



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

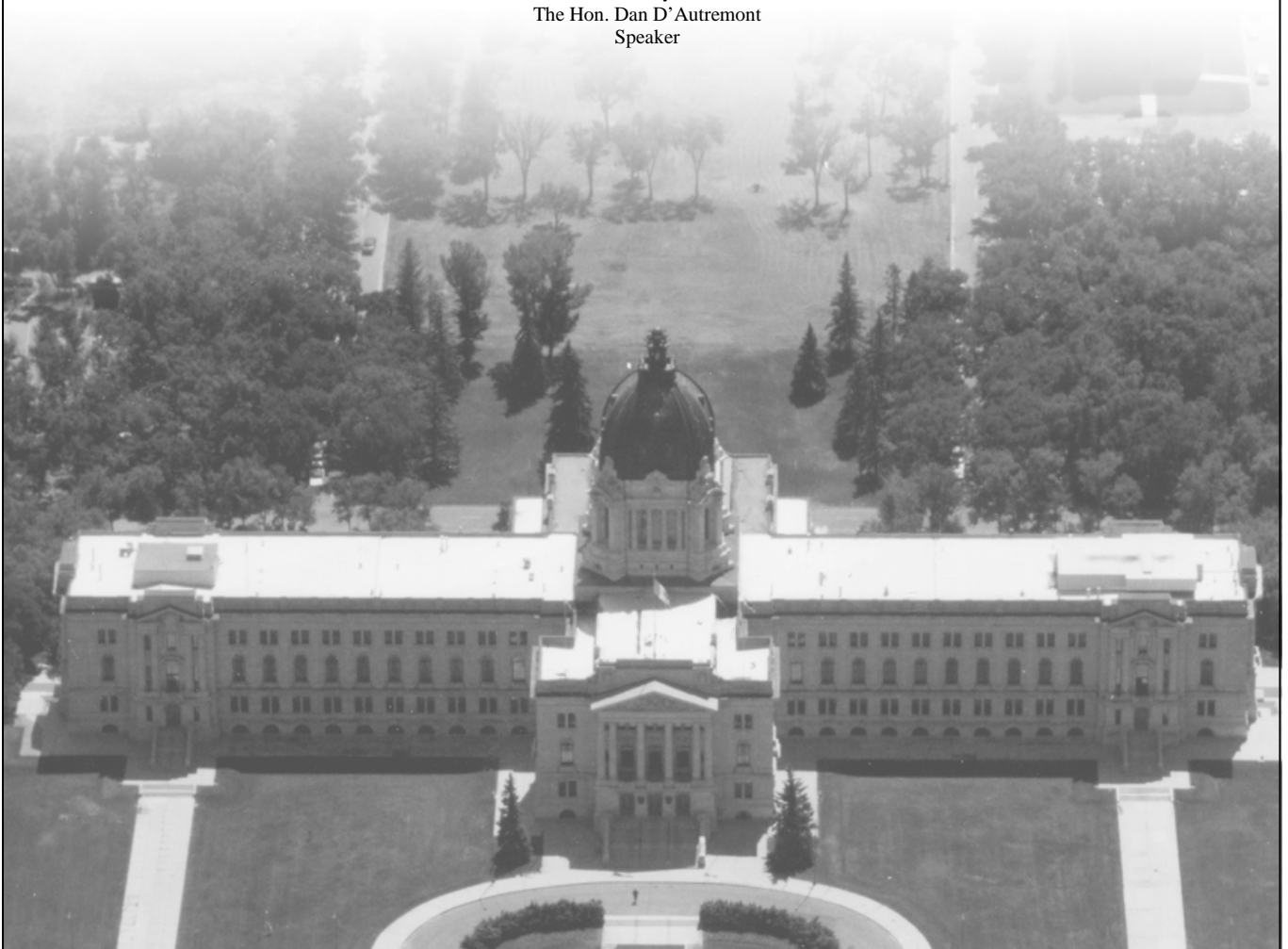
of the

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 — Cam Broten

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Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
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Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
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Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Docherty: — Merci, monsieur le Président. [Translation: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.] Today is International Francophonie Day, and we are lucky to have students who are fluent in French sitting in the west gallery. It's a group of 56 students, all grade 8, from École Monseigneur de Laval. And accompanying the group today is teacher, Sylvie Fletcher, Stéphanie Alain; and from Montreal, exchange students Pierre-Yves Chateauvert and Mr. Jean-François Descoste. I would ask all members to join me in welcoming this group to their legislature today. Merci. [Translation: Thank you.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Merci, monsieur le Président. Je voudrais dire une grande bienvenue à tous les élèves de l'école Monseigneur de Laval à cause de l'opposition, et je voudrais dire félicitation pour la célébration aujourd'hui. Merci.

[Translation: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say a big welcome to all the students from École Monseigneur de Laval on behalf of the opposition, and I would like to say congratulations on the celebration today. Thank you.]

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition against Saskatchewan health care laundry privatization. We know that in May 2013 the Government of Saskatchewan announced its plan to privatize health care laundry in Saskatchewan, handing it over to a for-profit, Alberta-based corporation, K-Bro Linen. And we know that the privatization of health care laundry will mean that fair wage jobs will be replaced with poverty wages, and public accountability will be lost. I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly be pleased to cause the government to reverse the misguided decision to privatize Saskatchewan's health care laundry, which will result in the devastating loss of over 300 jobs in the communities of Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Yorkton, Weyburn, Regina, and Saskatoon.

And moreover, the privatization of health care laundry will misuse vital taxpayer dollars by taking money out of Saskatchewan's health care system to boost the profits of an Alberta-based corporation; and furthermore, the

privatization of health care laundry will put patient care at risk as Saskatchewan's health regions lose direct control over laundry and thereby will have a significantly reduced ability to quickly and effectively respond to infectious outbreaks in health care facilities.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Moose Jaw. I do so present. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents as it relates to concerns around safety on Dewdney Avenue, the need for rerouting heavy-haul truck traffic from Dewdney Avenue, and recognition that this issue was caused by actions of that government and any delays to address the safety concern is unacceptable. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to immediately take action, as it relates to the unacceptable danger, disturbance, and infrastructure damage caused by the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue west of the city centre, to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, families, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include rerouting of heavy-haul truck traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Regina. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Outstanding Principals

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to congratulate a friend and a neighbour of mine on his achievements. Owen Fortosky is the principal of St. Mark School in Saskatoon Riversdale and is one of two Saskatchewan recipients of Canada's Outstanding Principals Award.

Owen was nominated by staff and community for his tireless commitment to improving education. His work and education have taken him all over the world — to Uganda, Guyana, Thailand, India, Sri Lanka, Dominica, and Granada. He said recently:

When you think of people maybe being frustrated when the photocopier isn't working, then you think about how in Uganda, for example, people walked for two days to take part in those workshops. It changes a person for sure.

Fortosky has taken incredible strides to help newcomer students at a school who face the challenge of learning in a new language. He involves parents in the process to help build trust in his students. As a result, St. Mark's School has become an integral community space and works with Saskatoon Open Door Society to help welcome and support these families.

