient system centred around the patient." Mr. Speaker, why was that good enough for him when he was running for the leadership and now he's changed his position?

Mr. Speaker, we make no secret of the fact that we want all of the funding partners of the government to find efficiencies. We're reducing the size of our government by 15 per cent over four years. We'd like the municipal sector to find efficiencies. We'd like universities to find efficiencies. We'd like health boards to find efficiencies. And, Mr. Speaker, the reason we want to do that is so we can sustain the growth in this province, so we can invest in the disabled, in paratransit, Mr. Speaker, so that we can invest in people, improve quality of life. That's our vision, the cornerstone of which is balanced budgets and fiscal sustainability.

Now that member wrote Mr. Lingenfelter's \$5 billion platform. I'd understand why he has no interest in fiscal sustainability. Woe betide this province if they ever form the government because we'd be back to massive deficits and increased debt, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

Standardized Testing

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a real question too. The Minister of Education has yet to explain why standardized testing is the way to go for our province. But in last week's thin education budget, he managed to find \$5.9 million for computer software for standardized testing. Mr. Speaker, a lot of parents are wondering where the real priorities are for this government, and teachers are wondering too. The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation said it's a glaring evident that the only options have found, the minister has found are, and I quote, "... being allocated for data collection through standardized testing as opposed to classroom supports."

To the minister: how many educational assistants could have been hired this year for \$5.9 million that he's spending on standardized testing?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank the member opposite for the question. You know I've been, I've been a teacher, an administrator, and a school board member for almost 40 years, Mr. Speaker. I can't tell you how many parent-teacher-student interviews I've ever had. I don't, I can't count them: hundreds maybe thousands. One of the common themes of those interviews, Mr. Speaker, was how well is my child doing? I need to be able to know how well my child is doing so that I can help them move forward for success, Mr. Speaker.

That's the reason why we're introducing the student achievement initiative, Mr. Speaker, because for the first time we'll be able to tell parents, we'll be able to tell students, and we'll be able to tell teachers the reasons, the rationale of how we can move their children forward, Mr. Speaker. And we'll continue in that direction.

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

Mr. Forbes: — You know I am amazed that that minister's saying that he couldn't provide that answer in those interviews about how well those kids are doing. But we know this, Mr. Speaker, the need for English as an additional language are growing. As our province becomes more and more diverse, the needs in the classroom for supporting students who may not speak English at home are presenting teachers with challenges in ensuring students understand the material. That's why this budget fails to put appropriate resources needed for EAL [English as an additional language].

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation said, and I quote, "With the enrolment increases come the need for additional funding to support diversity, and specifically English as an additional language." Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party made a choice to fund standardized testing last week. They didn't have to make that choice. To the minister: how much support could be added for English as an additional language instead of the \$5.9 million for standard testing?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again, thank the member opposite for the question. You know, 2.3 per cent increase in operating funding is not a status quo budget, Mr. Speaker, and contained in that amount of increase, Mr. Speaker, is an amount of \$17 million to deal with current enrolment. And one of the factors in that current enrolment amount of money, Mr. Speaker, is for supports for learning, from where we get our teachers for English as a second language, educational assistants, etc.

And Mr. Speaker, there's more money in there for First Nations and Métis students as well, Mr. Speaker. So the supports to learning are present in that amount, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to do that. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it's an additional \$10 million over last year's budget, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, the minister found the slim resources for 40 new portables at schools. But the budget also flagged there are now 4,500 new students in our classrooms. Either that means that classrooms are going to be packed with over 110 students each, or the ministry's putting a drop in the bucket of what is needed to relieve the pressure on our classroom that this province is facing.

Mr. Speaker, the new resources for education predominantly went to standardized testing, a policy that no one over there has been able to explain, instead of relieving the real pressures that we're seeing in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister: how many more classrooms could have been built instead of spending \$5.9 million on standardized testing?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and the member opposite for the question. You know, standards are all around us. I'm sure the member opposite has a driver's licence. He needed a standard to get to that stage, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've got standards all throughout our province, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to . . . [inaudible].

Chinook School Division for example, Mr. Speaker, in their balanced literacy program, increased the reading level of their children by 21 per cent, Mr. Speaker, over the course of four years. Regina Public, using the early years identification tool, Mr. Speaker, decreased the deficiencies of students by 44 per cent over the course of a year, Mr. Speaker. Prairie Valley School Division, 23 of their 26 initiatives showed remarked increase, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, why wouldn't we want that for the best interests of our children? Why wouldn't we want that, Mr. Speaker?

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

Changes to Canada Pension Plan

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, hidden in the back pages of the provincial budget was the Sask Party government's reversal in position on the Canada Pension Plan. Instead of supporting a shift towards better retirement security for everyone in our province, the Sask Party's taken a step backwards, saying in this budget, ". . . the Government is not supportive of a CPP enhancement . . ."

Mr. Speaker, people in Saskatchewan want to see retirement security enhanced, and the CPP [Canada Pension Plan] is the best way to do that. It's affordable. It's efficient. It's portable. It's common sense. Why is the Sask Party government reversing its position, walking away from improving the Canada Pension Plan, an important part of retirement security for every Saskatchewan resident?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is very well aware of the changes that may happen at the CPP level and at the federal government

level and what kind of, actually, decisions will need to be made before CPP can be announced. That discussion has been under way for about four years. There continues to be discussion.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the officials at the federal government level have been tasked with doing some reviews of the current CPP plan to see what kind of pressure would fall upon employers, upon employees, who might not be affected negatively if we indeed increase CPP contributions by a modest amount. So, Mr. Speaker, those discussions are under way. Minister Flaherty has indicated that the CPP discussion will again be on the table at our next meeting, which is proposed to be in June.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I guess I'll maybe push the Finance minister on this front then, because in the past he's spoken about having some support for expanded CPP, something that certainly we've championed, something that we've called for, something that most other provinces in Canada support. Now we open up the budget, and we've had that commitment from the Finance Minister, now we open up the budget, and in the black and white ink of that budget it states, as I said there before . . . the Government is not supportive of a CPP enhancement . . ." And it references discussions that are going forward.

Now I guess we're looking for leadership from this government and from our Finance minister, while many other provinces have had that leadership from their Finance minister. Does our Finance minister and that government support the expansion of the CPP?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we as one of the provinces at the table will continue to look at the expansion of CPP and what that might mean. We're going to look at the definition of what modest increases might be, and at the appropriate time we'll make that decision. One of the other tools, Mr. Speaker, that I kept hidden from the members opposite, and actually talked about it in my budget speech, Mr. Speaker, was the whole position of the federal government on pooled registered pension plans, PRPPs.

Mr. Speaker, PRPPs are going to be another tool that people in the province of Saskatchewan and all across Canada might use to enhance their retirement. Mr. Speaker, we know that financial literacy in the province of Saskatchewan and throughout Canada is woefully inadequate. We need to ensure that people have choice, people have options. And we're going to pursue that, as I indicated in my speech. Mr. Speaker, we're going to introduce that by introducing the Act that will introduce pooled registered pension plans here in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this Finance minister on this file is tough to track. He seems to have one position one

day, another position in the black and white of his budget, sort of flip-flopping around, Mr. Speaker, when we're looking for some real commitment.

Now while the PRPP is certainly a new tool that's been introduced and something that we support as a new tool for retirement security, it's limited in its scope. It's voluntary and only applies to some. We're looking for broad-based expansion of something that's there for many, and that's the Canada Pension Plan. So we support new tools, the PRPP that's being brought forward, but not at the expense of expanding the Canada Pension Plan.

So I guess my question to the Finance minister who's confusing his position more here today: is it an error in his budget that he's printed in the back that this government doesn't support the expansion of the Canada Pension Plan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite . . . I want to clarify a couple of things. As far as the expansion of the CPP across Canada, Mr. Speaker, we are going to look at the options. We're going to ensure that if there is indeed a desire and the adequate support, Mr. Speaker, because you do need seven provinces to change that. If there's adequate support to put in place modest increases to CPP without, without ensuring that the economy, the growing economy of the province of Saskatchewan doesn't take a step backward because there is extreme pressures on employers, we're going to look at that.

That has been my position from day one, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance in this province. It'll continue to be that. And I want to know whether the member opposite is indeed going to support pooled registered pension plans here in this province.

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

Creative Industries and Film Employment Tax Credit

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year's budget ended the Saskatchewan film employment tax credit, and last week's budget confirmed the government's stubborn streak and their failure to listen to people who know the tax credit worked. Mr. Speaker, when they made that decision, they scrambled. The Finance Department told the Ministry of Culture they had a bad story to tell about the end of the film industry in the province, so the minister and his officials looked for more spin. One week before the budget was released, they put together a contract that cost thousands of dollars to come up with their justifications and talking points. Mr. Speaker, why would this government spend money on research on a tax credit after making the decision to cut it?

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find it strange, I mean here today and in the budget speech — we will have a reply to the budget speech later — we've had the opposition members consistently saying you need to spend

more, you need to spend more. We heard it here again today: you need to spend more on post-secondary education, you need to spend more on health care.

As a matter of fact, the member for Saskatoon Nutana last night, Mr. Speaker, in her budget speech said, even their increases are cuts, if I could put it that way, Mr. Speaker. What we have here, Mr. Speaker, what we have here in this year's budget presented, the sixth consecutive balanced budget presented by this government, Mr. Speaker, is in our culture sectors. When the government is spending 3.1 per cent more than expenditures this year, Mr. Speaker, we have an 18 per cent budget lift in the culture sector of our budget in this year's balanced budget, Mr. Speaker.

We have \$5 million for the film employment tax credit in this budget, Mr. Speaker. And we have \$5 million, brand new dollars, in Creative Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, an investment fund that all of our creative industries can access. And that member says, it won't help this economy at all, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the minister didn't hear my question. Why would this government commission a study after making a decision to cut a particular program? Why would you spend money on analysis after you've cut it, Mr. Speaker?

When the stubborn Sask Party government made the short-sighted decision to kill the film tax credit, they needed to find a reason to justify it. That's why they scrambled to put together the spin and PR [public relations]. In a report that cost taxpayers thousands of dollars, commissioned after they already made their senseless decision to end the film tax credit, the government looked for anything to justify it.

Mr. Speaker, when I asked in committee last April for the government to produce analysis on the film tax credit, the minister gave none. That wasn't the only . . . I had asked several times last year for some analysis to be tabled. When asked, why did the minister not release this report or any other analysis on the film tax credit, and will he table those documents now?

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Speaker, in the context of last year's balanced budget, this government made some very difficult decisions. We decided to invest in people living with disabilities. We decided to invest in our low-income seniors, Mr. Speaker, providing additional funding for them. We decided to change the tax code such that single moms making \$25,000 a year, Mr. Speaker, paid 400 per cent less in provincial income tax in the province of Saskatchewan than they do in the province of Manitoba. Those were difficult decisions, Mr. Speaker, that this government made. We think that's better public policy.

Mr. Speaker, this government undertook a consultation process with all of our creative industries in the province of

Saskatchewan. We spent the better part of six months, Mr. Speaker, speaking and consulting with the creative industries to develop a support mechanism for those creative industries, Mr. Speaker. And what we came up with was on the basis of what was being provided to us with respect to feedback, Mr. Speaker, and that's Creative Saskatchewan.

And we know, we know, Mr. Speaker, that in the province of British Columbia right now they're spending over \$300 million on a film tax credit, Mr. Speaker, and they're at 80 per cent unemployment in that province. We think we have a better mechanism to support all of our creative industries in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. And again this minister failed to answer either question around why would they commission a study after they've already made a decision just days before the budget, Mr. Speaker, and why did they refuse to table that analysis or anything else.

The day before last year's budget, the government considered flexibility around their impending cuts. In their own notes, a Sask Party government official wrote they would consider flexibility "... if someone comes forward after the FETC cancelled." Mr. Speaker, it appears that the government was open to change only one day before the budget. But instead they dug in their heels and continued this stubborn streak, refusing to admit what a disastrous mistake cutting the film employment tax credit was.

Why was the government willing to be flexible on the film tax credit the day before the budget, but so entrenched in its wrong-headed decision the day after?

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the hon. member from Saskatoon Riversdale has read the budget or not. There was an 18 per cent increase, an 18 per cent increase in the cultural spending in this province, Mr. Speaker, in this budget. We have 5 million new dollars, 5 million new dollars, Mr. Speaker, in Creative Saskatchewan for all of our creative industries, all of our creative industries to apply to for financial support, Mr. Speaker.

And when asked, when asked, the Culture critic for the NDP said it's "... not going to stimulate film production here in Saskatchewan ... It does nothing for the economy, and that's the bottom line." Mr. Speaker, I suspect that musical producers, visual artists, theatrical producers, those that are involved in digital media woke up the morning after the budget and read those remarks, Mr. Speaker, and wondering how their work does not contribute to our economy. She ought to be ashamed of ever saying that, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I think we all heard.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 89 — *The Creative Saskatchewan Act*

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 89, *The Creative Saskatchewan Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport has moved first reading of Bill No. 89, *The Creative Saskatchewan Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 228 through 235.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled answers to questions 228 to 235 inclusive.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

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

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and join in the budget debate on this fine day. The sun's shining in the province of Saskatchewan.

And it's interesting, Mr. Speaker. We see here in question period the very reasons being presented why I and I know my colleagues in the official opposition are going to be voting against this budget, and why we sit back and scratch our heads

at some of the decisions of this government, Mr. Speaker.

On this last set of questions alone, you see what smacks of opinion-based evidence making in terms of the way this government has made their decisions. They took a vital sector of the creative industry in this province and destroyed it, Mr. Speaker, destroyed it. And then in the hurry to try and paper over the decision that they'd made and cover their tracks, they go out to different PR outfits and different . . . trying to develop an analysis that fits their situation.

And you know, a year later here we are, and the minister introduces *The Creative Saskatchewan Act*. And you know, great, Mr. Speaker. You know, if that was coming in and of itself, that would be great. And on its own merits we will judge it, and we will weigh in on a more informed manner for that, Mr. Speaker.

But for that and the Saskatchewan Arts Board to finally get an increase under this government, Mr. Speaker, you know, the cost on the other side of the ledger is last year they trashed the film industry. And so, you know, if that's some kind of equivalency game that they think they can play off in their Angus Reid polling, they're sitting there saying, oh well we've got a problem with people that like the arts, and this is maybe something that we can take back out and give the member from Northeast something that he can shout about across the province in terms of the creative industry . . . Well, you know, interesting, Mr. Speaker, but for those initiatives in and of themselves, you know, on the face of them seem to be fine initiatives and, in some cases, well overdue initiatives, Mr. Speaker.