Owen's leadership has helped make incredible contributions to the quality of education in Saskatoon. He fostered the community-based model at St. Mary's School which included the creation of a school-based pediatric clinic in 2007 — one of the first of its kind in Canada. As well, he helped establish a student co-op and credit union at St. John's School. He was also co-founder of Saskatoon's Core Neighbourhood Youth Coop or CNYC.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate Weyburn educator Arlene Dobson who also received this important award from The Learning Partnership. We are fortunate to have leaders like this in our province. Please join me in recognizing the important work of educators in shaping our future generations. Thank you.

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

International Day of the Francophonie

Mr. Docherty: — Monsieur le Président, aujourd'hui je suis fière d'avoir l'occasion de reconnaître la journée internationale de la francophonie. Aujourd'hui les francophones autour du monde ont l'occasion de célébrer leur héritage français.

[Translation: Mr. Speaker, today I am very proud to have the opportunity to recognize the International Day of the Francophonie. Today francophones around the world have the opportunity to celebrate their French heritage.]

French is truly a worldwide language, except maybe for me, Mr. Speaker. It is the official language of 33 countries in five continents around the globe. Here in Saskatchewan, this day is an opportunity to honour the French language and the contributions of the French culture to our province. We're very lucky to have a deep and flourishing French culture here, and today we have the opportunity to be able to celebrate it with our French brothers and sisters around the world.

For more than 100 years, Saskatchewan has benefited from the presence of French culture and language. Francophone organizations provide employment, immigration, and community development programs with the province as well as immigration and interprovincial migration services.

As I mentioned in the introduction, today we have students from École Monseigneur de Laval. These students take the majority of their education in French, and they will help to keep the French language alive in our province.

Monsieur le Président [Translation: Mr. Speaker], even those of us who do not speak French should take the time to celebrate International Francophonie Day with our French-speaking community. I ask all members to join me in recognizing and celebrating International Francophonie Day. Merci.

[Translation: Thank you.]

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

Environmental Concerns

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, there's one thing we didn't hear about much in yesterday's budget speech, and that is the environment. In fact the word wasn't even mentioned.

What's even more alarming, Mr. Speaker, is the numbers. Year over year, this government shows us that proper stewardship of our environment and resources has not been a priority. Climate change funding has been cut by 82 per cent since 2009, and this year was no exception.

The Premier has publicly said that the US [United States] administration should be given a little environmental elbow room on Keystone. It's hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker. The reality on the ground in Saskatchewan is that this government continues to cut environmental assessment, environmental protection, and climate change funding.

While the Boundary dam project promises to curb a portion of greenhouse gases, it will only address coal emissions. Not only that. The project is already over budget and there is no sign of it opening in the near future. This project, as valuable as it may prove to be, is not a climate change policy. It only deals with one aspect of emissions and does nothing to move us forward to a renewable energy economy, putting us in the back of the pack of progressive countries who are aggressively moving their emissions on a downward track. Why is that, Mr. Speaker? Because carbon capture, as expensive as it is, will only deal with one-seventieth of the emissions we are currently producing.

Despite their election promises, emissions continue to rise. When will we ever see real climate action from this government? All we're seeing today is broken promises and a failure to act. This budget, once again, fails future generations.

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

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, our law recognizes the inherent dignity and equal, inalienable rights of all members of the human family. We do this as a province because the causes for which we stand — of justice, of freedom, and of fairness — cannot flourish where discrimination is given rein to coexist.

Today I stand alongside my fellow members to speak in particular on the matter of racial discrimination. Tomorrow is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, where citizens and governments meet the call of the United Nations to respect, protect, and defend our rich diversity. I will be joining the Minister of Education and the Minister of Advanced Education and students from the Misbah and Brunskill Schools at the University of Saskatchewan to

celebrate the day.

Diversity has always been a source of strength for our province. In fact it would be impossible to tell the story of Saskatchewan without it. Throughout our history, indigenous and newcomer populations have endeavoured to create a society in which people of every race can prosper. To date, immigrants from over 190 countries have settled in roughly 320 communities across our province. We are honoured to welcome the almost 50,000 newcomers who have arrived since 2007 alone. Their presence makes the cultural mosaic of our province stronger to everyone's benefit.

Mr. Speaker, through you I ask all members to join me in recognizing tomorrow as International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Thank you.

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

Saskatoon Hosts University Men's Hockey Championship

Ms. Campeau: — Mr. Speaker, this weekend all eyes will be on Saskatoon as the CIS [Canadian Interuniversity Sport] men's hockey championship is set to take place at Credit Union Centre. Presented by Co-op, the PotashCorp University Cup will bring together the top six men's CIS hockey teams for a seven-game tournament to decide who takes away this year's top honours.

The host team, the University of Saskatchewan Huskies, enter the tournament ranked fifth but look to use their home ice advantage to keep the cup at home. Leading the Huskies in the tournament is forward Derek Hulak who was named Canada Westmen's hockey Most Valuable Player and First Team All-Star.

The team is coached by Dave Adolph who is also the longest serving head coach at the championship with 25 years of experience in CIS including 21 with the U of S [University of Saskatchewan].

Other teams in this weekend's event include Canada West champion University of Alberta, the Acadia Axemen, Windsor Lancers, McGill Redmen, and the Carleton Ravens. The tournament kicks off this afternoon as the Golden Bears take on the Ravens this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in wishing the University of Saskatchewan Huskies men's hockey team luck in what is sure to be a great weekend for hockey. And for my colleagues in the Saskatoon area, I encourage you to go and take in what is sure to be a first-class event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

World Down Syndrome Day

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to recognize World Down Syndrome Day, which takes place tomorrow. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow marks the ninth

anniversary that the United Nations has observed this global awareness day. This year Down Syndrome International has focused its theme on Health and Well-being — Access and Equality for All.

Those with Down syndrome have unique strengths and abilities and go on to live a full life, reaching all the usual milestones but at their own pace. We saw this last week, Mr. Speaker, when we learned about Taylor Layton, the award-winning young woman from Outlook who developed her own successful recycling business despite having Down syndrome.

Mr. Speaker, our province continues to support those with disabilities. This year's budget included 9.9 million in funding for the Ministry of Economy's employability assistance for people with disabilities program to assist adults with disabilities to prepare for, secure, and maintain employment. Mr. Speaker, we are continuing unprecedented support for people with disabilities with enhancements for programs and services.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me today in recognizing World Down Syndrome Day and supporting our government for all that it's done and continues to do for those with disabilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

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

Happiness

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Finance minister presented the 2014-15 budget. Now members of this House will debate the merits of that budget, and that's perfect timing, Mr. Speaker, because today is also the United Nations International Day of Happiness. Members of this Assembly should be very happy with what the Finance minister announced yesterday: a balanced budget, a budget that does not raise taxes, a budget that invests in infrastructure for our future, and a budget that invests in the people of our province.

Certainly the Education critic should be very happy to see commitments to education dollars to replace Connaught and Sacred Heart schools right here in Regina, as well as dollars for St. Brieux School and Sacred Heart School in Moose Jaw. I hope he votes in favour of this budget, Mr. Speaker.