But it's always about the context with these members opposite, Mr. Speaker, and it's always about the big picture. So there may be this measure or that measure that can be tuned in on or focused in on, and it looks pretty good, Mr. Speaker. And some of these things, again in and of themselves, are good measures, would be, if we weren't in the British parliamentary system that we're in, Mr. Speaker, would even be supportable measures. But in the context of a budget and in the context of a record of a government that does things like the . . . Again the opinion-based evidence making that seems to have gone on with the film employment tax credit and the decision to kill it, Mr. Speaker, and along with that a vital sector of our creative industries in this province, again you have a hard time, I know on this side of the House, taking what is said on budget day as the full measure of that government's commitment to different things that happen in this province.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to back up a bit and start where I should have to start, and that is to talk about the good people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, the way that I think this budget in some cases meets some of their expectations but in some cases doesn't deal with them straight, doesn't do the job that needs to be done, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say even before I get into that, Mr. Speaker, a big thank you to the people that I work with to help to bring voice to the concerns and issues that are important to the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre. I want to say a very special thank you to Colleen Smith who I work with in the constituency office. Colleen and I have known each other for a lot of years

and it's a real honour and a privilege to work with her. And I know those are words that sometimes get tossed around in this business, Mr. Speaker, but in my case it's really true. I'm quite thankful and I'm quite fortunate to be working with Ms. Smith in terms of trying to serve the good people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

I'm also thankful, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the support that I get and that I'm so fortunate for from family. And again we're a ragtag bunch, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the McCalls. And some of us aren't doing as well as maybe once was the case, but it's a family that has a lot of love and a lot of support and had a lot to teach myself about how to carry yourself in the community, how to work for the community, how to sustain that work, sustain that effort, and to think about what is really important in this life, Mr. Speaker.

And for that I'm very, very proud to be the son of Carolyn and Doug McCall and to be a member of the McCall family. I'm very thankful for the love and support of Theresa. And you know you get, sometimes you get very lucky in this life, Mr. Speaker, you get very fortunate, and sometimes you get some sunshine in what is otherwise darker patches on the road. But I'm very fortunate to have the love and support of Theresa. And it makes this work all the more rewarding and engaging, Mr. Speaker, when you have that love and support from family.

So I'm thankful for the people I work with, I'm thankful for family, and I'm thankful for the good constituents and neighbours and friends that I have in Regina Elphinstone-Centre — the people that are my neighbours, everybody that's wondering where the heck we're going to put all our snow, Mr. Speaker. And we'll see how that goes in the week to come. But it's, I've said this many times before, Mr. Speaker, and I'll say this on down the line, I know it's popular amongst MLAs to talk about how special and unique their constituency is, but I think that's actually the case for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

In terms of embodying the motto of our province, "from many peoples, strength," you have people from literally around the globe that live in Regina Elphinstone-Centre. You have newcomers, you have long-settled citizens, you have First Nations, you have Métis. It's a diverse place in terms of socioeconomics. It's a diverse place in terms of just what makes up the ebb and flow of different parts of the neighbourhood, be it the residential areas and the vital sort of vibrant communities that you see in places like heritage and north central and Cathedral and Regent Park, the bit that is in Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

The exciting sort of developments in the warehouse district, the always, always vitally beating pulse of this city, the downtown, Mr. Speaker, and the great sort of cultural opportunities on offer there, the great sort of administrative centre that that brings to both public and private sector — it's a very interesting constituency, Mr. Speaker, and I feel very humbled and honoured to serve as their representative in this legislature.

So, Mr. Speaker, in terms of how this budget relates to the needs and the hopes and aspirations and the issues that are of concern to the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, again I'll say off the top, there are items in this budget that constituents

will look upon favourably. There are items in this budget that I look upon favourably, that I am glad to see them in this budget. But on balance, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way this government conducts its business, the way this government carries itself, the way that this government is increasingly stubborn and, in some cases, less than forthright in terms of the way that decisions are made or the impact of those decisions, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the balance that is talked about in rhetoric in this speech from the Minister of Finance, the balanced growth, a tagline that seems to be the mantra for this budget, well if there was balance in this, Mr. Speaker, then it would be a different speech that I'm giving today. But that balance is not there.

The balance is not tipped in favour of support. And so I, for the reasons that are ably stated in the amendment and for the things that I'm going to talk about now, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the budget. I will be supporting the amendment that states:

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

And starting with the last and moving back to the first, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the P3 [public-private partnership] contemplation that we see in this budget, again this would seem to be a case of a government very anxious to manage the look of the books, very anxious to shove costs that should be incurred in the in years for these budgets to the out years, shovelling them over to the kids, to the grandkids, to those yet to come, Mr. Speaker.

And again you know, in some ways we've seen that act before. We've seen a way that the government in the 1980s made a bunch of decisions that we paid for until this very day, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

And when we hear different things from members opposite in terms of the record of, you know, the former NDP government and the deficits that they like to talk about that were inherited, well when the Roy Romanow New Democratic Party took government in 1991, there was a deficit deficit, Mr. Speaker. That was a huge problem for this province.

And in point of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you'll cast your mind back to then, this province — because of the decisions that had been made through the 1980s and the way that they'd been passed forward to the next generation, the way that mess had been shovelled off to the next government — in that first budget, Mr. Speaker, the government had to spend more on the deficit and servicing the debt that had been racked up through the 1980s than on the entirety of education, Mr. Speaker.

And if you think about that and what that means for the ability of the province to build for the future — let alone build for the future; build for that day, Mr. Speaker — it's pretty rich listening to some of the members talk about . . . I think the

member from Regina Walsh Acres was talking about a reign of terror that took place in the 1990s in the province of Saskatchewan. It's hard to take that seriously, Mr. Speaker, and if you do take it seriously, it's hard to not hold your head in your hands when you listen to those kind of things.

When the NDP government left office in 2007, there was \$2 billion cash on hand that the members opposite . . . You know at the time, the Premier had the forthright ability to come forward and say, you know, thanks very much. There were good things done. And how we see that slide, Mr. Speaker. And I guess it's up there with the pledges around humility, the pledges around we're going to earn the support of the Saskatchewan people, and we're going to do it every day. You know, we don't see that as often as once we did in this Chamber. And I guess in some respects, Mr. Speaker, so be it, so be it. But if the members opposite want to honestly reckon with the record of this province and reckon with what were mistakes and what were good things for the province, you'd hear a different story than the kind of litany that gets unleashed on a daily basis about what happened in this province between 1991 and 2007, Mr. Speaker.

So if you can't . . . Those that would deny history and those that can't learn the lessons of history, you know, it's going to be interesting to see how those lessons get repeated. And again in terms of the credit card nature of this budget and the way that these costs have been kicked on to future generations, Mr. Speaker, we're going to see how that plays out in terms of P3s for, or privatization schemes for hospitals, for schools. We're going to see how that plays out for roads, Mr. Speaker.

And again one of the problems with that is, you know, there's no satisfaction in a decade down the line saying, you know, well it turns out that it was more expensive and that these costs got passed on to the next generation. You know, there's not a lot of satisfaction in that, Mr. Speaker. But I think that's what's coming down the line. I think we can take that lesson from other jurisdictions where these privatization schemes have been entered into. And you know, we'll see the proof in display. But my hope, Mr. Speaker, is that people in their wisdom cotton on to what is going on and tell this government something different, that this is not a path that should be pursued, that this is dangerous for the province.

In terms of denying transparency, Mr. Speaker, again this government . . . This very day we had the questions around the film employment tax credit. And that one still has a lot of folks scratching their head in terms of why that decision was made.

But in terms of what came forward in this budget, Mr. Speaker, you know, perhaps we'll get the fuller picture through freedom of information. And maybe we will get somebody finally wanting to get some things off their chest on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

But again you see a tendency on the part of that government to try to jam reality into their ideology, to take their opinions and then base evidence on that to make decisions. And again, Mr. Speaker, that's a bad way to run the province.

In terms of environmental progress, my colleague, last night, the member for Nutana, ably listed the cuts that are being made

in this year's budget, again compounding other cuts that are made by this government.

And again it's one thing to work on the development side of the coin and to have that balanced approach to development, Mr. Speaker. But if you don't have the environmental credibility on the other side, if you're not looking to the environment, then of course you're making decisions that future generations will pay for. And it's the environmental edition of rolling the credit forward for next generations to pay off, Mr. Speaker.

And if you're doing that as a government, then don't be surprised when you go to other provinces and other jurisdictions to say, you know, we are environmental stewards of the first rank; we've got a great environmental record. And they say to you, well it's not the case; your actions say something very different. And these cuts that you've been making to the climate change fund, like in 2007, Mr. Speaker, that they said they were going to sustain but they couldn't wait to get it cut right out of the gates, the cuts that we see in terms of the environmental oversight and regulatory capacity in the department, in the Ministry of the Environment, in this budget, Mr. Speaker, again the rhetoric does not add up to the record in terms of the way that these members are conducting their business. So we'll see how that carries forward.

In terms of failing students in schools, again we've heard about the monies being brought forward again by my colleague from Saskatoon Centre, the Education critic for the official opposition, on what's happening with standardized testing. And again a fairly contentious topic, Mr. Speaker, but one that ideologically this government seems to be committed to and is bulling forward with. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, I wish they had shown the same sort of fortitude when it came to pursuing the work of the joint task force on employment and education opportunities for First Nations and Métis people in this province. And I know that there's \$3 million earmarked in this budget, Mr. Speaker, and you know, for dollar one towards better educational outcomes for First Nations and Métis people in this province, it's again a good thing to see.

But in terms of the way that this whole file has been handled by this government, the way that the joint task force was announced in the May before the 2011 election . . . It was supposed to be up and running in the fall of 2011. It didn't get up and running until the spring of 2012, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that there were \$2 million put forward for that budget . . . And we don't begrudge making sure that these kind of inquiries are properly funded so they can do their work and gather that research base. That's as it should be. But I think it's telling, Mr. Speaker, that they put up \$2 million for the operations of it and now they've got a notional \$3 million in terms of a response after the report finally comes from the joint task force later this spring.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, that's disappointing, to say the least, in terms of not doing what should be done, not taking the kind of action that should be taken on a front that is so critically important for this province's present and future, Mr. Speaker. And I think, you know, last Thursday we had the provincial budget. The following day . . . Or last Wednesday, we had the provincial budget. The Thursday we had the federal budget. And again there was some expectation around whether or not

the federal government would finally come forward to make sure that on-reserve First Nations education is equally funded or equitably funded with off-reserve education, Mr. Speaker. And in the province of Saskatchewan, again it's hard to get the exact figures out of the federal government on this, but we know that it's about a third less that goes for per-student funding on-reserve.

And there was a great opportunity for this government to say that is a priority for the people of Saskatchewan, that kids are funded on an unlevel playing field, that it's not fair, Mr. Speaker, that that should be addressed. There was a lot of expectation weighing in on Thursday's budget in terms of what the federal government would finally do on that file. And of course, Mr. Speaker, it came up with nothing to address that unlevel playing field, to address that inequity that so hamstring our system in this province, Mr. Speaker. And again the way that . . . If you haven't got that level playing field for education, Mr. Speaker — education being one of the great levellers in life, in society, in the economy — if you don't have that, Mr. Speaker, then a lot of the other problems that we see around us in this province, it's not real hard to figure how these things happen, how they fit together.

So again there was no action, no meaningful action other than this notional \$3 million in terms of responding to the joint task force's work. And the joint task force, which I would add moreover, Mr. Speaker, the joint task force which, in their interim report before Christmas said the most pressing issue that they encounter — in terms of the hearings that they were doing across the province and the stakeholders they were talking about and the research that they were conducting — the most pressing issue was that inequity between on- and off-reserve funding for education for First Nations. And again, Mr. Speaker, if you haven't got something as fundamental to your system as that on a level playing field, on a fair footing, then it's going to have consequences that we see playing out through other parts of the budget and through other parts of society.

And, Mr. Speaker, again people are waiting a long time for this government to, you know, if they've got so much political capital, if they've got so much popularity, you know, would but they would use it in the service of something like this, Mr. Speaker. Would but they would use their preferred relationship with Stephen Harper to make sure that this issue was being addressed.

But we don't see that, Mr. Speaker. What we see instead is, you know, wait for the joint task force to report and, you know, we've got \$3 million for that to come. And again, Mr. Speaker, that task force itself, through no fault of the good people that have shared that work, through no fault of theirs, has taken a long time. And now, Mr. Speaker, it comes after the budget and is going to get the notional 3 million, again when it was funded for 2 million to begin with.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I don't . . . I'm going to wrap up on that pretty quickly but it just, it makes you scratch your head in terms of seeing the decisions of this government, and it makes you wonder about the sincerity or the commitment that you hear in a lot of fine, high-blown speeches from members opposite, but when it comes to the real action, when that task

force finally comes in, Mr. Speaker, again \$3 million notional. We'll see how that works out. When the federal budget comes in, you know, it gets an enthusiastic thumbs-up from the members opposite. I mean, it's not a lot of help, Mr. Speaker. It's something that needs that work.

Carrying on through the amendment, Mr. Speaker, in terms of health care there are some good measures in this budget around health care, to be sure. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, you know, what perplexes us in the opposition benches and what gives us cause for pause, Mr. Speaker, is the way that, you know, there are really great measures being mentioned in the speech by the Finance minister. And you know, they hit the applause line and it's a great thing, but it's always in the details that things seem to fall apart.

And again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the monies coming forward for the Alzheimer's First Link program to be able to expand that and to put it on a relatively equal footing with the kind of support that is shown for that program in other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, we think that's a great thing. And I think the record shows very clearly the opinion of the official opposition on that. And I want to thank those folks with the Alzheimer Society, the work that they've done to raise that awareness and to very forcefully make the case. And I'm glad that the government said yes to it, and I'm glad that this measure is going forward. We'll look to see how it's implemented, Mr. Speaker, but again a good thing on the face of it.

The home care pilot project that's coming forward, you know, we're glad to see that. We think that more needs to be done in terms of home care, in terms of helping seniors to be able to have that choice and to have the important home environment available to them. And if we don't make these improvements to home care, Mr. Speaker, and the kind of stress that that will place on long-term care, a system that is already under significant stress and strain in this province . . . And we think that's an investment that makes sense, and we're again glad to see it in the budget.

But I guess, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that is also interesting to see, given references, the way that the long-term care beds that were first announced in 2009 come up for announcement yet again in this budget, Mr. Speaker, you know, fair enough but get the long-term care beds up and running and get on with the thing.

The other thing we find interesting, to say the least, Mr. Speaker, is the P3 approach being offered up for the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. And again, Mr. Speaker, that despite assurances made on other fronts by this government, to see it being shuffled off into some kind of privatization scheme . . . Uncertainty is something that gives us a lot of concern and a lot of pause for thought on this side of the House.

[14:45]

Another thing that again is a good announcement in the budget was the increased funds for the Cancer Agency. And again, as recent as today, Mr. Speaker, the member from Moosomin makes reference to a case in his constituency where cancer has afflicted a family. And I happen to know that family, Mr.

Speaker, and I know the good, decent people that are being affected by this, Mr. Speaker. And I applaud the member from Moosomin for lifting up those young people for recognition, and to applaud them in their efforts and to rally around Mr. Whelpton in this time of severe challenge, of hard challenge.

And again, Mr. Speaker, the monies that always go forward to the Cancer Agency, that's something that, you know, who wouldn't support that? But on the other side of the ledger, Mr. Speaker, we see the \$54 million that is being asked for from the RHAs [regional health authority] and from the Cancer Agency. And that's not in the applause line of the Finance minister during his speech. That of course is in the fine print, and you have to read through these things and see how it plays out with these members to find out where they're at, really and truly, on these things.

So again there's money coming forward on the one hand, Mr. Speaker, but for something like this, \$54 million being asked back from the RHAs and from the Cancer Agency. And again, Mr. Speaker, these are the things that give us pause, that make us wonder about how straight this government is being with the people of Saskatchewan, how straight they're being with the decisions that affect the people of this province.

In terms of the way that this budget is structured and the different things that you find about it there, Mr. Speaker, you'd think that the auditor . . . It's funny, the relationship of this government to the Provincial Auditor. Because of course, I think it was the question period on budget day itself, Mr. Speaker, where the Finance minister was feigning outrage about something that the member from Rosemont had said in terms of using the auditor's words and the auditor's reports to hold this government to account, and the way that the Finance minister reared up and got all, you know, into high dudgeon mode about what the member had said, and having the audacity to say that he was the defender of the Provincial Auditor.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if they're going to truly defend the Provincial Auditor and if they're going to respect the words and advice of that independent officer of this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, well then how about it shows up in the budget? How about it shows when the Provincial Auditor says, your books are wrong; you've got two sets of books? You've got a proposition that is misleading, Mr. Speaker. How about when the Provincial Auditor says that? How about you take some of your outrage and take a long hard look in the mirror and say, yes, you know, maybe it's time that we got with every other jurisdiction in the country of Canada and made sure that we lived up to what the auditor is saying we should do.

But again, Mr. Speaker, we don't see that. We see the stubborn streak of this government, that they know best, that, you know, the auditor can have the auditor's opinion, but they know best, Mr. Speaker.

And again when you're the only province in Canada carrying out your books in a certain way, Mr. Speaker, well you know, maybe, maybe that should be the caveat for when they talk about how we're the only province in Canada to have a balanced budget last year. And we'll see about this year, Mr. Speaker. But if you ask them about whether or not the balance is there in the budget, of course you hear one thing. If you ask

an independent officer of the legislature tasked with this very duty, the provincial officers, Mr. Speaker, you hear something very different. We hear that they have two sets of books. You hear that the budget in fact was not balanced. You hear that the books that have been presented have been manipulated. You hear that they have been wrong and misleading.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to whose opinion about the books and the way that the oversight should evolve to keep track with the generally accepted accounting principles that are in practice across this country, when it comes to initiatives like that, Mr. Speaker, we of course would be taking the Provincial Auditor's word over members opposite. And when they're feigning outrage and when they're getting up in the defence of the Provincial Auditor, maybe they should think about how things went on PAC [Public Accounts Committee] when they had members go after the auditor, Mr. Speaker, and play some games with the budget of the auditor. Maybe that'd be a great time to get the outrage cranked up, Mr. Speaker. So again we'll see how these things play out, Mr. Speaker, but the record says one thing; the actions say something else.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I want to make specific mention of before I get too far away from the structuring of the budget is the whole question of what's going to happen with the funding for PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program]. And of course, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way that the provincial disaster assistance program has been funded in past, we see an increasing draw on that program and an increasing draw over the last decade in terms of the way that program has been deployed.

And we know that the average payout over the last three years was \$105 million. So why wouldn't they put something that bore a relationship to the monies that have been expended over the last three years — they know that there are problems coming ahead — why wouldn't that be in the budget, Mr. Speaker? Because of course if you put something like that in the budget, then, you know, even on the face of the image management that they're presenting around the budget, even on the face of that, Mr. Speaker, you no longer have a balanced budget.

And so you know, will the money be there? And will it flow in terms of special warrants and all that? You know, I certainly hope so. I'd certainly expect that to be the case. And are there things that have been done to prepare, making sure that the possible flooding that is there, that we see in terms of the snowpack and what may be coming down the pike, Mr. Speaker? We certainly hope so.

But in terms of the budget, you know, that they've punted to the rainy day fund, that they shuffle the books to make it look good, again, Mr. Speaker, it speaks to the way that the members opposite are more concerned about manipulation and image management than they are about being straight with the people of Saskatchewan. And again if they keep structuring the budget like that, then that's going to have problems for not just them, Mr. Speaker, but it's going to be a problem for the people of Saskatchewan. So maybe they could listen to the Provincial Auditor on these things. Maybe they could take these things into account as they plan forward.

One thing I'd say as well, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite . . . that I was glad to see in this budget — and you know, I know this doesn't come up much, Mr. Speaker, and we'll see how this plays out — but I'm glad to see the additional funds being forwarded to address overcrowding in the correctional system in Saskatchewan. I am glad to see that perhaps the advice of the Provincial Ombudsman has been heeded in this regard in terms of the overcrowding that has a dramatically negative effect on the way our corrections system works or does not work, Mr. Speaker.

And in terms of the investments that are made in this budget, we'll be interested to see how that plays out. We'll be interested to see if it puts our correctional system back on a footing that is more in fact about corrections than it is about warehousing and making the problem worse in terms of individuals that are in the correctional system. We'll be interested to see if it has that salutary effect, Mr. Speaker.

But again one thing we know for sure, if you've got a system that is in crisis, if you've got a system that is overcrowded, there is danger inherent in it for correctional workers. There is danger inherent in it for inmates. And there is danger inherent for all of us in terms of the way that if you don't have some kind of rehabilitation going on, if you don't have opportunities there in terms of the programming around life skills or around vocational upgrading, Mr. Speaker, in terms of individuals coming out of the system and being able to participate in the economy in an honest and straightforward way, if you don't have those opportunities, Mr. Speaker, then you're not just revolving the problem. That problem is spiralling into becoming worse. So how those investments work out, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the correctional system, we'll be watching that closely to see how that plays out.

And something else we'll be watching closely, Mr. Speaker, is the way that . . . the impact of Bill C-10 federally and the way that this promises to improve the counts in our correctional system, the way that that continues to impact the system in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, if this government is as good as its word, I think the current Minister for Corrections and Policing said that, well when the bill comes in, we're going to ask the federal government to ante up because of course there's changes in law that are being . . . the costs of those are being passed on to the province. Well, Mr. Speaker, on the opposition benches we're interested to know what that cost is, when they anticipate that cost showing up on our books, when they anticipate the increased counts taking place in the correctional system overall, and what sort of plan there is to make sure that they deal with it.

And again, Mr. Speaker, on the other side of the coin there is the Hub initiative or the community crime reduction initiative that's being championed out of the Corrections and Policing. And you know, we're glad to see that. I'm glad to see that, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way that this model seeks to bring a community together to address and fight crime in a preventative way. And I'm glad to see it referenced in the budget. From what research I've done about it, it seems to be an interesting program. It seems to hold out a lot of promise for hope, Mr. Speaker. But again if you're doing things on the preventative side that only run up against a correctional system that is so in crisis and so overcrowded that there's no hope on that side of

the ledger, it's very hard to make that kind of progress in terms of overall crime reduction and overall community safety.

Another thing that I'm very interested to see how it plays out, Mr. Speaker, is the way that the Regina anti-gang strategy that had been funded by the federal government was brought to a close. And we finally hear that the province is saying no to continuing that anti-gang strategy work here in the city of Regina. And again, Mr. Speaker, I guess my question is, if not that, then what? What kind of anti-gang strategy is being deployed by the members opposite in terms of addressing what is a huge problem for too many neighbourhoods? And if they don't have a strategy, will they be owning up to that?

Something else I wonder about, Mr. Speaker, is in terms of the way that the Community Mobilization initiative, the way that shows up in the city of Regina or not. And you know, my hope is that it does and soon. But one thing that's interesting about that, Mr. Speaker, as I understand the fundamentals of the program, is that it bears some resemblance to the good work that was carried out under the inner city community partnership and the way that that brought community together with the province, the federal government, and the municipal government. And we know that that approach to fighting crime in inner city of Regina has taken a significant backseat from 2007 on in terms of the way that this government has not been committed to the inner city community partnership. So I guess, Mr. Speaker, if it takes them introducing their own program that does the same thing, then so be it.

What I'm interested in, Mr. Speaker, and what I think my neighbours and what the constituents of Regina Elphinstone-Centre are interested in is the effect, and that is safer communities and safer streets. And you know, if it takes the Sask Party, you know, walking away from one program only to come around to introduce their own program so that they can feel good about the parentage of it, then that's sad of course, Mr. Speaker, but so be it. It's just that the resources and the efforts be deployed to fight that crime, to deal with that situation, Mr. Speaker. So my hope is that that is addressed and soon.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, one thing that in a particular sense I'm interested to see is the way that the budget works out for advanced education and also for employment and skills training. And again there are, on the face of them, some good measures in this budget that in a broader context have much to recommend.

But in a particular context, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the tradition of funding that has been put forward for post-secondary education in this province, in terms of the importance of the pre-K to 12 [pre-kindergarten to grade 12] system and the post-secondary system in terms of making sure that that we fully realize the opportunities that we have been blessed so abundantly with here in the province of Saskatchewan, we'll be looking to see that those are realized. And we'll be looking to see the kind of gains that are boasted about on the one hand in terms of student support and scholarship, Mr. Speaker, to see that those aren't taken with the other in terms of what now happens with potential increased tuition.

And again, Mr. Speaker, if you're taking with the one hand, if you're giving with the one hand and taking with the other, well where does that leave you? It leaves you at a zero. It leaves you with no gain, but again you only hear about one side of the ledger from these members opposite. You only hear about one side of the equation. So how that plays out, Mr. Speaker, we'll be watching closely.

Something else that we'll see how it plays out, Mr. Speaker, is the federal government's new approach around the jobs Canada program that they're recommending everybody sign up for. And again, Mr. Speaker, we know that the labour market agreement and the Labour Market Development Agreement are coming to an end, and the way that that influences the dollars available for post-secondary and skills training in this province, and we'll be very interested to see if that change on the federal basis makes the province of Saskatchewan whole or if in fact there is a decrease that comes from the way that the federal government has changed their approach to supporting post-secondary education and skills training. And again, Mr. Speaker, these are initiatives that . . . There are a lot of really exciting things going on in this province.

I was glad to see the announcement today out of the apprenticeship and trades commission. And again there's a model where you have industry working with government, where you have management and labour working together, and you have that unique and innovative approach to making sure that people get skilled up so that they can take a more productive and more remunerative role in the economy.

One of the hugest challenges that we have in front of us is the whole question of labour force development. Again, Mr. Chair of Committees, it goes back to the question at how we invest in this province and whether or not we have an entire segment of the population being stuck with a system that is not on a fair playing field, whether or not that K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system works on reserve for First Nations and then again, Mr. Speaker, the way that those ramifications roll forward through the system.

In my constituency, Mr. Speaker, in terms of my home neighbourhood, there's a lot of transfer of population between particularly the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council and my home neighbourhood. And if those kids, when they go to get their education on-reserve are given substandard education — through no fault of those educators, through no fault of those First Nations, but through the fault of the federal government that refuses to make sure that those kids are funded on a level playing field — then guess what, Mr. Speaker? It's got a problem when those kids come to the Regina public system or to the Regina Catholic system. And there are some tremendous teachers doing some tremendous work, tremendous administrators throughout those two systems that I know very well, Mr. Speaker. And there are even some independent schools that are doing some great work in terms of improved outcomes and in terms of making sure that kids are advancing as they should.

But if you don't have that, you know, if on-reserve education is two-thirds at the rate, then guess what? It's not just their problem, Mr. Chair of Committees. It's not just the problem for kids on reserve. It's a Saskatchewan problem. And if you don't

have that fixed for on-reserve education, that equity and that fairness that needs to be there, then it isn't fixed. It isn't addressed for the people of Saskatchewan.

And the people of Saskatchewan will pay a price for that in terms of . . . And again I've just referenced the labour force challenges that we have here in the province. We have a tremendous advantage here in the province of Saskatchewan in terms of what is primarily young and Aboriginal students that are out there. That opportunity is there, Mr. Speaker. But if we don't realize it, if we don't take the steps to promote that interest, to defend that interest, to secure that interest, then we're going to keep on getting the same kind of results that we've had.

And you know, that lends itself to a system that again . . . Professor Eric Howe I think has done a tremendous service to the people of Saskatchewan in terms of the analysis and the laying out in chapter and verse the consequences for the people of Saskatchewan to have those kind of inequities in our labour force, to have those kind of inequities in terms of income, to have those inequities there in our educational system. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, I want to go on record again saying thank you to Professor Howe in terms of the work that he has done, in terms of the contribution that that individual has made to public policy in this province. And again, Mr. Speaker, the way that he points to the record of this government is worse than Manitoba and Alberta when it comes to First Nations and Métis education and employment levels and the way that that individual has marshalled the case.

And again it's sort of like the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Chair of Committees. Would but that this government gets the message. And maybe it's just that it's, you know, maybe we quote Dr. Howe too much in this House. But you know, this is a real interest for the people of Saskatchewan that is going poorly served by this government, and until it is, we're not going to live up to our potential as a province. And it's not a matter of somebody else's problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a problem for all of us to address and to make progress on.

And again there are other things under Advanced Education in terms of investments made around SIIT, the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, you know, that we think are admirable and worthy investments that should be made with public dollars, investments that are made to the regional college system, investments that are made to SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], investments that are made to our universities, Mr. Chair of Committees.

And again operationally there are some good things there to be seen. But if the overall . . . Again it gets into this kind of cognitive dissonance, Mr. Speaker. We see those good things and we certainly hear more than we'd ever want to in a lifetime about those good things from members opposite, Mr. Speaker. But when you get out on campus and you talk to students and you talk to faculty, it turns out that, you know, it's not this unrelenting parade of joy that members opposite would have you believe.

You know, yesterday afternoon, last night was a good example. You know, a hundred individuals on the campus of the U of S were getting laid off and we had members opposite talking

about how great things were. That's the kind of cognitive dissonance that I'm talking about, Mr. Chair of Committees, because again you hear one thing from members opposite but you see something very different on the streets, often as not. So until the reality matches up with the rhetoric, we will not be supporting the measures of members opposite.