The member from Cumberland should be very happy today as well with the money for long-term care facility expansions in La Ronge. I certainly hope the member from Cumberland will vote in favour of this budget and be happy today.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to read a quote from Amy McNeil, executive director of Saskatchewan Association for Community Living and she quotes, "We are leading the country, if not North America and the world, in supports for people with disabilities."

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition should be the happiest of all today because if he really believes in what he says about politics being about people doing well, I am sure that

he will stand up and vote in favour of this budget as well.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Patient Safety and Lean Initiative

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last four years, Mr. Speaker, the number of critical incidents in hospitals and care facilities has jumped by almost 30 per cent across the province. These critical incidents involve deaths and serious injuries of patients because of something that went horribly wrong in health care.

My question is for the Premier. Why has patient safety been getting worse at the same time that lean was being forced upon the health care system?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately hospitals and health care organizations, not only across Canada but across North America and across the world, do deal with safety incidents like infections, medication errors, and falls, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the last number of years we've put more of an emphasis within the system to report critical incidences, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we frankly think that it's probably still under-reported, as it would be in other provinces, but we are putting in place, Mr. Speaker, initiatives to encourage the system to report on critical incidences.

We're also doing much work on the safety front, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the surgical initiative, for example. We've put in place a surgical checklist as a part of the surgical initiative. Believe it or not, Mr. Speaker, prior to this, just in the last couple of years there really was no checklist that the surgeons or the surgical team would actually go through before the surgery would begin, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the proper patient was being operated on, the proper part of the body was being operated on, Mr. Speaker. That's nearly at a 100 per cent uptake, Mr. Speaker. We need to get that up to 100 per cent. And we're also investing, Mr. Speaker, in piloting a stop-the-line patient safety system in Saskatoon which we'll roll out across the province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, critical incidents involving deaths and serious injuries have been reported all along, and what the numbers show, Mr. Speaker, is that they have increased in the past recent years. In the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, Mr. Speaker, the number of critical incidents has almost doubled over the last four years. The number of critical incidents that involve death went up by 40 per cent over the last four years, and the number of critical incidents that involve injury or harm to patients jumped by 750 per cent.

So again, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier: why has patient safety been getting worse and why have critical incidents jumped at a time when his government is leaning the

health care system?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my previous answer, Mr. Speaker, we're putting an immense amount of focus on compliance with the legislation to ensure that our health care organizations, our front-line staff are actually reporting when critical incidents take place within the system, Mr. Speaker. I think there's a broad range of literature all across the health care system, not just in Saskatchewan, but across the world, Mr. Speaker, that indicate that even today probably we're under-reporting critical incidences. So we're trying to put a focus on actually having staff and administration report on critical incidents. That's one of the reasons why people believe that the number of incidences that are being reported have actually been increased because of this increased focus, Mr. Speaker.

We're also, Mr. Speaker, putting in place new tools to make it easier for those incidents to be recorded. So a new electronic incident reporting system has been implemented as opposed to the old paper-based system, Mr. Speaker, which is I think a more efficient way to do things.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you at the provincial leadership team that we have at a quarterly basis, we do review all the critical incidences, Mr. Speaker. I think that's an important part of the accountability within the system.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this government would be well served to listen to what front-line health care providers are saying. Here's what Tracy Zambory, president of the nurses, said yesterday: "Two-thirds of our membership are telling us that patient safety has not improved and in fact has even gone down in our facilities across Saskatchewan." This is serious, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And the Minister of Highways says this is about contract negotiations. The nurses in this province are committed to their job, Minister, and they care about patient safety. And to suggest that it is about contract negotiations is an offence to every hard-working nurse in this province, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I would like to remind the member to direct his comments through the Chair. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, two-thirds of nurses are saying that safety is actually getting worse in the province, and the government's own numbers, Mr. Speaker, back that up. The number of critical incidents in facilities across the province is up by 30 per cent over the last four years, and the number of critical incidents here in Regina has doubled.

To the Premier: when will he listen to front-line health care workers and start prioritizing patient safety?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, Mr. Speaker, what we have acknowledged as a

provincial government on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is that we need to ensure that we have a proper complement of health professionals within the system, Mr. Speaker.

That's why we've hired 1,000 more RN [registered nurse] positions in the last seven years, Mr. Speaker. That's why we see over 300 more physicians practising in the province, Mr. Speaker. And the list goes on in terms of the health professionals and their ranks have only grown over the last number of years under this government, under record health funding from the provincial government, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the comments by the president of SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses], the members will know that there's a meeting between the Ministry of Health and the president tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, to discuss some of these concerns, as we've discussed in the last number of weeks, as I have in face-to-face and telephone conversations, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important to note though what the president of SUN did say yesterday morning on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] radio where she said, and I quote:

It's not that we don't support lean. We need to make that clear right off the start. There is a lot of valuable tools in lean. We need to create efficiencies. We need to reduce waste, absolutely.

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

Mr. Broten: — Back to the drawing board, Mr. Speaker — that's what the nurses had to say about this government's approach to lean because it has lost its way. Nurses have been saying, Mr. Speaker, that lean has not been helping in terms of patient safety. In fact nurses say the production line approach of lean doesn't fit very well with improving patient safety. But this government just plows ahead, refusing to listen and refusing to acknowledge the very concerning statistics.

The data from nurses shows that 84 per cent of adverse events in our health care system are related to inappropriate staffing levels. But instead of fixing the basics, Mr. Speaker, instead of ensuring appropriate staffing levels are in place, what does this government do? It spends \$40 million on one US consultant and flies in Japanese senseis at a cost of \$3,500 per day.

To the Premier: why is this government neglecting the basics, hurting patient safety, while it pours massive dollars into its pet lean project?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, as I've indicated before, what we did acknowledge when we formed government in 2007, as SUN had indicated, is that we didn't have enough nurses in the province, Mr. Speaker. We didn't have enough RNs in the province, Mr. Speaker. We were short 600 positions that needed to be filled, Mr. Speaker. We committed to the 600 positions. We added 200 additional positions to that to bring us to 800 positions that weren't available under the members opposite to provide safe care for the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. And we exceeded that goal by an additional 200, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Tracy Zambory, as I mentioned, has indicated that it's not that they don't support lean. She said that yesterday morning, Mr. Speaker. That to me doesn't say, go back to the drawing boards, Mr. Speaker. We are listening to what SUN and our providers have to say. That's why there is a meeting scheduled tomorrow to find out what the concerns are, to find out what has changed since January 15th when Ms. Zambory said this on the RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region] website:

The most exciting aspect of the lean process is that registered nurses are being engaged alongside the entire health care team on the front end of change. This approach of reducing inefficiencies will improve patient safety, maximizes the collective knowledge of our front-line staff, and demonstrates true leadership.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, nurses have clearly said that patient safety is not being prioritized in this government's approach. That's why we have two-thirds of nurses saying that patient safety has actually decreased in the province.