And moreover, Mr. Speaker, one of the tendencies we see on display with this government, be it with the regional health authorities and the \$50 million deficit that we have in Saskatoon and Regina or the RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region] and the Saskatoon Health District or the way that decisions are being passed off to school boards or decisions that are being passed off to the post-secondary sector, again we hear, you know, no small amount of self-congratulation from members opposite about the wrestling with the hard decisions that they engaged in, the hard decisions that they had to grapple with and how difficult it was and on and on. And you know, yes there were some hard decisions, Mr. Speaker, but it would seem that there is a trend with a great number of those hard decisions where the hard decision was to pass it off to another sector or another organization for them to make the hard decision.

So again, is that leadership, Mr. Speaker? Is that the province living up to our full potential? Or is that, again, more hocus-pocus on the part of the Sask Party in terms of the rhetoric on the one hand and the reality on the other?

One thing I do think I like to see in this budget, Mr. Speaker, and one thing I'm glad to see in this budget is the way that revenue sharing has been carried forward with municipalities. And I think that's as it should be. And we'll be again watching closely year to year to make sure that they're not putting their finger on the scale or anything like that. But again, it's a boon to the province to make sure that the municipalities are appropriately funded. And we're glad to see that the vehicle of 1 per cent of PST [provincial sales tax] was seized upon, and we see that going forward. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, that's something that we're glad to see in the budget.

Something we're quite interested to see how it plays out, Mr. Speaker, is the whole question of regional planning authorities. And I know that certain other members opposite, they go back to the old, you know, forced amalgamation fight and all of that. But we'll be interested to see how the monies that were put up in this budget, though admittedly very small, Mr. Speaker, have been seized upon by commentators like Alan Thomarat who's, you know, of course a good . . . makes a great contribution to public life here in Saskatchewan, but is of course a good friend of this government. Another commentator such as John Gormley in his column last Friday, good friend apparently of the Deputy Speaker if I'm judging his reaction appropriately, both of those individuals have seized upon a \$250,000 expenditure in the Government Relations budget as significant in terms of what's going to happen around the 786 municipalities that we have in this province. And again, Mr. Speaker, maybe there's some kind of plan that really isn't on centre stage right now, but we'll see how this works out and how the members opposite roll this forward.

And of course the initiative also got a Legislative Secretary last May, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So, you know, you got your

Legislative Secretary for regional co-operation. You got your 250,000 bucks in the budget for regional planning authorities, and you got Thomarat and Gormley weighing in on, you know, this is the thing to watch. So we'll take their advice. We'll take their advice, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We'll be watching to see how it works out and see whether or not it provides any sort of better footing for the kind of ongoing struggles we've seen around the city of Regina, city of Saskatoon, and the kind of conflicts that they've been getting into with different of their rural municipalities. We'll see how that plays out, Mr. Speaker. We'll be watching with great interest for sure.

Something else that I want to make sure I'm on record saying is a good thing in this budget is the . . . are the initiatives around support against domestic violence for women, the addition of the safe house in Melfort, and the additional resources brought forward for different of the operations through the province. This is again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, work that should be supported, and we're glad to see its inclusion in terms of efforts being brought forward in this budget.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, though, it's against a backdrop of a problem that is far too great to give anyone comfort or any false sense of security in this province. We all have to realize that violence against women is something that . . . It's not just a problem for women. It's a problem for men. It's a problem for all of us to address, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we appreciate seeing that investment in the budget, but we realize that in the broader scope of things this is a problem that we collectively need to do a better job of responding to. And again, it's not just the responsibility of some. It's the responsibility of all as we seek to address this.

There was some interesting things in the budget around housing, Mr. Speaker. And again I want to get on record saying that any sort of support that is put forward for housing is good to see. But again in terms of the way that the affordability crisis has gone on and on and the impact that has had in places like my home neighbourhood, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the face of a response on the part of members opposite that is not equal to the task, we're glad to see the increased announcements in the budget. But again we've seen announcements from members opposite where, you know, how it plays out on the ground is maybe a different thing.

One thing I am unreservedly happy about, Mr. Speaker, is the investment made with Habitat for Humanity. I think that's a good thing and I'm glad to see that going forward. I'm sure that will now be thrown back at me in some kind of form by members opposite because, you know, no good word goes unpunished in this House. But I am glad to see that investment for Habitat in this budget, and I see the real difference that it makes for people in my neighbourhood on a daily basis in terms of Habitat houses that have been successfully built and homes that are now very much appreciated by those families.

[15:15]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess there are a lot of other things that could be said about this budget. There are a lot of things that, you know . . . Again there's some other good measures in this budget that on the whole we're glad to see.

But on balance, in terms of the way that this budget addresses — or doesn't — the needs that we see facing the province of Saskatchewan today, the way that this budget is a credit card budget, the way that this budget isn't straightforward with the people of Saskatchewan, the way that this budget seizes upon some initiatives that I think are wrong-headed and let others go walking by, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think is unfortunate to see.

So for all of those reasons that I've talked about here today, I will not be supporting the budget but I will be supporting the amendment. And should that amendment pass, then you know, we'll see what happens from there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I begin I would like to say a few thank yous, and first off to team Telfer back in my office in Cudworth. I appreciate their hard work and their friendship. I would also like to say thank you to our Regina staff. Their work, their attentiveness, and their assistance is very much appreciated. I would also like to thank the Minister of Finance and his team for all the hard work they did in building this budget into such the fine piece it is. I'd also like to thank our Premier for his leadership and skill in guiding the Saskatchewan Party. And most of all I would like to thank my partner, my friend, my wife of 37 years, Valerie.

I would also like to thank the people of Saskatchewan who were brave enough to stay in Saskatchewan through all the dark years and are now part of the new Saskatchewan. We are changing Saskatchewan for a bold and bright future. The boldest comment that I heard is a lady who said, very boldly, we are not going back. We were the have-not province for too long. We can now build for the future, for our family, for our grandchildren, and for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, the big news in the budget is that it is once again a balanced budget, probably the only one in Canada. In the past five years, Saskatchewan has changed in ways we didn't believe possible under the NDP.

The former interim leader of the NDP said that the new Saskatchewan was a myth, as if it wasn't really happening. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan would beg to disagree with him. What they are seeing is real. What they are feeling is real. It is the new Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the NDP say it is by chance that we became government just as the boom was happening. Well, Mr. Speaker, what is happening in Saskatchewan just doesn't happen by chance or by luck. Like one quote I know says, the harder I work, the luckier I get.

Mr. Speaker, some people say governments are all the same. Well this fall I had the privilege of hearing the renowned author and policy expert Brian Lee Crowley from the Macdonald-Laurier Institute. He spoke about the happenings in Saskatchewan. Mr. Crowley said from Saskatchewan's birth and for the next 30 years until the Great Depression, Saskatchewan was the third most populated province in all of Canada. The Depression broke our back, broke our hearts, broke our spirit, and Saskatchewan lost faith.

Mr. Crowley said Saskatchewan's rise was not inevitable. He listed countries where similar resources and advantages to that of Saskatchewan but who could not duplicate the success of Saskatchewan. Mr. Crowley said the reason for our success lies with a government that can create a stable and competitive environment for growth, something that has eluded Saskatchewan governments for generations.

Mr. Speaker, to prove the point beyond a shadow of a doubt, K+S Potash is back in Saskatchewan. This is a company that the NDP drove out of this province decades ago. Mr. Speaker, that same potash is still here in the ground. Nothing has changed. The only thing that has changed is the government. They are back now. They are back now due to that change of government.

In other words translating the Saskatchewan story, everything was here — the resources, the people. All that needed to be done was to get the ball rolling. Mind you that's no small feat, getting the ball rolling. The NDP tried for 60 years, and all they succeeded in doing was getting rolled over by the economy ball. The Saskatchewan Party along with the people of Saskatchewan have reversed that backward sliding and have gotten the ball rolling forward. Saskatchewan is now a have province that is becoming the province to be watched. Our province is the one that others want to emulate. We are the new Saskatchewan and proud of it.

Mr. Speaker, we are in an extensive review of labour laws in this province. The NDP say we don't have to change labour laws because they are working and they have worked for generations. Mr. Speaker, that is what some people said about the horse and plow. It has worked for generations. Why change now?

I will give you another example of that very philosophy. In the late 1940s and early '50s, SaskPower was electrifying Saskatchewan. They would ask for a volunteer in a community to go and sign up farmers in that area that wanted electricity. In our area, my dad was that man. He was surprised at how many people asked, what do we need electricity for? I don't see a use for it on my farm. My father had to do a lot of persuading to get enough neighbours to agree to have electricity brought in. Today how would we live without electricity?

Some people are afraid of change even if it's for the betterment of all people. The people who say no to our labour law changes are such people. Let us join together and reach out for the future, not sit and wait for it to run us over. We must be progressive, bold, and proactive if we are to keep building the new Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, life can be stranger than fiction. Some things that happen and the reflections of those actions speak louder than words. The Saskatchewan Party chose the colour green to represent the party. The colour green is of course the colour that means go. Green is also the colour of spring, the colour of new beginnings. It is a colour we all love. Even in sports, our Roughriders are green.

The NDP, on the other hand, they picked the colour orange. Think about that for a minute. Orange is the colour of danger zones. The colour means move slower; it is illegal to move fast.

In some cases, in an orange zone you must even stop and wait. This has been the practice of the NDP — slow down the economy. If a company like K+S Potash is progressing too quickly, you penalize them, even kick them out. Mr. Speaker, orange is also the colour of Halloween, the time of tricks, the time of stories that don't have any facts, only fiction. The time of scare tactics. Sound familiar? You can see how well orange fits the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, now the great pumpkin of the NDP, Thomas Mulcair, says that western resources are a disease in Canada. Can you believe that, Mr. Speaker? A disease. He even went down to the US [United States] and preached that disgusting gospel based on half-truths and falsehood. His only goal is to gain power. He certainly wasn't promoting the betterment of Canada. Mr. Speaker, he is willing to sacrifice Western Canada in his goal to become prime minister of Canada. The saddest part of this whole story is that the negative nine on that side of the House sit mute on the whole situation or, at best, say they don't know. What's not to know? This is the time to oppose such ideology. They should be yelling out loud in defence of Western Canada and our future.

Mr. Speaker, the new Leader of the NDP is trying to distance himself from the 5 billion NDP election platform of 2011. He tries to stay mute on the issue of their election platform, but in fact when you look at a copy of their platform, you find his signature and his alone. Yes, he ignores the fact and tries to criticize the Saskatchewan Party budget. If he'd become premier, the province would be another \$5 billion deeper in debt. That's \$5 billion away from a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, the new Leader of the NDP is also trying to distance himself from their last leader, Dwain Lingenfelter. Let us not forget that the new NDP leader and also the Deputy Leader of the NDP were the right and left hands of team Lingenfelter. They did his bidding, and they learned their trade under his watchful eye. When the deputy leader starts his warped spin and rants on any budget topic, you can close your eyes and yes, Dwain is back once again. Sounds like Halloween.

Mr. Speaker, this budget, like all budgets since the Saskatchewan Party has become the government, is once again breaking new ground. It is forging a strong link between the government and its people. Our government has changed this province like no other government since Walter Scott, our first premier.

This budget is our sixth consecutive balanced budget, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan, agriculture is still the backbone of our economy. With 47 per cent of Canada's cropland here in Saskatchewan and food becoming more important in the global economy, we must support Saskatchewan agriculture. To build on that, our government is investing \$198 million in crop insurance.

This year we're spending a record 576 million on much-needed highways. That puts us well ahead of our four-year election target of 2.2 billion. Instead of closing hospitals, we're building hospitals. There is more money for health care. Surgical wait times have been drastically, drastically reduced. We are investing more money in our students, both university and

technical schools. We are building and repairing schools at a rate unheard of in past governments. We're building long-term care facilities, not closing them. We are raising low-income seniors' pensions to the tune of 300 per cent by the end of our term. We are funding the disabled and giving them a hand up not a handout.

Mr. Speaker, there are many more highlights in this budget. And I would encourage the people of Saskatchewan to pick up a copy of the budget or go online and see for themselves the progress Saskatchewan is making. It is a great time for Saskatchewan as we take our rightful place in Canada as one of the leaders in this country. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I enthusiastically support this budget.

And, Mr. Speaker, on a separate note, I would like to say a blessed Easter to all the people in Saskatchewan on this Holy Week. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to enter into the budget debate today. And I'm very pleased to support this balanced budget put forward by my colleague and friend from Canora-Pelly and seconded by my colleague and friend from Saskatoon Greystone.

I will be happy to address the important details pertaining to the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers that I represent. This is a very good report on the condition and direction of our province as we go into the future. And I would also like to take this time to thank and recognize the constituents of Sask Rivers for their continued support and trust.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my constituency staff, home in Saskatchewan Rivers. Marcus Abrametz is one of them, and Jason Beebe and Joan and Cora. And I'd like to thank them for their dedication to the province. They work in our two constituency offices: one in Red Wing — that's the main one — and one in the town of Big River.

I also want to thank my family for their love and support. As our family grows, we continue to live and work in Saskatchewan with much appreciation for all that Saskatchewan has to offer.

[15:30]

I'm very proud of my children, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe I've talked about the four of them before in the House so I'm going to tell you all about them today. Markus is my baby and he has dual degrees in chemistry and science, and Lacey has completed her master's in speech language pathology. Briggitt has dual degrees in social work and nursing, and she married a newcomer who happens to be a physician, and he has decided to live and work and raise his family in Saskatchewan. So we're very happy with that. They have a little girl called Ella and another child on the way. And I have another child. My oldest boy Matthew and my daughter-in-law Kate are entrepreneurs and agriculture producers, and they too are raising their four children here in Saskatchewan. They have two young boys and twin baby girls.

So we are truly blessed, Mr. Speaker. Grandma's table needs another leaf. Not like a few short years ago when grandparents lamented that their grandchildren were in another province after the NDP drove out all our young people out of Saskatchewan.

But, Mr. Speaker, this budget's a story of investment and development. And facts are stubborn things, Mr. Speaker. Government's first duty is to protect and invest in communities, not run their lives. This budget demonstrates our record and commitment to moving forward, planning for growth and not decline.

Mr. Speaker, we tend to remember life lessons learned, and one of them being that there comes a day when you have to take a stand on something. You cannot continue to sail through life unbiased or undecided or unopinionated, especially in politics. You have to draw a line in the sand and decide which opinion you stand for, which debate, which side of the fence, which side of the House Assembly you want to sit on, which answer, which budget you approve, and which vote you can live with, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we have different political parties, different personalities, different genders, ages, religions, and education. No two are alike, Mr. Speaker, but we continue to grow as people, grow as a government, and grow as a province.

Winston Churchill once said, and I quote, "It's not enough that we do our best; sometimes we have to do what's required." And, Mr. Speaker, we also have to consider what the public ask for.