Mr. Speaker, this government doesn't need to spend \$40 million on a lucrative contract to a US consultant. It doesn't need to fly in Japanese sensei at a cost of \$3,500 a day. It doesn't need Japanese-English dictionaries on government websites. What it needs to do is listen to nurses, listen to front-line health care providers.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Premier talked about how newborns weren't wrapped in blankets when they were put on weigh scales, but front-line workers said, why don't we want them in blankets? Mr. Speaker, that's a great idea and it illustrates my point. The government needs to listen to front-line health care workers, because John Black and Associates, Mr. Speaker, because senseis from Japan don't have anything to do with wrapping babies in blankets.

My question to the Premier: why is he wasting so much money on massive contracts with a US consultant, with Japanese sensei, when what he needs to do is listen to the ideas from the front lines?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition would perhaps educate himself on what lean actually is, Mr. Speaker, it is exactly that — listening to the front lines of our health care system to find ways to improve care to patients, improve efficiencies within the system, and gives the system the tools to become a high-performing health care system, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan.

Here's what we're hearing from RNs, from nurses, Mr. Speaker, and I'll quote, "To get rid of so much waste and see how we can spend more time with our patients was enough to keep me wanting more." Here's another patient, another quote from a nurse: "Patients now can get to spend more time with their nurses. We don't have to spend time running to the fax machine, clarifying physician orders, or looking for missing medications." Here's another one, Mr. Speaker: "This was

refreshing to see a process change within a few days. I have nothing but good things to say about the process.”

Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition truly has an inbox that is full with concerns from front-line staff with lean, Mr. Speaker, I would urge him, redact the information; we don't need to know who it is. But I would urge him to send that information over, Mr. Speaker. We're interested in learning what, in finding out what people are saying, Mr. Speaker.

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

Patient Care and Lean Initiative

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, a few months ago, this government received 250 pages of urgent requests from seniors' care facilities for desperately needed staff, equipment, and repairs. But at that time, this government actually said no to \$8.5 million of those urgent requests. The Health minister said there would be more money to come in the budget. On November 13th, the Health minister said: “. . . some facilities do talk about staffing issues, and we'll look to address those either through the action fund, or in next year's budget . . .”

But the budget contained no new dollars to address the seniors' care crisis or to meet the \$8.5 million of urgent requests that were previously rejected by this government. To the minister: why not?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just correct the member opposite. While we did discuss last fall the \$10.04 million that cabinet approved mid-year to address the first tranche of the Urgent Issues Action Fund, Mr. Speaker, that we'd indicated that we would be reviewing to see if those dollars had actually reached the front lines, had reached the residents in approved resident care. As well, Mr. Speaker, we knew that some of those dollars would have an impact in terms of the future budget. So this budget does include close to \$3.8 million in dollars that were not available in last year's budget for front-line staff for equipment, Mr. Speaker, and to make some changes to how resident care is delivered within long-term care.

Mr. Speaker, the budget also does include \$15.3 million for equipment. Eleven million of that has been identified for regional health authorities already. And what we've determined, Mr. Speaker, is that 30 per cent of that will go into equipment into long-term care, which adds an additional, Mr. Speaker, just under \$4 million in equipment to long-term care in this budget.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Regional health authorities that are being asked to cut more than \$51 million, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, care facilities put forward 250 pages of urgent requests to this government for staff, equipment, and repairs. This government rejected \$8.5 million of those requests. The rejected requests included desperately needed staff, nurse call systems, lifts, and bathtubs. Those are the basics that are needed in care facilities,

but this government rejected those urgent requests and there's not one new dollar in this year's budget to meet those urgent needs.

To the minister: why is this government once again refusing to fix the basics in seniors' care?

[10:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — There is \$3.764 million in this budget that was not in last year's budget. Mr. Speaker, that is new dollars to go towards staffing issues, to go towards equipment, to go towards maintenance, Mr. Speaker. So that's 3.764 million.

Mr. Speaker, there's also equipment dollars that are funded to the regional health authorities. Of the \$15.3 million, we've already determined that \$11 million of that will flow to the regional health authorities. We've said to them that 30 per cent of those dollars need to be dedicated to long-term care equipment, Mr. Speaker, which equates to \$3.3 million. So \$3.3 million plus \$3.764 million equals \$7.064 million in new long-term care dollars for equipment, staff, and capital, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Give with one hand, Mr. Speaker, take away with the other — \$51 million inefficiencies.

Mr. Speaker, this government said no when care facilities put forward urgent requests for much needed staff, nurse call systems, lifts, bathtubs, and repairs. When Saskatoon Health Region said they needed 450 more care aids but modestly just requested 38, this government made them scale that request back to 19. Saskatoon Health Region needs 1,700 lifts. It requested just 100, but this government made them scale back that request to just 56.

But while this government was saying no to desperately needed staff and lifts, it was saying yes to massive and unnecessary contracts with American consultants and flying in Japanese sensei at a cost of \$3,500 a day. Again to the minister: why is this government refusing to fix the basics in seniors' care but spending well over \$50 million in consultants?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite wants to talk about giving with one hand and taking back with the other hand, let's go over the record of the NDP [New Democratic Party], Mr. Speaker. In 2004, with a budget increase of 6.3 per cent in the health budget, Mr. Speaker, 90 beds, and I'm quoting from *The Western Producer*: “. . . 90 beds — 50 of them used for long-term care — will be cut in 12 communities. That will result in 92 job cuts; 40 of them are nursing positions.”

Mr. Speaker, the article goes on to say, “Another 160 jobs could go, because Nilson said the regional health authorities must find

\$20 million in cost savings through administrative efficiencies,” Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in years of increases of 6 and 7 and 8 per cent, we knew where the members opposite would go to find efficiencies, Mr. Speaker. It was to fire staff. It was to close facilities. It was to close beds, Mr. Speaker.

We decided to take a different approach. In a year even when the health budget was only increasing at 3 per cent, Mr. Speaker, we’re going to continue to do what we’re doing through inventory management, through blood savings, Mr. Speaker, and other ways through lean which have been effective.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, we have a seniors’ care crisis in this province, and this government is refusing to fix it. While this government neglects the basics in health care and in seniors’ care, it’s Saskatchewan families that are paying the price. If the Health minister actually read through the urgent request from care facilities, he would have found this on page 206: “There are clients that cannot currently be placed in long-term care as they have complex needs which require additional staffing that is not currently available.” People like Mr. Caron. So people are being turned away from care homes because their needs are too complex and there is not enough staff in place to help them, yet this government is spending \$40 million on just one lean consultant and flying in Japanese sensei at \$3,500 a day.

To the minister: how can you justify \$40 million on consultants and \$3,500-per-day senseis to the families like the Carons that are being turned away from care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I’d remind the members opposite that what we’re spending in terms of lean have already in fact paid for themselves, Mr. Speaker, represent point two per cent of the health budget, Mr. Speaker, which is the same proportion of what lean spending under the NDP in the Five Hills Health Region equated to. Point two per cent of Five Hills health budget went to lean spending under the NDP.

So, Mr. Speaker, it’s in the same proportion to what the members opposite were spending. We’re just deploying it across the entire health care system, the first of its kind in this country, Mr. Speaker. And it has proven results . . .