I'd like to speak on the importance of municipal revenue sharing, record revenue sharing in this budget. This government will distribute 264.4 million to municipalities in municipal revenue sharing. This commitment represents an 11.4 per cent increase from the previous year and 137 million increase over 2007. Mr. Speaker, this commitment will help with the successful growth of municipalities like the 229 per cent increase of revenue sharing from 2007 in my own home RM [rural municipality] of Buckland — 229 per cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, this government and budget has invested nearly 850 million in infrastructure for schools, post-secondary facilities, hospitals, and highways. Saskatchewan Rivers will benefit by the completion of the Highway 11 twinning initiative and the 25.5 million for grants to rural municipalities to improve their road systems.

Saskatchewan Rivers constituency is home to many beautiful parks in our beautiful boreal forest, Mr. Speaker. Improvements to Saskatchewan provincial parks continue through enhanced capital funding including an additional 10 million over four years. Mr. Speaker, major projects include the planning and design for two new campground developments and additional electrical service to campsites. Now, Mr. Speaker, for those of you who have travelled to or camped at Emma, Christopher, Anglin, the candle lakes in my constituency, you know the value to families that enjoy this part of our beautiful province. Approximately 200 campsites will also be upgraded in electrical service, and three washroom shower facilities will be replaced.

Lakeland and area has many tourist spots for travellers and tourists to visit and enjoy, from the Sundogs dogsledding

excursions next door to Elk Ridge, to our Prince Albert National Park at Waskesiu where you can travel to the cabin of the noted naturalist Grey Owl and his pet beavers, Jelly Roll and Rawhide. My mother told me stories of playing with Grey Owl's daughter, Shirley Dawn, who was close in age with my mother. They were both born in the early '30s. And Shirley Dawn and my mother would go to the sandy shore of Christopher Lake and they would play. So our area, Mr. Speaker, of Sask Rivers is so rich in history and stories.

But time marches on and time moves on, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan's time in the present has been good for all the people of Saskatchewan today. The gift of time is not ours alone. It is given equally to each person, Mr. Speaker. The benefits of experience have been good decisions made by our government, and we are seeing the results of that growth today. For Saskatchewan residents who live, work, and invest in the province, this budget provides an environment conducive to investment and growth, a vision of growth for all people, an inspiration to achieve more than others think is possible.

Mr. Speaker, our government has decided to grow our province and make decisions for balanced growth. I'd like to quote Hermann Hesse: "People with courage and character always seem sinister to the rest." Mr. Speaker, improving the quality of life and economy was what we were elected to do by the people of Saskatchewan. They elected us with a majority and believed in us. It's our duty to achieve a better quality of life for all.

Mr. Speaker, this budget includes an investment of close to 5.8 billion in infrastructure over the term of our government — double what was invested from 2002 to 2007.

Mr. Speaker, our government realizes the value and importance of Saskatchewan agriculture producers. The Ministry of Agriculture will continue its commitment to fully fund its portion of Growing Forward programming to support the business interest of some farmers.

This year's 198.3 million crop insurance budget is the largest in the history of the program and a 91 per cent increase since 2007. I believe that's a growing budget, a budget that looks far into the future, Mr. Speaker.

Agriculture is a major contributor to our province's economic growth. Agriculture allows investment in the quality of life for Saskatchewan Rivers constituents, constituents like the Northern Fringe Grain Club, 30 grain and livestock producers who contribute to the economy of Saskatchewan. They are a farm management club interested in software, marketing, and advisors that today's farms need for the high level management.

Mr. Speaker, record funding for crop insurance and research in the 2013 budget will help continue and enhance crop production for farmers like this vital group, farmers who are my friends and neighbours attending community gatherings together. We are together in times of sorrow, in times of happiness. We are together for funerals and weddings and baby showers.

Mr. Speaker, investments in market development will help Saskatchewan reach agriculture exports by 50 per cent, as well as establishing Saskatchewan as a global leader in bioscience.

For over 100 years, agriculture has been the major economic force in the area of Canada's central plains known as Saskatchewan, our great province. The farmers, their families, the scientists, and public servants who built this industry in this region of harsh climactic extremes inspire admiration and awe. It was 1866 that Reverend James Nisbet established a farm with livestock near Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, it wasn't too many years ago that some Saskatchewan farmers were holding rallies and blocking roads. Those days of farm activism are now a distant memory. Saskatchewan agriculture producers are enjoying their greatest prosperity since the 1970s.

Farm land has become a good investment for young people who are now excited to come back to the farm. Making room for another generation, many farms are in expansion mode. And I am very proud of our government's initiative of this agriculture record funding and growing population, Mr. Speaker.

This budget comes at a remarkable time in Saskatchewan's history. In response to meeting the challenges of a growing province and growth pressures, Saskatchewan is investing in developing the knowledge and skills of its people so that education and employment outcomes allows our businesses, our people, and our communities to thrive — all with a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker. Government budgets need to facilitate, not undermine growth as others have done to the previous detriment of future prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, the world wants what Saskatchewan has. But more importantly, Saskatchewan has what the world needs. Demand for Saskatchewan's abundant resources is projected to remain strong, and for the foreseeable future the world will want to do business with Saskatchewan.

With a capacity to absorb a larger workforce, the province has incredible growth potential. Our government's budget includes labour force development for over 448 million to support base operating of Saskatchewan's university and colleges. That's an increase of 9.2 million. And providing work readiness, employment development funding for First Nations and Métis people will give them the essential skills to accelerate into the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this government delivered a balanced growth budget ensuring a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people: a budget with heart, a budget with heart and soul. I am proud of Saskatchewan, and I'm proud to live and work and watch my children raise their children in Saskatchewan. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I support this budget of 2013-14. And I'm very proud of my colleagues and my Premier. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Tochor: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I rise today, it's an honour to speak to this great budget that we've tabled within the last couple weeks. But I just want to pause as I've got some thank yous coming. But I just want to reflect on what I view right now actually as I look across the aisle, and I see the member from Regina Lakeview, the only member over there.

It's a little bit of an indication of . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I would just remind the member that members are not to reflect on the presence or absence of members in the House. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Mr. Tochor: — I apologize for that. What I was speaking to is just in general. It's a little tired. It's been around for a while, and we'll talk about that a little bit later on in my speech on the alternatives and what could be happening in Saskatchewan if we took a different path in the last election.

But, Mr. Speaker, just to start off with, I just wanted to talk about before this budget, is a couple of thank yous. And some important thank yous to thank out there is my CAs [constituency assistants] Helen and Conni. I know you're watching back in the office unless you're helping a resident that may have come into the office, but I just want to thank you for all you do and how much help they are to me. And I need a lot of help some days, and they keep me on the straight and narrow. And I just want to thank them for everything they do.

[15:45]

I also need to thank the people of Saskatoon Eastview. It's a great honour to represent them down in Regina. And I think about Eastview and the people that call Eastview home every day. And it's with that in mind that we make the decisions or my views that I share down here is with the heavy heart and with Eastview on my mind. And that goes from the important seniors that make Eastview their home, and the people that have built this province to what it is today, and along with them is the veterans that have fought for and have kept the peace and have made Canada the world leader that it is.

And I need to thank those two groups and along with . . . It's also the changing face of Eastview. We have a lot more families moving in. It's exciting to see that you go out on a summer day, and there'd be kids running across the yards and playing in the parks. It's so rewarding to see because not that long ago it was different and it was on a different, different direction, Mr. Speaker. But Eastview is a community in Saskatoon that has a lot to be very proud of.

I'd also like to thank, before I get into my comments about the budget, is my family. And I'm very lucky to have my mom and dad who raised me in a way that valued hard work, valued common sense, valued living within one's means. And I'm very appreciative of the upbringing and also their support. And as many people that are MLAs can contest that you can't do it without the family, and I need to thank them for always being there for me.

And now with family comes the newest kind of addition, and it's . . . Danielle and I, many would know in here, but maybe not at home watching might not know is that we're expecting our first child in July. And we're very excited, and it is a tremendous time. And I'm very excited to see what the next chapter brings. But it also adds to the way that I carry on as a MLA and as the view of the different decisions to be made in government is also to remember now I'm going to have a little boy or girl. We don't know yet what junior's going to be, but I

know junior's going to be special.

So with that in mind, I'm going to talk about the budget and how it reflects on my family and growing family and also the growing Saskatchewan.

And today I'm going to be talking about the budget. So we have the one document which is . . . I've got to thank the minister and the people on Treasury Board on compiling this budget. I think this is a very balanced, very appropriate budget, and we'll speak to that in a moment. We're also going to speak to how it affects the growth plan. I'm going to read a couple pages from the growth plan, and it is our guiding star, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on where we're going to take the province. And it's an important document.

And it's also very important to always have context as what could have been or what are the alternatives. Mr. Speaker. I'm going to read a little bit from this document, and this is from . . . this is the Chair of the policy review task force, and it's an important document to have an idea of what might have happened.

So to get right into it, let's start looking at some of the budget items in here. And first up, we've got to understand we've got the growth plan, but we also have our vision for Saskatchewan to be the best place to live, to work, to start a business, to get education, to raise a family, and to build a life. And, Mr. Speaker, that's what this budget does. It really sets that foundation that has been poured with five years, or now this one being the sixth consecutive year of a balanced budget. And it's important to remember that's why we make the decisions we do, and it's paying dividends, Mr. Speaker.

As we all know, there's 80,000 more people that have voted with their feet that they have saw and heard what we're doing in Saskatchewan, and they wanted to experience it. And we're having all these newcomers come to Saskatchewan, and it's such a new . . . and it adds to the energy of the province.

And just this past weekend, Danielle and I were at a Hindu dinner up in Saskatoon, and it's a wonderful dinner that has been growing over the years. And it's a wonderful part of the new Saskatchewan, is these newcomers that are deciding to venture out and see what Saskatchewan is about. And it's really rewarding to talk to some of the new families that have come here.

And different comments that they brought up about the budget at the dinner was they're very grateful it's balanced. And that's a little bit rare. And I know we spoke a little bit about it in here, about how rare a balanced budget is. But one has to just look across the country and you see a lot of red ink, and that is something that this government will never do, Mr. Speaker. And if you look at why that's important, you only have to look at what's going on in Europe right now. And especially a little timely, over in Europe, is there's the run on the bank right now in Cyprus. There's protests that are happening in the street. There's governments over there for decades have been living well above their means. And what that does is add so much debt, and with that comes those debt payments. And unfortunately, what those governments can't do is service that debt. So that socialist mindset that is Europe is somewhat

falling apart at the seams.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is a valuable lesson for the people of Saskatchewan to take in, is that we have to have balanced budgets. We can't always fall into the trap of wanting everything up front and not concerning about our needs but more about our wants. And I think that's what we've heard mostly from the opposition this session, is that they want more money here, they want more money there. But they never really speak about who's going to pay for all these programs. And that's important to keep in back of mind when you're comparing this budget to others, is that it's balanced, that we are taking care of the needs of the people of Saskatchewan, but we're doing it in a balanced way and balancing off the priorities that we think are important.

Mr. Speaker, obviously I'm very supportive of this budget, and most people are. And the journalism in Saskatchewan have been very positive and they have an important role to play, but I believe what's important is to listen to people that are even outside of the province. And one of those groups of people are the different companies that do credit ratings for provinces, because they get paid to judge the books of the province and the direction and the ability of each province going forward. And it's important because they don't really have a dog in the hunt; they are just looking at it and saying, okay, how are this jurisdiction going to do compared to others? And, Mr. Speaker, Moody's have upgraded Saskatchewan to Aa1, which is the highest that this province has ever had. And that's once again from, you know, an independent, non-partial, out-of-the-province observation. Also Standard & Poor's, AAA.

Mr. Speaker, this is important because it was not that long ago that our credit rating as a province was a lot, lot worse than those. And what we saw was a substantial amount of money that was being paid for in servicing the debt, Mr. Speaker. What we've seen is, now that we've dropped the debt by 40 per cent, we're having significant savings. And that savings, Mr. Speaker, we can put back into health and education and the important programs the people of Saskatchewan deserve and, indeed, need.

We spoke about education. And there's important change that we made in the education property tax in Saskatchewan where, because there's so many people that are wanting to move to Saskatchewan, and as the province grows, we know the value of Saskatchewan has increased. It's over 60 per cent . . . No. I believe over 67 per cent increase in property values, and what that means is that if we didn't change the property tax mill rate that everyone would have a substantial jump in their property taxes. And what this government made the decision to do is bring that down to neutrality, which means that there's no additional revenue that's going to be coming to the province because we've dropped the mill rate. We think that's the right thing to do for the people of Saskatchewan.

Now one of the things that we believe as government is we should lead by example, and one area that the government is doing is reducing the number of public servants in the province. We set a goal that we were going to reduce the public service by 15 per cent. And why that's important, Mr. Speaker, is we found that over the years of the NDP government, they kept

expanding the public service, kept hiring people. As people were fleeing the province to find other opportunities, the government of the day kept hiring more public servants. And what that does is we had a smaller tax base to pay for a growing government which we thought was a little backwards, Mr. Speaker. So we've changed that and through . . . and we're not talking about laying people off or pink slips going out. We're talking about just managing the people retiring, that we're reshaping the public service. And there's dividends paid back to the people of Saskatchewan where they don't have to pay as much tax to pay for this bloated public service. And that's one area that we're leading by example, Mr. Speaker.

Another one that . . . very proud of is in health care. We're now at \$4.84 billion invested in health care and that is a record sum, Mr. Speaker. The largest health budget ever was under the Saskatchewan Party government. And that's important. That's important because that is what the main service I feel that the government provides the people of Saskatchewan is health care, and that's one of the main reasons why I got involved in politics.

Just quickly I'm going to run over some of the numbers in health care. The regional health authorities will receive a base operating funding of \$3 billion. Mr. Speaker, that's \$131 million more. So we hear the Leader of the Opposition in question period talking about these cuts, and it's not to say that he's wrong, but we're increasing the budget. And so I'm not sure where he's getting his numbers. We are asking for efficiencies, but the overall budget in health care is increasing, Mr. Speaker.

Another one that's very close to me and unfortunately many families in Saskatchewan is the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. And they will receive \$157 million to provide an enhanced cancer care. That's an \$11.9 million increase over last year. And, Mr. Speaker, that's close to me. And I spoke about this before, but I have two siblings that fought and won their battle with cancer. And I'm very appreciative of the good work that the people do in the Cancer Agency. And we all have someone that has been affected with cancer, and it's just the right thing to do is to put a little bit more money back into that agency.

Another important health initiative is the Saskatchewan surgical initiative. When we took over we had some of the historic longest wait times in the country, Mr. Speaker. It was ridiculous how long people had to wait for surgeries, and that was something that I know first-hand as well. My father-in-law roughly nine years ago had to get his hip done and, Mr. Speaker, he waited over a year. And I didn't know them at the time, but I've heard stories of the hardship of having a loved one that is still working but waiting for a hip replacement and the pain and suffering it caused.