The Speaker: — Yes, I would hope that members on both sides, especially the member asking the question, would like to hear the answer. So please, members, tone it down a bit. I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I’ve indicated where we are investing within long-term care within the system, Mr. Speaker, through the Urgent Issues Action Fund, through additional dollars on equipment that will be dedicated towards long-term care.

Mr. Speaker, I’ve also indicated that, as the Finance minister

read out, that we do need to start planning for the next renewal of long-term care capital, Mr. Speaker, here in Regina Qu’Appelle as well the community of La Ronge, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to the member opposite voting in favour of that when the budget comes for a vote. But, Mr. Speaker, we’re also investing in seniors outside of long-term care, Mr. Speaker, through the seniors’ house calls and other initiatives.

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

Saskatchewan Futures Fund

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, on December 30th here’s what the Premier had to say about the futures fund:

I just don’t see how we would want to delay any longer. I think it sends the right signal that first of all this wasn’t just a public relations exercise, because it most assuredly wasn’t. Secondly, that all of us as a province can start thinking long term.

Well it turns out it was, in the Premier’s words, just a public relations exercise. And in the words of families and taxpayers, the futures fund turned out to be a flip-flop and a broken promise. My question to the Premier: why the flip-flop? Why the broken promise?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I thank the member for the question. It’s an opportunity for us to talk about the 44 per cent of general operating debt that this side of the House, this government has paid off since we were first elected.

Mr. Speaker, the official policy of the government with respect to this, with respect to a futures fund, was announced in the growth plan when we first commissioned and engaged Peter MacKinnon. At the time I indicated that it would be the preference of the government as a positional stance to pay off all of the debt, the general debt of the province, the general operating debt of the province first, and then start to save.

Mr. MacKinnon made some recommendations about what measure, what would trigger in fact us moving towards savings or debt. That’s that 26 per cent level of revenue that would come from the resource sector, Mr. Speaker.

Today everything’s still on the table. The official position as reflected by the Minister of Finance in the budget hasn’t changed. The official position is, let’s pay the debt off first and then start saving. Typically you pay more interest on debt than you can in some of the funds in terms of return.

However, Mr. Speaker, it’s on the table. We may well, as we move to structure that particular heritage fund, that futures fund, through a legislative framework, we will have a debate in the province and a debate in this legislature. And all options remain on the table, including paying down the debt even as we start to build the savings fund for the future of the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's just a tad strange that for the Premier that pretended yesterday he was going to focus on a summary basis, that he's now focusing on the manipulated numbers of debt that he's been held to account for by the Provincial Auditor.

When it comes to the futures fund, there's no question this is a flip-flop and a broken promise. Here's what the Canadian Press reported in November, and I quote, "Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall says he thinks it's a good idea for the province to try to save money for the future while also paying off the debt."

To the Premier: what changed? Why is he sacrificing this good idea for sustainability and prosperity for the long term?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the Finance critic, he's had a tough couple of days. All the things that he asked for, the major points he wanted, are represented in the budget, Mr. Speaker.

He's also had some difficulty getting basic facts right. The general debt of the province is still reported in the new budgeting documents of the province of Saskatchewan. He needs to look over those documents. They were just tabled yesterday, to be fair, but he needs to look at them. And, Mr. Speaker, when he looks at them he's going to see that the general operating debt of the province we inherited from members opposite when they were in government has reduced by members on this side by 44 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I have in fact speculated about when we structured that futures fund, which will happen very soon, Mr. Speaker, that we might actually begin saving while we pay off the debt.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard from Saskatchewan people. I've heard from caucus. And we've heard Saskatchewan people say, you know, we in Saskatchewan, we'd like to pay off unsupported debt. This is unsupported debt we're talking about. There's no structured payment on principal that happens, as members opposite know, only when government wills it to occur, as our side of the House has done with 44 per cent reduction in the debt.

So, Mr. Speaker, the people of the province are saying, pay it off first, then start the savings. But we'll have the debate. All options are on the table, Mr. Speaker. And I welcome further questions on this from the critic.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the question was directly that the Premier was saying before that he thought it was a good idea to save money for the future and pay down the debt. Now of course he's flip-flopped. He's broken that promise. And it seems, as he said with his, you know, with his own words, that this was nothing but a public relations exercise, Mr. Speaker.

The idea that we have to wait for the debt to be paid off is short-sighted and it defies Saskatchewan common sense. For one, the budget that was presented yesterday jacks up debt, \$1.5 billion this year alone. And it's hiked debt since 2009 by over \$4 billion. And even on the other core debt that he speaks of,

there's no plan to pay down that debt. So we're not seeing a fund any time soon. While other resource-rich jurisdictions have used their natural resources to build prosperity and sustainability for the long term, this government spends every last penny of our \$100 barrel of oil to just get by.

To the Premier: if he can't put a few dollars away to improve our sustainability now in a strong economy, then when?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we're talking about unsupported debt. What that means is that there's no structured payment on the debt unless a government decides to make payments. Picture a bright orange credit card, if you will. We've got a huge balance on it, and you're only able to pay the interest. He's saying that the Saskatchewan common sense is just ride that orange credit card. Don't make any principal payments, Mr. Speaker. The people of the province would say . . . I think it's an open debate what actually is Saskatchewan common sense, and we're going to have that debate discussion. One of the options might be to start the fund.

Mr. Speaker, it is international happy day, and I don't understand why the members opposite are not happy, frankly. They asked us to go to summaries. We've gone to summaries, Mr. Speaker. They asked us to leave the credit union tax structure the way it was. We've done that. They asked for Sacred Heart School. We've done that. They asked for Connaught School. We've done that in the budget. They've asked for a new long-term care facility in La Ronge. Mr. Speaker, we've done that. They asked for new child care spaces. There's 500 new child care spaces, Mr. Speaker. Why are the NDP so negative, Mr. Speaker?

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Oral Presentation of Petitions

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I have a statement to make. There was a point of order raised on this past Tuesday, and I wish to report on that.

On March 18th, the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre presented numerous pages of a petition that he had previously presented in parts over the course of the current session. While presenting the petitions, the member cited a number of place names in Saskatchewan that he said were the locations of the petitioners.

On orders of the day, the Deputy Government House Leader raised a point of order, claiming that many of the communities listed by the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre did not appear on the petition. The member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre responded to the point of order by stating that the list of communities cited related to previously tabled parts of the petition and documents he provided to the Minister of Education . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I don't need help from either side, thank you . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Does the member want to leave the Chamber quickly?

[10:45]

First of all, I want to be clear that the issue here is not the petition itself, but the oral presentation of the petition. In that regard the rules of this Assembly state as follows:

16(3) The period for Presenting Petitions is subject to the following conditions:

(e) The Member may read the prayer, provide a general explanation of the subject matter and location of the petitioners.

There appears to be some misunderstanding about this rule that needs to be clarified.

Over the past few decades, the practice has developed of presenting a petition in parts over the course of a session, sometimes one page at a time. For the sessional record, each successive part is considered to be an addendum of the original petition. Given this practice, members have a broad opportunity to mention the location of the petitioners for each of the parts of the petition as they are presented.

In addressing the point of order, the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre noted that the locations he named related to all of the individuals who signed the petition. On March 9, 2010, Speaker Toth ruled that the locations announced must in fact appear on the petition that is being presented. The member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre mentioned the names of 45 locations but what he tabled on March 18th contained the signatures from only six communities. It is not permissible to orally list any locations that are not on the pages being tabled that sitting day. Furthermore, it is not in order to cite the location of persons who signed other documents that might be ancillary to the petition.

For these reasons, I find the point of order well taken. When presenting petitions, I ask that members ensure that the location of the petitioners is confined to what is being presented that day.

Before closing this subject, I want to address what is meant by the rule where it states that the member may provide a general explanation of the subject matter and location of petitioners. The rule does not define what is meant by general explanation. The rule leaves it up to the Speaker to gauge how best to preside over the oral presentation of petitions. Over the course of this session, I find that some members have begun to provide more than a general explanation of the petition. In some cases, a substantial level of detail is provided in the explanation, and in other cases the commentary might be considered a provocation for debate.

Members are reminded that rule 16(3)(b) states that, and I quote, "No debate on any matter on or in relation to the petitions is permitted." I ask members to be mindful of this rule when choosing the language used to introduce a petition.

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 225 through 262.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled responses to questions 125 through 162 . . . 262, sorry.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to follow up on the budget debate here today and provide a bit of a local perspective and speak in a way that allows me to focus on some of the local priorities that are certainly important. But before doing so, I just want to certainly just touch back on something that's just come out of discussion in question period as well, and something that was missing in that budget yesterday, and that's any commitment at all to the futures fund that had been discussed and touted by government opposite.

Of course, this is something we've championed for a long time, a futures fund, the idea that we should take some of our resource wealth of today and put a little bit of that away for the long term. This is a common sense approach to a budget and it's the kind of approach that focuses on the long term.

Right now the current government, in now their broken promise on this front, communicates to Saskatchewan people that they just can't get the job done for Saskatchewan people, despite the strong opportunity they've been provided. It tells Saskatchewan people that they broke their promise as it relates to the futures fund.

We know just a little while ago the Premier, it was said that he thought it was reasonable to both put a little away for the long term and pay down debt at the same time. Now what we're hearing from the Premier is something entirely different. We see a broken promise. We see a flip-flop. And in fact what we're worried is that, in the Premier's own words, that this whole piece that he's engaged with on the futures fund was simply a public relations exercise for him and his government, that he never had serious intent in implementing this. Because it's pretty evident that with the Premier's new position that he thinks he needs to pay the debt off first — which we should point out that this government's not paying the debt off; they're actually increasing debt, Mr. Speaker — that's there's no future for that future fund.

We believe there should be a better plan for Saskatchewan people. We believe Saskatchewan people deserve a little bit of the resource wealth today to serve the long-term prosperity and needs for tomorrow. And you know, it's not excusable for the Premier to flip-flop and change positions and break this promise

for Saskatchewan people. And really this is way more than just a broken promise. It's a lost opportunity for Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan people.

I do want to provide a bit of a local perspective back to the constituency. I'm always honoured to bring forward the issues that matter for my constituents, and in doing so I have to reflect as well on the good people that I do serve. And I'm thankful for all their efforts in building and improving our community and strengthening our schools and making sure there's sports, culture, and recreation programs for the kids, to make sure there's supports out there for seniors. And this is done in many ways by those that are providing service on the front line every day.

It's delivered by those in the schools. It's delivered by so many in volunteer efforts. I'm so thankful for the efforts that we see within our schools, the work of the teachers, the work of the staff, the work of the parents who are involved within those schools. That truly makes a difference. I also think of all the coaches, all the facilitators, all those that provide sport, culture, recreation throughout the community. And I'm thankful for those individuals. I'm thankful for the role that churches play throughout the community to provide opportunities for many and places for people to connect. And I'm thankful for our community associations.

The community that I represent represents, you know, I think a lot of what we see across the province — hard-working people, hard-working business leaders, and people that are doing their part in Saskatchewan. And we see that in many ways. We see people . . . We see this government dropping the ball in important priorities.

But when I'm thinking of those types of leaders, I think of Dennis and Judy Zawyrucka, who keep the shack over at the Outdoor Hockey League, and I think of Dustin Henderson and Bradyn Parisian who have dedicated their time and energy to make sure that sport's accessible, that hockey's accessible through the Outdoor Hockey League. I also enjoy being able to get over and assist a bit if I can, Mr. Speaker.

Or people like Guy Lohman in the Normanview West Community Association who's dedicated to planting trees and improving the neighbourhood and creating park spaces that are livable and enjoyable and that can be appreciated by all. Or those over in McNab, Mr. Speaker, a dedicated group that makes sure that if there's ever an ounce of graffiti that it's removed, and their efforts to continue to improve the park as a place to congregate over there as well, Mr. Speaker.

I think of the good people throughout Rosemont Mount Royal Community Association, and just the time we had this last weekend at their Family Fun Day once again, where they bring together community, have games and crafts and activities for young people, have fiddlers there for all ages, and had strawberry social that of course we all enjoy. It's these kind of people that really do bring together community.

I also think of St. Cecilia Church and the work that they're doing with those that are new to Canada in supporting ESL [English as a second language] and supporting settlement, such good efforts and important efforts that strengthen our

community and provide important supports.

And I think of local leaders, and I could list many on this front. But I think of Alanna Kalyniuk on Dewdney Avenue who's working to make sure that we work toward safety, get those heavy-haul truck traffic moved off of Dewdney Avenue and make sure that the people have the protection that they deserve, the safety that they deserve.

When I look at some of the local issues within Rosemont that we've been identifying to government, we don't see a whole bunch of action in this budget. And this is a budget of course that's failed families, as we've identified, doesn't go the distance it needed to in education or health care or in seniors' care where we have a crisis, does nothing to address affordability. We spoke about these items yesterday, or I spoke about these items yesterday.

But I want to focus on just a few projects that haven't been advanced by this government that should be, one of them being the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue. This is nothing short of a major safety concern. It's going to require government's actions and in a very immediate way before it's too late because the risks on those streets, on that road is huge and those actions are going to be important. We're going to continue to call for immediate actions. Of course the long-term solution has to be a commitment in a timely way to the bypass on west Regina. But we need immediate actions and they need to be supported by this government to make sure that that truck traffic can be moved off of Dewdney Avenue far before that west bypass ever gets fully completed.

And there's practical solutions that could be advanced on this front. A very small portion of Pinkie Road just west of Regina could be improved. There's a small bridge, Mr. Speaker, that meets the creek right out by the Goulet golf course that, Mr. Speaker, frankly I'm scared to drive my bike over, Mr. Speaker, or to jog over. And if that was simply improved and replaced, which is needed anyways, it would allow that truck traffic to be bypassing Dewdney Avenue in a very immediate way.