And the reason why is because the NDP, the government of the day, refused to fund health care. And to be fair, they didn't refuse to fund health care. They just didn't have the money. And why they didn't have the money is they made policies and decisions that didn't help the economy. It hurt the economy. So for a party that have bragged long and hard about how important health care is to them and how convention after convention their members voted for resolutions to improve health care, actually what happened under them, it got worse,

Mr. Speaker. They closed hospitals. They had the longest surgical wait times in Canada. And that's what this party inherited when we took over in '07.

I'm proud, Mr. Speaker, that our initiative that we took on is no one's going to wait more than three months for health care, or sorry, three months for surgery in this province. That is our goal. The members across the aisle would in the past claim that, why set goals that you don't know you're . . . you might not achieve, Mr. Speaker?

[16:00]

Well that mindset I believe is a failed mindset that produced failed results. And we set bold goals as the Saskatchewan Party, and this is one of them and we're going to campaign on the next election. We're going to get surgical waits down to three months. And, Mr. Speaker, just a follow-up with my father-in-law that needed hip surgery. Now it was roughly three years ago he needed to get another hip surgery. He waited only four months. Still, still, you know, four months is a long time to wait. But you know what, Mr. Speaker, it's a lot less than a year. And we're going to drive those surgical wait times down to three months, Mr. Speaker.

And we're doing that with this budget right now that's going to receive an increase of \$10 million. And that brings up the money for the surgical wait time initiative to \$70 million in 2013, Mr. Speaker. That is a commitment that we're going to get those surgical wait times down to three months. And we're going to use private clinics as well in that mix. This is something that the NDP refused to even consider, is looking at other alternatives, still in the public system, still, that no one's going to put a credit card down and jump the queue. But you know what, there's components of the health care that can be delivered in a much more efficient way by private business and private companies than within the public system, or within the public system.

Mr. Speaker, we've also increased the spending of 1.5 million, so a total of \$3 million to support the 20 rural physician locum pool. And, Mr. Speaker, as many people in Saskatchewan, they are . . . I find myself, I live in Saskatoon but I still have parents that live in rural Saskatchewan. And this is an initiative that's going to help communities such as theirs and many throughout the province where they're having issues. Or it could be just a short-term measure that they need to find some physicians to fill in, and this is going to hopefully fill in those issues.

There's also going to be an increase of 2.3 million to a total of 18.1 million for the supporting training seats as well as the recruitment of physicians. This includes new funding of \$250,000 for a rural family recruitment incentive program. Mr. Speaker, we know that we have struggles out there. We know that we need more physicians. We have over 200 more doctors working in the province since we took over, but we do need more, and this is going to be one that really adds that capacity in rural Saskatchewan.

Another area that we've put additional dollars to — and we need to, unfortunately, compare it to the NDP's record — is on Alzheimer's. They've had different conventions, NDP conventions that they pass resolutions to support Alzheimer's.

And there's unfortunately no action on 16 years of them being in government on Alzheimer's. And you know what? That changes with this budget. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of the fact that we're putting additional dollars into that program.

Another area that we can be proud of is the increased support for people with disabilities. And you know, our growth plan set a goal of making Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to live for people with disabilities. Mr. Speaker, this is one that is a little shameful for the history of Saskatchewan, that we didn't do more for people with disabilities. And we've, in our first term, started to improve in that area, and we're still not there. But we're committed to put additional dollars into helping people with disabilities.

We're also . . . Within health includes an increase of \$600,000 to support the cost of three storefront projects in Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert to provide intense support for FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder]. And, Mr. Speaker, this is one unfortunately that is too high of rate of incidence in Saskatchewan. And this government is moving on improving that situation.

We're also in . . . The government relations budget provides an increase of 325,000 for transit assistance for people with disabilities program. That's the total funding of 3.5 million, allows the program to expand to additional municipalities and double the capital grants available for buses within Saskatchewan, which is very important, Mr. Speaker.

One of the areas that I spoke about before is Saskatoon Eastview where I represent. There's a large number of seniors, and I'm so thankful for all that they have done to help build Saskatchewan. And one of the ways that — a small way but a significant way for them — that we are helping out is the seniors' income plan, and we'll see a \$3.2 million increase in that plan. That funding is now at \$27.4 million which is once again just helping out seniors that are in need of care.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot in this budget, and I'm just going to touch on a couple of ones that are important to, I believe, to the province and to the people of Saskatoon Eastview, is the quality of life and the important investments that we made in parks and culture and the environment. And they're paying off, Mr. Speaker. We've seen some pretty substantial announcements of what's taking place in our province, and we're pretty proud. We have the Junos coming up in Regina here shortly. We have the Memorial Cup up in Saskatoon that we're hopeful that the Blades can squeak out a win tonight. They're down in the series two games to nothing right now, and we're hopeful tonight they'll get at least a move that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . It's not tonight, I hear? Okay. And then one of the biggest events of the country is the Grey Cup, and it's coming back to Saskatchewan. So I'm pretty proud of that.

We understand in the quality of life there's different initiatives that we've helped to invest in. We've put \$5 million into the new Creative Saskatchewan Investment Fund. And this is important, Mr. Speaker, because this supports culture across the spectrum, from music to TV to live theatre to music to the arts. And it's important to have that investment, and I'm proud to say that we are putting money into that program.

Another area, and this is where the dollars really gets a little bit bigger, Mr. Speaker, is infrastructure. And the need is there, and that's why we're putting so much dollars into different programs. The government has invested over \$5.8 billion in the infrastructure projects since 2008, Mr. Speaker. I've just got to repeat that. That's not millions. That's billions — \$5.8 billion. And that's a significant amount of dollars but there's more need out there. And some of the reasons why is that we've inherited this infrastructure deficit. During those dark days in Saskatchewan, there was very little spent on infrastructure, and we're correcting that, Mr. Speaker. And how we're correcting it is with SaskBuilds, which is a new initiative that we're starting up. And into this budget we put an additional \$6 million to start the work of SaskBuilds, and it's a number of P3 opportunities they're going to look at.

Mr. Speaker, I need to just speak briefly about P3s and the importance and the history of how they affected us positively in Saskatoon Eastview. The opposition would rail about these different examples across Canada or internationally of how P3s have gone sideways. But there's a concrete project that is getting completed right next to Saskatoon Eastview that the people can just drive by and see the work at hand, and it's the South Circle bridge. That project started over 90 years ago and, Mr. Speaker, because of P3s, we're going to have that wrapped up this summer, and it's going to transform the city. And that's a design build, Mr. Speaker, where we set the requirements of the project for private business that the bridge has to be this many lanes and this many exit ramps and what have you. And the project is a design build where we threw it out for bids and we asked the private sector, what could you do? Or within these requirements, what will the bill come? And because of that process, because it was competitive, and because of this competition — this is something the NDP does not like to talk about — but because there was competition in that, the bid, the actual winning bid came in below what was allotted for dollars which enabled us to get the interchange and the overpass done at Preston which is right near Saskatchewan Eastview.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is a concrete example that P3s have helped this province and the city of Saskatoon, and we look forward to what the P3 work that is going to be completed under SaskBuilds.

Mr. Speaker, another important part of the infrastructure in this province and something that we have invested, \$2.2 billion in highways over a four-year period. Mr. Speaker, this is significant increases over what the former government used to spend on highways, and the need is . . . We need to continue at this level for many years to catch up from the deficit that was inherited from the NDP.

Now as I said in my opening statements, I'm very excited about our first child that's going to be coming this summer. And one of the things you think of is schools, and the importance of schools and education in this province. And that's something that we can be really proud of for this government, is the money that we've put into schools in operations and in capital. Over half the schools in this province either have been replaced or major repairs have been done to. That's a significant increase over what the former government has done.

Now on education, it fits into our growth plan and I'll speak to

that in a bit. But just in conclusion on education, it is an area where we're going to try different things. We're going to . . . On the school needs that are out there, we're going to look at P3 options. We have the student achievement program and I'm very thankful that our government is going to bring forward a program that is going to look at the achievements of our students. And that is something I strongly support that's in this budget. And these things that . . . What we're able to do is put this money back into these programs and back into infrastructure. And that's why we seek growth. That's what we do with the dividends of growth, is put it back into the priorities, which is health care and education and infrastructure.

Just on the education side, and I have to stress that, you know, some of these increases are substantial when you're looking at the funding for education will reach \$1.7 billion, which is an increase of \$107 million. Now, Mr. Speaker, the opposition and the negative nine would like to rail against how we're cutting this and cutting that. Well here's an example. The hard numbers is there's over \$100 million more for education in this budget and, Mr. Speaker, that's something we can be proud of.

This is also in this budget — and this ties back to junior on the way here — is on child care spaces. And Danielle and I are already talking about how are things going to work in the coming years, and child care space is important. And in this budget, well we meet the commitments to create 500 new child care spaces. And that's significant when you start looking at how many kids are being born in Saskatchewan, and I know first-hand. And we talk about the birth rate in the province, and that's up. And we talk about the in-migration of people from other provinces, and that's up. And we talk about the different people moving to Saskatchewan, and we're at an all-time high of 1,089,807, which is a new record high for Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, this budget is a document that I know that many have worked very hard on and something that every member should be proud of, that there is substantial investments in the priorities that are needed for Saskatchewan. And it's all done within a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker. And why that this document is important, and it's on the . . . It stands on its own, but it's also in a series of balanced budgets which is now six in a row. And what that does is enables us to take that surplus and put it back on to the debt, pay that down lower so we have more money to invest in other things in Saskatchewan.

And what is guiding us in the creation of that document is this one, which is *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*, which is an important document and it's kind of our North Star, that we're looking at where do we want to be in 2020. And just a quick highlighting on this one is look at the addressing the infrastructure challenges and building infrastructure for growth. Mr. Speaker, you see that, you see us working on that priority with the investments we've made on highways and in SaskBuilds and P3s. And that's going to pay dividends down the road because we're going to have the infrastructure we need for the people of Saskatchewan.

And we're also going to . . . One of the bold targets of vision 2020 and the plan for growth is the growing development of Saskatchewan's labour force. Mr. Speaker, we know that that's changing. We have had record investments in universities on

operations. They're once again up. Mr. Speaker, the opposition likes to rail against cuts, but it's up over 2 per cent. And I can only imagine what the opposition would say if we were in Alberta and they actually cut by 7 per cent. So, Mr. Speaker, you look at the difference — a 2 per cent increase and your 7 per cent decrease in Alberta. That's a 9 per cent variance, and that's a lot. The people of Saskatchewan and what the universities are doing in Alberta . . . That's going to pay, once again, with Saskatchewan putting in the money, is going to pay dividends.

[16:15]

And it goes back to the growth plan of improving Saskatchewan and making sure we have the schools and the educated people to compete in the world economy. But we're also seeing a change that we need to have more skilled labour out there as well, through the good work that the people do at SIAST and the different colleges. And we've seen additional funds, over 3 per cent increased funding for operations at SIAST. And that's going to fuel the economy going forward.

Another bold goal in our growth plan is advancing Saskatchewan's natural resource and agriculture advantage. We've seen the good work the Minister of Agriculture's done in agriculture. We've also seen the natural resources and what that means to Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I grew up in a town that was reliant on potash immensely. It has three potash mines around there. And I've seen the benefit of having that resource in your town and community, and I'm very grateful for the good work and the high-paying jobs that come with that. But I also have my two brother-in-laws actually work at Mosaic, and they are getting as many hours as they want right now, Mr. Speaker. And that's how one of the bold initiatives in this plan is to make sure that we keep that advantage, keep our resource economy growing.

And, Mr. Speaker, what would risk that? What would risk the growth that we were in in Saskatchewan? And this is the final document that I've just got to briefly talk about is the tree book, the tree book, Mr. Speaker. This tree book was authored by the Leader of the Opposition and he was . . . Well yes right here on page no. 3 is the policy review task force. Mr. Speaker, this is what would risk us going back . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Melfort on his feet?

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

The Speaker: — The member from Melfort has asked for leave to do introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Phillips: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce four people from the town of LeRoy from the Evergreen Country Home who are down on a meeting with the Ministers of Health

and Rural and Remote Health. And they're from a CBO [community-based organization] organization in the town of LeRoy, very important to the community of LeRoy. We have Heather Block, the chairperson; Brenda Nabseth is the manager; and board members Chris Hanson and Lorne Schroeder. I would ask that the members welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

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

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All right. I had a little break, and I just want to . . . We're going to regroup here. And what we were talking about before I got interrupted was that . . . And I'm fine with the interviewing our guests and I appreciate they're come seeing the Assembly.

And we're going to talk about what would risk the new Saskatchewan and what they would experience in rural Saskatchewan and health and whatnot. And what would set our province back is this document, Mr. Speaker.

This document is what the last NDP platform was built on. Mr. Speaker, this document was produced by the Leader of the Opposition, and this is what they believe. And I believe this \$5 billion of reckless spending would put our Saskatchewan back into the old Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. There's no way that this document or that platform, if it ever became government, the NDP, we would be in record deficits in matters of minutes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they have record spending in every direction, every direction and every government service the opposition wanted to increase, Mr. Speaker.

And how were they going to pay for that? Jack up the rates on potash, Mr. Speaker. That's what the NDP would do. And I was just talking about how my two brothers . . . brothers-in-law that work in Mosaic, they would not be working right now, Mr. Speaker. No. If the NDP won the last election and jacked up royalties on potash, they would be at home not working, Mr. Speaker. You can't take an industry and double their rates and consider that they're not going to have any negative impacts, Mr. Speaker.

We saw this in Alberta. And I'm going to just briefly speak about my other brother, my older brother who's out in Calgary. He works in oil and gas, and, Mr. Speaker, he said one thing. And he said, the best premier that Saskatchewan ever had — and this was a couple of years ago — was Ed Stelmach. Yes, he said that the best premier we ever had was the premier of Alberta that jacked up the royalties.

Mr. Speaker, you know what happened when you jack up royalties? People leave, business leaves, and government revenues go down, Mr. Speaker. And we saw this in the '90s with the opposition. They kept shipping people out. The exodus of people and the exodus of the tax base caused record drops in revenue, that they couldn't afford the programs. And what'd they do, Mr. Speaker? They kept growing government. So the dark years of when the NDP was in government created such a climate that people left in droves, Mr. Speaker.

It's funny that you talk about the generation that left and the lost generations. I got a text earlier today that my good friend Lance Fairlie that was in Saskatoon — and I came through commerce with him — he had to leave to Alberta to get gainfully employed, and that was because of the decline of Saskatchewan under the NDP. He just texted. He's in Saskatoon. He's coming home for Easter, and I look forward to hopefully having a cup of coffee with him over the weekend here.

Mr. Speaker, how we . . . What's, I say, the biggest risk, the biggest risk to Saskatchewan is the NDP, under their current leadership, that has written this document. We know exactly where they would take us. They would take us down the road of deficits, take us down the road of reckless spending, and they would take us down the road of decline, Mr. Speaker. And we won't let that happen.

Mr. Speaker, just in conclusion here, I just want to say that what we're building here in Saskatchewan is special. It is a wonderful time to be here. It is a time of energy and opportunity. You see that in the people that you meet on the streets and the people that have moved here. And I'm so thankful. And I'm thankful to play that part of government in ensuring that we keep balanced budgets and balanced priorities. And, Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to enter into the debate about this budget.

And I just want to conclude with I'd like to thank my colleagues. It's been just over a year now on this job, and I've appreciated everything that I've learnt and the support that I've got from the colleagues and everyone that works in the building.

And it's seen, the good work that we can do on this side is seen with the budget document and the budget we have tabled. And, Mr. Speaker, because of my fear of the reckless path that the NDP might put us on and the dangerous amendment that the NDP put forward on this budget, that I will not be supporting that dangerous amendment. But I will, Mr. Speaker, be supporting this budget. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into the debate on our 2013-14 budget presented by the member from Canora-Pelly, the Minister of Finance and the Deputy Premier.

It's great to follow the member from Saskatoon Eastview. He's very detailed in his remarks and facts, so it gives me the opportunity to stay a little bit more high level and just talk about things in general, Mr. Speaker.

First off I'd be remiss if I didn't join with my colleagues in thanking a number of people at the beginning of my remarks. Firstly the people of Yorkton, without their trust and confidence, I wouldn't have the opportunity to stand in this Assembly and represent them today. So I'm very thankful to them.

The first people I would really truly like to thank is my family. If it wasn't for our spouses . . . I know my wife, Leone, is very supportive of my work here. She's very supportive of what we do here and a very hard-working lady that keeps things running very well at home. So I'm so thankful for her love and support, Mr. Speaker.

My kids, my oldest daughter, Katelin, is actually going to nursing college in Regina here. She's in her second year, finishing up her second year, which I'm very thankful she has that opportunity to do that. With investments by this government over the last number of years and ongoing investments, we see a significant increase in nurse training seats, which has helped us address that nurse shortage in the province and delivering better quality of care and more health care for the people of the province. And she has that opportunity instead of moving out east or out west or to Alberta, Mr. Speaker. She has the opportunity of not only staying here and creating a life and her own family but being closer to us and taking part in our economy and being a resident of Saskatchewan.

My other daughter, Rayanne, is actually in Ottawa right now. It's a lovely city. I love visiting there. She loves it as well, although her heart's in Saskatchewan. She's out there because her fiancé is on a hockey scholarship. He's playing for the University of Ottawa and taking geology, which is exciting in itself. But he'll have an opportunity to come back to this province, his home province — very much a prairie boy as well — and taking part in the economy, probably in agriculture because he does have a great history, a family tradition in agriculture. But with his training in geology, Mr. Speaker, he'll have great opportunities here, whether it's any type of mining or resource-based industries which we are so blessed by divine providence to have in this country, in this province, Mr. Speaker, the resources that we have to help balance our economy and to create a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people.

The staff both at home in my constituency office and here are just above . . . go above and beyond to help us do the jobs we do, are always very supportive. As well as my colleagues here on the floor and across the floor, Mr. Speaker, from time to time are helpful, particularly over here.

I was honoured to be appointed as Government Whip by the Premier just after the last election. Prior to that . . . Or sorry, Deputy Whip prior to the election and Whip after the election. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if that was a blessing or a curse. I'm not sure if the Premier actually likes me or trusts me or he just wanted to, you know, get me in this position. But it is truly an honour to serve as Whip. The great thing about it is you get to interact with virtually every member of the caucus. And we have a very diverse caucus, a very well-rounded caucus, and it is quite an opportunity to be able to have daily contact with the majority of them and develop those relationships and work with

them.

My colleague, the member from Regina Dewdney, he's our Deputy Whip, and he's been a very great asset. And just a quick story about him, Mr. Speaker. You know, one of the key duties of the Whip and Government Whip and Deputy Whip is to keep track of the members in the House. And you know, some of the jokes that have gone around after previous Grey Cups, I don't think they're very funny. Well I've got to share this. I don't think he'll be too mad at me for sharing this story. But he sat down in his chair right after being appointed as Deputy Whip. And the comments across the floor: what's he doing sitting there? He can't count to 13. Well I found that sort of funny, maybe a little bit offensive, Mr. Speaker, but I loved his reaction. He's very quick on his feet. He's very quick of wit and a very intelligent, very good leader. He has this great leadership skill. His reaction? He says, maybe I have trouble counting to 13, Mr. Speaker, but I can count to nine. And that was, I think, one of the best speeches he's given in the House. It's very short but pointed.

I spoke about the opportunities my family has here, Mr. Speaker, which is great. Now I get into our budget, again, high level, briefly I go through a lot of these items. Of course the theme of this budget is balanced growth. And that's got a twofold meaning, Mr. Speaker — balance in respect of balancing the books, balancing the budget. We know the general revenue side, \$65 million surplus; the summary side, \$150 million surplus, Mr. Speaker. So a truly balanced budget — sixth consecutive balanced budget. Every one of ours have been balanced with cash, whereas I've heard it described in the past that former NDP budgets, although balanced, were at times balanced with a credit card.

If you look at the investments that are through this budget, again balanced with the economy, creating a strong economy, giving people opportunities through the province through the government policies, but also balancing those economic policies with growth against policies that help those that are most vulnerable and need the most support in our province, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm very encouraged by the direction our government is taking. We are basically a conservative government, conservative-type government with a strong social conscience, with which I'm very pleased to be a part of.

[16:30]

If we look at the deficit reductions we've been taking part in, we've been leading over the past number of years, Mr. Speaker; \$3 billion dollars in debt has been reduced, which is a cumulative savings of \$600 million in interest payments, Mr. Speaker. So that's \$600 million we know goes directly back into our economy into programs in the province to do things like helping some of our most vulnerable. Our growth plan is very, very much on track.

One of the keys to our growth again is growing our provincial population. And that's manifold. And that goes in line with our immigration policy as well, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, I've got some criticism from time to time from people in my local community about maybe some of the immigration trips and the

programs that happen and recently the one to Ireland, Mr. Speaker. I'm very much supportive of those initiatives, and let me tell you why. It's because over the years we've seen with . . . Many members have talked about our children and our young people leaving the province for a number of reasons. Basically the direction the province was taking with our economy, with policies of the former administration, we had our young people leaving the province.

So what we've come to now, Mr. Speaker, is an economic depression, a labour depression in our market, whereas we would see the ideal curve would be young people coming in, being trained, taking part in our economy and our jobs, and then slowly transitioning out as they become baby boomers, grandparents, and going into retirement. What we see now is a huge depression in the middle. We have the young people being trained, not able to take part in the labour force yet. We have baby boomers that are transferring out of the labour force into retirement. We have this huge depression. And a lot of the programs we put in place to this point, say when it comes to physicians and nurses, a lot of them are just starting to graduate, won't be graduating for a couple years yet. They can't take part in that looking after that depression at this point.

We've got to immigrate people. We've got to bring people back to this province to help with that. But it's not . . . Immigration isn't necessarily our first point of attention. Firstly we have to look at our First Nations youth, our First Nations people, and our young people that would have gone away without those opportunities. And we see a lot of initiatives now in this province getting them engaged in the workforce, getting them engaged in the economy, helping to address that labour shortage, and helping in that respect.

Then we have our expatriates that have that talent — that labour pool that we are trying to attract back, from Saskatchewan — wanting to come take part in our economy and be a part of our province again. And then we have the Canadians that would like to take part in the Saskatchewan economy. They might be living somewhere out east or in Ontario or Alberta or BC [British Columbia]. They're all welcome here, Mr. Speaker, those that are coming in to help us out with our labour depression.

And then we look further overseas to look at countries like Ireland that have a lot of similarities with us, that are wanting to come and take part in our economy and help us out as well. So you know, those are very key initiatives, I think, in a well-thought-out plan to attract people to the province and look after our economy and then expand, expand our economy, which gives us a lot more opportunity with a stronger economy — more finances in the province, more jobs to create a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people.

Just some quick comments about a lot of these things, Mr. Speaker. Many of my colleagues have spoken of the seniors' income plan, the Saskatchewan assured income disabilities program, both of them getting significant lifts to look after some of our most vulnerable and get them to be able to achieve a better quality of life.

We look at significant investments in health care. We heard the members across talk about some of these cuts. But, Mr.

Speaker, I point out that because someone expects a 5 or a 6, or maybe they're budgeting for a 5 or 6 per cent lift, they get a 2 or 3 per cent lift, that does not constitute a 2, 3, or 4 per cent cut. That is still a 2 or 3 per cent increase. Maybe not what one was expecting but still a significant increase, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's a point that has to be made.

We look at some of the comments by some of the leaders of our institutions, our universities, and other sectors. Some of them planning for a 3, 2, 3, and 4 per cent cut and very encouraged by the 2.1 per cent lift we see in the post-secondary education, 3.1 for SIAST, and 2.8 I believe in K-12, pre K-12, Mr. Speaker. So those are significant increases.

Money being put back into health care again, 3.4, 3.5 per cent increase overall. About 5 per cent for regional health authorities, Mr. Speaker, which I know they're very happy with, although admittedly they do have to find some efficiencies. We expect all entities, all arm's-length entities of government, to be finding those efficiencies. We are caretakers of the public purse. We have to make sure we're responsible with the money that the people entrust to us.

The Saskatchewan surgical wait initiative: 7,000 more surgeries this year, funding for, so we can start, continue whittling away at those surgical wait times. And extra funding for Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, Mr. Speaker, which means a lot to me.

When we look at some of the financial institutions, Mr. Speaker, we don't want to hamstring these post-secondary institutions by going down the road of tuition freezes. We've seen that happen before. In fact, I think the NDP tried that in the '90s and what happened? As soon as you take that freeze off, the increase is so astronomical it's just a shock to everybody. And it just puts a lot of people in hardship.

So what we've done, we've funded the universities and post-secondary institutions to a very acceptable level, I believe. But then we're putting money back in people's pockets through the different initiatives like your graduate retention program, which has been very well accepted over the past number of years. We have a record number of young people taking advantage of that and staying in the province now and contributing to the province and building their families.

The Saskatchewan advantage scholarship, I think, is something very important to talk about. Because when we look at the tuition increases that have happened over the past number of years, with the money available through that program — \$2,000 over a four-year period, \$500 per year, Mr. Speaker — I would argue that if you look at past increases in the last four to five years, the future increases we'll be looking at over the next few years, that far outpaces the increases of tuition. So we're putting money back in people's pockets and letting them spend it where they know best.

And when we look at other initiatives like the \$120,000 that doctors can access if they're practising in underserved areas and the possibility to have them breaking that up, depending on how much they serve in underserved areas, Mr. Speaker, I think is a good step. And with the nurses and nurse practitioners in that same program to a \$20,000 level, I think is very important.

Significant investments in infrastructure I think are very important. We're right on track with our \$2.2 billion investment over the four-year period of this term, Mr. Speaker, and I think most people are very happy with that. Again challenges with the wet conditions and the temperatures that we do have in the province, but significant investment and significant progress being made there.

I'll just briefly touch on just a few more items that are very specific to my constituency, Mr. Speaker. Two of them are province-wide initiatives but very appreciated. I know Mayor Bob Maloney from Yorkton spoke about these when being interviewed on CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] on the day of the budget. The one thing is the revenue sharing for municipalities, very encouraged by that. If you look at the record when we took over — our first year, '07-08 — the city of Yorkton had 1.32 million in revenue sharing; '13-14 budget, 3.334 and change. A very significant increase, about 350 to 400,000 more than they were expecting, which puts them in good shape in their oncoming year.

When we look at — the member from Saskatoon Eastview touched on this at length, Mr. Speaker, but I'll just touch on it briefly — the education property tax mill rate, we know with reassessment we would have had significant increases in property tax. We want to do what we can to keep money in people's pockets, have a very tax-friendly environment. And with that lowering of mill rate we know it'll be a zero net increase to property taxes. Some taxpayers may see a slight increase, some a slight decrease, but overall a net zero increase. So we're very happy to be able to do that and help the people of the province with minimizing their tax burden.

When we look at the labour needs again, we touched on immigration, looked at the labour needs of the province. Mr. Speaker, we have to start training more kids. And there's a project I've been somewhat involved with for a number of years, even prior to being elected. As a nominated candidate, I had stakeholders coming to visit me to see if I'd be supportive of this project, and then in the ensuing five years been working on it. And for whatever reason, the project would have difficulties: whether it's location, agreed-upon location, funding model, size of the facility, or whatever the issue would have been, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just so happy and thankful, firstly to the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Finance minister, my colleagues, cabinet, and Treasury Board for approving this project. But also very thankful to the many people in Yorkton that worked so hard on this project I'm about to speak about — the administration, the board, and the staff, and then the people of Yorkton, the businesses and private citizens that put their hard-earned money towards supporting this project — and that's the Parkland College Trades and Technology Centre. That's going to be an exciting project, a value of about 15 million-plus, depending on the value of the land. The city stepped up and actually sold the land, now valued about \$3.5 million, to the college for a dollar to make sure that project went ahead.

We see numerous organizations from potash companies, smaller business, larger business, contributing a very significant amount of money, which will be announced fairly soon I believe, with \$1 million investment termed as planning and

development and design work. For design work, Mr. Speaker, those in Yorkton know a lot of that work has been done. We're down to the design stage. We know what it's going to look like. The majority of the architecture drawings are done. It's a matter of developing those blueprints.

And as the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Premier, and the Minister of Advanced Education said in a meeting with the college, get your shovel in the ground as soon as you can. So we're not planning on doing a snow-turning. We're going to do sod-turning when the time is right. But I'm so excited that that will be going forward, training 350 students, First Nations and non-First Nations alike in the city of Yorkton.

And we know Yorkton, we're surrounded by a significant amount of First Nations communities from Cote, Keeseekoose in the North; Gordon's to the West; and to the South a number of, Ochapowace, Kahkewistahaw and a few others, that those individuals are going to have that opportunity to come and train in Yorkton, get significant training for skills and be able to engage in that economy. And some of them probably engage in some of the mining jobs that are going to be opening up in the North, Mr. Speaker, that are going to be, we know that will be coming with the expansion of mining that will be available with the new royalty structure that was announced recently.

So, Mr. Speaker, I could go on at length, but I'm going to allow some more time for some of the other members to speak. The members of the opposition have I think some more good things to say. Although you know, when you look at so many good items in this budget . . . And I heard the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport yesterday go through his speech in detail and saying, I'll bet they're not going to support that. I'll bet you they're not going to support that. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to seeing how the members opposite vote on this budget.