But as I say, this is a safety concern that requires the actions of government. And this issue, and the fact that the heavy trucks have inundated Dewdney Avenue, is an issue created by this government who created the Global Transportation Hub without properly putting in place measures to ensure proper and safe traffic flow. So they didn't think the project all the way through and ensure the safety of many, and my constituents. So it's a safety issue. It's degrading infrastructure. It's taking away peace of mind.

These trucks are crashing down Dewdney Avenue at all hours of the day and night and in many ways are actually literally rattling the homes and shaking the homes and the foundations along it. It's not safe. It's not appropriate. This is a major artery through a residential neighbourhood that connects families to schools, that connects people to their church, connects families across Saskatchewan to Pioneer Village and the seniors' care that's there. It connects people to tourism sites such as the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] Depot and Government House. And you know, quite frankly it just needs to be addressed and any further delays, as I've said, are entirely unacceptable.

We also didn't see anything in this budget, any measures as it related to education to make the investments that are needed in classrooms across Saskatchewan and across our communities. We have overcrowded classrooms, many of them that have faced cuts because of this government's funding, and we have teachers that are overworked, under-resourced. We have students that are in classrooms that are bursting at the seams without educational assistants, without the supports they deserve.

And we didn't see anything in this budget in a very local way to support and work with the school division here in Regina to reopen or recommission Dieppe School, a school that was closed in part because of the funding of this provincial government and a school that was very important to a community and I hope soon could be very important to that community again because I know it's been very difficult for them to have that school closed, Mr. Speaker.

We need to continue to focus on Pioneer Village. We see nothing in this budget to address this very important infrastructure from a health perspective and from a social perspective for many across this province. This is a care facility that provides many families, many people care that they need and deserve, but the facility is way past its due date. It requires replacement and we saw nothing in this budget to meet those needs.

If I look at the other areas that we touched on yesterday, those are the priorities that were important to my constituents as well: the fact that in this budget, the government didn't do anything to address the affordability pressures that hard-working families are facing; failed to deliver in the classroom and make improvements; failed to make sure that the emergency room — I think of the crisis over at the Pasqua Hospital this last year — that the emergency rooms in Saskatchewan are supported and that they can be trusted by Saskatchewan people and certainly my constituents. And as well when we see the whole lack of support for seniors' care, this is a troubling issue for all in this province and certainly my constituents as well.

I know there was lots of concern by my constituents and those across the province about ensuring that we have books that we can trust, about ensuring that the finances are an honest, true portrayal of the reality. And we've been calling and pushing this government to make changes towards a summary budget and making sure Saskatchewan people have nothing short of honest books they can trust.

[11:00]

There's some changes in this budget. We're going to continue to track that through to implementation and make sure that Saskatchewan people have nothing short of books they can trust, of course recognizing that this Finance minister, this Premier are the first in Canadian history to fail an audit of its books. And we know what their approach was after that, and that was to dismiss the auditor's concerns and recommendations. But we continue to push on this issue, and we're pleased to see at least a first step on this front.

I know many are concerned in the province and in my constituency with the selling out of opportunity, the contracting

out, Mr. Speaker, the fact that we have, on so many streets, Sask stickers on vehicles that say SaskPower and SaskEnergy on the side, but on the back, Mr. Speaker, they have Texas plates. And I know that, you know, that many across Saskatchewan say that defies common sense and takes away good opportunities for Saskatchewan people by way of jobs, by way of business opportunities. And it just doesn't make sense to be exporting all that opportunity far outside our borders.

We see that in many other areas as well. And I think, you know, the recent steps towards some level of what looks like prison privatization potentially, Mr. Speaker, is a concern as well, where you take away strong people within the community that have been providing important roles within our correction system, providing important rehabilitative roles within our correction system, and having those individuals now outsourced to some private company. That's not the Saskatchewan way, Mr. Speaker, and it's giving away of the Saskatchewan advantage and our ability to secure our future.

As we've said, there's a lot of waste and excess this government is engaged in. We see them shipping well over \$40 million into one American contract, Mr. Speaker, for a lean, kaizen, Japanese project that they're engaged with that just isn't delivering the results that Saskatchewan people deserve. Those should be diverted into where they count — on the front line of health care and seniors' care, Mr. Speaker. We see the government wasting millions of dollars on an old-fashioned, outdated standardized testing regime, Mr. Speaker, that should be able to be diverted to making a difference in the classrooms all across our province and certainly in my community, Mr. Speaker.

And we think as well about the wasteful agenda that we've seen from this government, creating three more MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] when they're not needed that are going to cost millions into the future, Mr. Speaker. Or the fact of the dollars that were wasted on so many other fronts as well, where we look at that boondoggle that was Enterprise Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. These are just examples of dollars that could have been diverted, that could have been better used, and that could have been advancing the priorities of Saskatchewan people.

The member from . . . Well one of the members opposite gets really, you know, is choosing to get noisy. I think he'll have a chance to speak. I hope he takes it this year, Mr. Speaker. But the reality is that despite the blessed opportunity Saskatchewan people find themselves in by way of the resource opportunity, this government's failing to get it done where it counts for Saskatchewan people. And that's why we aren't supporting the budget.

We see the broken promise to deliver a futures fund. We see inadequate actions for First Nations and Métis young people across this province, and all people, to make sure that there is better opportunities well into the future. And we hear lots of, you know, we heard lots of announcements yesterday, but we didn't see the funding to back it up. We're going to be tracking that. We heard reference to a north commuter bridge in Saskatoon. That's good, but there's no funds to back it up. So we'll be tracking those sorts of commitments. And as well, they introduced schools and then sent a paltry amount of dollars to

go with it.

You know, the reason for some skepticism with this government on these fronts is because of their record. And if you remember, Mr. Speaker, it was quite a few years ago, I think 2008 or 2009 that they were introducing some long-term care facilities, many of which are still being talked about here today, Mr. Speaker, that have never been built, that have never been operated, Mr. Speaker. I think of the North Central Shared Facility, Scott Collegiate, Mr. Speaker, in Regina that was announced back in 2007, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, 2007, and talked again in 2008. But, Mr. Speaker, that facility, it's never been realized.

So we'll see, Mr. Speaker, if the words from the Finance minister is more empty rhetoric from this government, if they're more announcements without funding. But we'll be tracking those commitments and making sure that this government's held to account and make sure that they flow those dollars to build the infrastructure that they are speaking of, Mr. Speaker.