So many good things. Granted, there's going to be things they don't agree with. But when you look at a budget like that, there's got to be the majority that you agree with. You think they would support it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll wait with anticipation to see how the members across vote on, I think, Thursday. As it stands right now, Mr. Speaker, I am happy and honoured to support this budget brought forward by the member from Canora-Pelly — the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Premier — and I will not be supporting the amendment brought forward by the deputy leader. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in the debate on the budget. And it's interesting to see. But before I start out, I'd like to acknowledge I guess my family and just to my wife and grandchildren. And thank you for your support and bearing with the busy schedule that an MLA is asked to do. And if you're going to serve an area, people ask you to serve it well and they want to have you in their communities. And we all know that that job is not easy sometimes. Our families are the ones sometimes pay the price for that, our grandchildren who would love to have us more around. But having said that, I just want to acknowledge that and thank my wife and my

family for their support.

I'd like to thank my CA, Al Rivard; Devin Bernatchez who is a part-time CA; Pearl Doris Morin also works part-time; and just for the work that those individuals do with case work. That people come into the office, they're always there willing to give support and help them deal with some of the tough situations we find some of our northern people dealing with when it comes to government agencies and some of the challenges that people are dealing. The staff do an excellent job, and I just want to commend them and say thank you for all the support they've given me.

But also we have a lot of people behind the scenes that work with our executive to help out and to continue having a strong NDP support in the North, in the Cumberland constituency. I want to thank those individuals that do their hard work volunteering and always helping out.

So having said that, I'd like to also acknowledge the elders, the leadership and elders of the North in the Cumberland constituency that give the advice and the guidance that they do. And you know, it is an honour to sit and talk and listen to the good advice and the wisdom that they share with us. And sometimes some of the challenges that we see and we're left with as the North and a community to deal with, and our elders and our leadership, they do an excellent job of advocating for northern Saskatchewan, doing what they can do. Limited sometimes with getting the response, whether it's federal or provincial governments, when it comes to programs, but we'll get into those details in the budget a little clearer. But I just want to acknowledge and not forget anyone. And if I have forgot anyone, I apologize. So with that, we'll get into some of them.

[16:45]

I'm excited in one way with a new leader. We have a new Leader of the Official Opposition. And I think it's going to do some change and it's going to be an opportunity to address some of the challenges that Saskatchewan families are faced. Whether they're middle income, individuals who are living in poverty, or individuals who are working three and four jobs, there are challenges out there. And you know there are some areas.

So I'm very pleased to say it is a honour to work with our leader. He will do an excellent job. I know that. He will bring our party forward. Is there challenges? Yes. He's going to have challenges; we all do.

But I think he'll get the guidance and advice that he needs from individuals, whether it's our elders, whether it's our leaders. He's willing to communicate. He's willing to consult. He's willing to get advice. And that's what amazes me about our leader. He's willing to consult and talk with individuals and look for advice. He isn't bull-headed, stubborn, and willing to just move in his own direction. So it's good to see, and I will stand behind him 100 per cent and say, here's a man who truly cares about listening to individual people.

So having said that I'll go . . . [inaudible] . . . We've got room to grow. And I remind those members opposite can sit there

from their chairs and chirp. They should do and the backbenchers maybe should do a little more arguing for the constituents back home, instead of like . . . When I think about Prince Albert and their second bridge. When I think about some of the other communities, North Battleford. When I think about Moose Jaw. So there are some of those areas where I would say truly, they should fight.

So just having said that, Mr. Speaker, clearly there are areas where we have to work together. And I just want to, you know, make it clear that our leader has made it sense. Our leader has made it very clear he will work with the government when things and ideas that the government comes up makes sense. He will work with them. He will support that if it benefits Saskatchewan people and it's good for them.

But when it's not the best for Saskatchewan people, he will stand up and he will fight, just like we will as the opposition, for those individuals who aren't heard and want their voice heard in this House. And that's what we'll do, and he's agreed. And he has common sense. He will do that.

So that's one side of it. I know he will work with the government when it makes sense, when it's the right thing to do, when it benefits Saskatchewan people — whether they're low income, whether they're middle class, whether they're business people, if it makes sense, whether it's the film industry, whether it's . . . You're looking at all the different industries that we have — the tourism sector — if it makes sense, he's willing to work with that. And our party will work with that.

Having said that, I look at a program, and I want to give credit to our Leader of the Opposition. When you look at the budget, First Link for Alzheimer's, when you look at the program, they used to get \$50,000. And with the good work that they have done for themselves, the organization, they have brought forward . . . and with the help, and I say this, with . . . Our leader has raised the issue and has lobbied this government. And I'm pleased to see in the budget that the government has moved it from 50,000 a year to 350. That is something that we give credit, and it's good. In that part of the budget I will give credit. It helps the First Link, individuals and families that are dealing with Alzheimer's an opportunity and some support. Could we do more? Let's hope we can do more. But at least right now, it's definitely a good start. We've gone in the right direction.

Now having said that, I know there's a few other areas where, you know, we make comments on the budget and give credit to the government. You know, the transition house in Melfort, it's going to help individuals and families and, you know, I guess a wife and a mother and her children, a place of shelter. If they're in a situation where it's not safe for them to be in their home or in their community, they have an opportunity to go to a place where before they may have to travel quite a distance to have a shelter for them. Now there is a shelter being built there, and I give credit to the government. And that's good. They've heard the concern. It's been years that that concern has been raised with the government. In this budget, the government provided that, so that's a good thing. We'll say that. That's fine.

Now having said that, there's a few other areas I know my

colleagues have expressed and have given some credit, and there's nothing wrong with that. We're supposed to work together for what's best for Saskatchewan people and the residents of our province. But let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker. In this budget, in this budget there are areas where we didn't see. And I know organizations like in northern Saskatchewan, the commercial fisherman would have loved to have an announcement that they were going to get support from their government who talks about the growth plan, who talks about economics, who talks about a vision of growth for everyone.

Unfortunately the northern fisherman did not get an opportunity. There's nothing that I can see in this budget to assist them. Whether it's the subsidy, transportation subsidy, freight subsidy that they used to get, whether it's a new facility, again this government has turned their back, and it is not a priority for the commercial fisherman of northern Saskatchewan. And that's unfortunate, clearly unfortunate.

Now we look at the trappers, Northern Trappers Association. They have applied and they've asked for support from the government in moving their organization forward. And they've tried too. They submitted proposals. And unfortunately that was not announced, and I did not find anything in the budget that dealt with their request.

So again the northern trappers, when it comes to their proposal that they requested from this government, again the government has other priorities, turned their back on our northern trappers who do an excellent job. And we've talked about the good work that the northern trappers do, the lifestyle and a custom. And that's sad to see that this government couldn't deal with the small amount that they were asking, in the neighbourhood of 80 to 90,000 with their proposal. The government could not find any money in it. But it found money for other areas that they call a priority. And we've criticized some of the challenges, and we'll get into that.

But having said that, we look at northern roads. And it's about safety, safety for community members to travel. They want safe roads. Whether it's tourism sector, whether it's business sector, whether it's the mining industry, whether it's the trucking companies, whether it's people that are hauling freight into the northern communities, they want safe roads.

Whether it's an ambulance who has to travel to a community . . . And some of our communities, they don't have access to an airport. And there's work where we need to look, and there needs to be work done. And I know there are some communities in northern Saskatchewan would love the government to find more money to deal with having an airport that would deal with an air ambulance, would deal with, you know, all 24 hours a day where they could land an airport.

When it comes to safety of taking a community member out, instead of travelling in an ambulance for hours, you know . . . And some of the communities are . . . A round trip could be seven hours where the ambulance would come into the community, take the patient out. That timeline is just is not what the community and the leadership of those communities want for their residents and for their communities. It's not what grandparents want for their grandkids. It's not what I guess the

children want for their grandparents.

Or you know, it has its challenges with individuals coming forward when it comes to safety about that. When you have a loved one who needs medical attention, they need a hospital. You want that immediately. You can't wait, and you don't want your loved one waiting for hours to get medical treatment. That isn't right.

So government could do that, and we're going to push for that. And I know there's some communities in the North, and clearly we'll ask for that and will be lobbying hard. And I wish them well, and they'll continue. But we didn't see any money targeted for airports in, you know, northern Saskatchewan, but hopefully that will change, and those negotiations can happen.

But having said that, we're looking at the roads, and I said that. The government can announce, and it can say it allocates all this money for roads. We see the type of industry, and we see maybe it's a growing industry and we see . . . And I'm going to get in some of the comments later on about the mining sector and stuff, and some of the Premier's comments. And we'll talk about that and, you know, some of the comments he made.

But northern roads in general, if you look at the quality of some of the northern roads, and you know, my colleague has referred to some of those as the moose trails. And it's interesting to say the member from Athabasca refers to those as moose trails. Just like in the South I think — what is it? — the goat paths they were calling them last year in the South. And it's interesting to see.

And I think some of those roads . . . CAA [Canadian Automobile Association] has the worst roads in the province, and I think clearly we see what's happened. And that's interesting to see who wins the awards that way.

So we see the challenges with roads. And a government can sit there and say it's spending all this so-called money on roads, but I think the people are seeing what's going on. It will be the people at the end of the day. The quality of the roads . . . And if you're seeing what the conditions are like in this province — and it's not just northern roads; it's rural roads; it's roads throughout — we see the challenges, and we know that more needs to be done. And clearly the government has an obligation to do more.

You talk about a government that talks about a budget that's the so-called . . . they want to brag about, they want to put up billboards about. And it's amazing when you talk about their numbers, Mr. Speaker. And unfortunately they've also won awards. That's amazing to watch the award they won. They won an award. It's not an award I would want to win, but I guess it's theirs, their award, and the Premier and his government can keep that award. And you know, that was interesting to see. And we've made our own little comments about that, and I think my colleagues have talked about that.

But having said that, I guess you look at some of the challenges that were faced when it deals with roads and roads in the North, and we're talking about that. And you know, I want to give credit, and I've said this before, and I've seen some of the highways people, and they do an excellent job. They're just

trying to make a living for their family. They're trying to provide a service so that the roads are safe for individuals. They're limited to what they can do. And I give them credit, the highways workers in northern Saskatchewan, but all over the province. They do an excellent job, and they try to do what they can do with the resources they're provided with, with the challenges that the Sask Party government has given them.

And I say the Sask Party government has given them. This is not a new government — you know? — six years, going to go seven years. I mean they're going to have to start looking at their record. And when I see some of them screaming out and sometimes in their frustration . . . And maybe they should talk to their own colleagues and the ministers and say, why have we had this much control of all the resources in the province for this many years? This many years have we had control, and why are things in such a mess still?

Yet they're told that they have to talk a certain way. They have a certain speech they have to read, and there's only certain things they can say. So they're kind of handcuffed as backbenchers. And you know, you can feel for them. I mean hopefully they care about their communities. But I think their communities are going to see that when they're not in with that inner group, with the ministers and with cabinet, they don't get that much say. So you know what? Maybe those individuals back home are wondering, well why do we have them? But let's be clear about that. They have an obligation to do and, Mr. Speaker, they'll do that.

So when we talk about the numbers, what I find really interesting in budgets and a lot of the comments that were made by members opposite referring to the budgets, they refer to going back, and they want to talk about 16 years of the NDP. And that's nothing wrong with that. That's fine. But they don't want to go back further than that. They don't want to.

Some of them do not want to talk about the '80s. Why is that? Why do they not want to talk about the '80s? And some of them were there. Some of them mentored in the '80s. Some of them worked in the office of certain premiers and certain ministers and MLAs. So there was a group of people that worked, but why don't they want to discuss those years in the '80s when our province was put into the mess it is and the hard work for 16 years that Saskatchewan residents had to put up with, had to put up with, and they, you know, clearly had to put up with?

And the good people of our province, the good people of our province, the good, the good people of our province did what they were asked to do. And there was some tough decisions. They weren't easy decisions. I know that. They weren't easy. But I'll tell you, there's members opposite over there that were involved in that and know exactly what went on. They know why our province was just about bankrupt. They know why. But do they want to talk about that, Mr. Speaker? No, no, no. They want to just talk about 16 years. They don't want to talk about the '80s, the mess that went on.

And they don't want to talk about, they don't want to talk about why people left this province. No, no, no. We'll blame. We'll blame. We'll blame. We'll blame everyone. But you know what? The one thing they do as soon as, Mr. Speaker, whether it's in this budget or any other comments they have, if it's to

take credit for something good, oh then they want to. They want the photo ops. They want to be there for the photo ops. Don't get me wrong. Don't miss out on a picture. That's fine. That's exactly what I mean. And that will one day come back to deal with them. They can stand up and smile and do what they want. That's fine.

Clearly this budget, this budget, you know, has some areas and challenges. And let's be honest. We hear the Provincial Auditor talking about that stuff. When you have the Provincial Auditor talking and making her comments and putting out her concerns and raising, raising concerns . . . And that's what I want to say. It is raising concerns about the way the government reports the numbers and the numbers that they're reporting and the way they're doing it. And we should be reporting the way the rest of Canada is and so that the public can see exactly the debt that's incurring under that government, or the finances. And if it's so good, they should be able to report that and it should be easy. But you know what? Mr. Speaker, they don't want to do that because they don't want the public to know exactly what's going on. But the public needs to know what's going on, and the public will understand. And I think there is going to be an opportunity for individuals . . .

The Speaker: — It now being after the hour of 5 o'clock, the House stands recessed to 7 p.m.

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS	
Bradshaw	2921
Wyant	2921
Nilson	2921
Steinley	2921
Bjornerud	2922
McCall	2922
Phillips	2945
PRESENTING PETITIONS	
Belanger	2922
Forbes	2922
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	
Purple Day	
Nilson	2922
The Power of Faith	
Toth	2922
Wind Turbine Project First of its Kind in North America	
Sproule	2923
A Celebration of Cultures	
Doherty	2923
Little Princess Ball	
Lawrence	2923
Focus on Women Trade Show	
Wilson	2924
Athlete Chases Olympic Dream	
Bradshaw	2924
QUESTION PERIOD	
Funding for Universities	
Broten	2924
Wall	2924
Standardized Testing	
Forbes	2926
Marchuk	2926
Changes to Canada Pension Plan	
Wotherspoon	2927
Krawetz	2927
Creative Industries and Film Employment Tax Credit	
Chartier	2928
Doherty	2928
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS	
Bill No. 89 — <i>The Creative Saskatchewan Act</i>	
Doherty	2929
ORDERS OF THE DAY	
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	
Ottenbreit	2929
SPECIAL ORDER	
ADJOURNED DEBATES	
MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY	
(BUDGET DEBATE)	
McCall	2929
Kirsch	2937
Wilson	2939
Tochor	2940
Ottenbreit	2946
Vermette	2949

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