With those comments, at this point in time, and mindful that many others would like to enter the debate here today, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving an amendment here today, moving a motion. And you know, as I say, this is a budget that just very simply fails families, fails to address affordability, fails to improve health care, fails to address education, fails to address the seniors' care crisis, breaks a promise on the futures fund, Mr. Speaker, and Saskatchewan people deserve better than that. So at this point in time, I will not be supporting the budget and will be moving the following motion:

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

disagrees with the government for tabling a budget that offers only cuts and crumbs for Saskatchewan families, doesn't address the needs and priorities of today, and fails to plan for the long term.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I know this will be seconded I believe by the member from Lakeview, who I look forward to his entry into this discussion here today as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member from Regina Rosemont, seconded by the member from Regina Lakeview:

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

disagrees with the government for tabling a budget that offers only cuts and crumbs for Saskatchewan families, doesn't address the needs and priorities of today, and fails to plan for the long term.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to support this amendment to the budget motion. And, Mr. Speaker, as many of you know, I've been here for a while, and I

know that there are often things that need to be done. I thought one of the key phrases used by the Minister of Finance when he delivered his speech was that he used this sentence: "That meant that some difficult choices had to be made." Mr. Speaker, that's what budgets are all about. Budgets are about choices.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that this government has not lived up to their duty of making some of the appropriate choices around how the money of the public is being spent. Now at least this year we have some steps towards getting a clearer piece of information about what money we actually have and how it's being spent. We know that last year the auditors had a great deal of difficulty with some of the steps that were taken by the Minister of Finance with the concurrence of the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, they have listened to that I think quite late in the game. I think my perception would be that in this budget, they were working along on a process like they had for quite a number of years. And all of a sudden it struck them, oh we haven't addressed the auditor's questions, and the public are concerned about this. And so when you go in here to these documents, they're kind of the same as last year except they changed the titles on some of the documents, and they changed the titles in some of the charts. Mr. Speaker, I thank them for doing that and taking the step towards moving toward a summary statement like every other province in Canada. But, Mr. Speaker, the way they've done it is — kind of like how they do all the things in this government — is by the seat of their pants.

The Premier gives a little bit of a comment. And I suspect that when something like this in cabinet and caucus were getting some of the preliminary reports from the Minister of Finance and treasury board, there was this, well, we're on the same track as we had before. We're going to do this. We've got *The Financial Administration Act* that says that these things have to be reported this way. And all of a sudden the Premier says, no, I think we need to go to the summary statements right away.

So then you look, you look at these documents. Anybody who looks at these documents knows that this whole job was done in the last four or five, six weeks at the most. And, Mr. Speaker, I, once again, I thank them for taking that step. But practically what we need to do is make sure that they will take further steps to make sure that by next year we've got a clearer statement on where we're going.

Now, Mr. Speaker, our response as an opposition is to say that for ordinary families there are just crumbs out there. They're just things . . . Now the problem is, because of this confused way they've done the books, we can't even tell yet where the cuts are going to be, where the changes are going to be.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are . . . The types of budgets that they've provided to the regional health authorities means that there's going to be cuts in that whole system, but we don't know where because they've basically delegated or pushed it out. That's what they did last year. And we saw and we see the things that we see that are issues for the people of the province — elder care, the issues around how quickly responses come, the cleanliness of a hospital.

Now how, you know, how many of us would have thought that

the cleanliness of the University Hospital, the Royal University Hospital, our flagship hospital in the province, becomes a day-to-day issue? And it is. And, Mr. Speaker, there's money allocated to the regional health authority. But there isn't a response or a clear response to some of the very specific things that were requested by the health regions. And, Mr. Speaker, it's those types of things that we are going to continue to look at.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when this budget was prepared, there's also areas in education. We know that in the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education system, they need more money, that they need certain types of resources. And this government has chosen to put the money in some other places. Now we're going to be trying to track where they're putting this money in some of these other places. But what we do know is that kids in classrooms are not getting the full benefit of what they should under our system. Same way at the universities. We know that the way the enrolments are going up, the numbers of people that are interested in getting post-secondary education, that the funding that's here is not sufficient to meet all of that demand.

Now, Mr. Speaker, once again that's a choice. Now why are these choices being made by the Premier? We don't really know. And that gets me back to this whole business of how we manage, how we work at any kind of system. Now the latest bright light or bright idea is to spend a lot of money on outside consultants on lean management. But, Mr. Speaker, any type of management is always about leadership. And I think the problem that everybody is seeing in our health system as it relates to the lean management is starting to show up in other departments.

We have a minister — I'm trying to remember her title here — Minister Responsible for the Lean Initiative, the member for Rosthern or for Martensville. The whole lean initiative is in her area. We don't hear a word from her about all of this. We didn't hear a word from the Premier today because I think he realizes this is not an easy one to talk about.

But, Mr. Speaker, the problem with any management system, whether it's total quality management . . . Or you can go back every decade for 60, 70 years, maybe even longer, but I think probably, you know, about 60 years is when this whole management consultant world was created. You can go back every single one of those letters that describe some kind of management system, and they either pass or fail on whether there's leadership and there's actually a vision of what is going to be provided for people, what a company is going to do, what an institution is going to do.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think the failure of our latest management gurus and other things relates to the fact, as we identified a couple of years ago, there isn't a plan. There isn't a plan for this government. And so that shows up every time some crucial issues arise.

[11:15]

Mr. Speaker, the plans in the health system are often suspect because we don't really know what it is that they're intending to do, and we see quite a number of initiatives that say, well yes, we're trying to work it out the best way we can. And then they

go and end up with all kinds of public-private kind of developments in the system where the people in the system say, well that's not a very good way to do it. You look at a whole number of things that are being done that just don't have any direction.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when we have a budget like this that, you know, I guess that is . . . Everybody tries to be very careful. They try to give a little bit here, a little bit there, and cover up any kind of negative aspects of it. We all get concerned. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm concerned that there doesn't appear to be the leadership at the centre.

I know one interesting comment I had — I guess it's almost two weeks ago now — when we heard that the Premier was quite interested in another job somewhere. And, Mr. Speaker, that hit the front page because it's of concern to people. And the comment to me was, well I'm an employer. I have many employees working for me. And if I hear of somebody who wants to go and get another job, I'm already thinking, well who's going to replace them? And, Mr. Speaker, I think at this time with our Premier, people are starting to say, okay, well who's the next guy that's going to do this job?

In Alberta they did it very quickly, and they did it through the members of the caucus. And maybe we should appeal to the members opposite to do a little bit of work there and see whether or not we can launch our presently most — sort of, at least from some of the polling — honoured citizen, launch him on to a new career. And I think we'd all wish him well.

But I think the people of Saskatchewan, and especially those who are suffering within our system, would say yes. I think it's time that we got somebody else who's going to give us some direction, is going to give us 100 per cent of his interest, and he's going to work on the things that are important to people.

And so, Mr. Speaker, what are those things that are important to people? And I know, based on how we've been listening as an opposition to the public, that there are a number of points, and we listed those out on Monday. And then I think it's worth going back to them and saying, what is it that people actually want? Well you know, it's right off the top; they say let's end these crazy contracts. Let's end the spending of money that doesn't appear to have a direction. And as we saw today, the Premier doesn't really even want to defend anymore. He's going to let somebody else do it. I assume pretty soon the minister responsible for the lean initiative will actually get a chance to talk about this. But we'll see about that. But, Mr. Speaker, people are saying, let's end that contract. Well they haven't done that yet.

We know that in long-term care, personal care homes, there's a basic issue about quality of care standards and just how people are being cared for. And, Mr. Speaker, those stories and those situations are very, very difficult for all of us. And I'm sure that members opposite are getting some of the same comments. They obviously don't have a chance like we do to raise them here. But we'd be happy on a, you know, quiet basis to raise issues in Kelvington or wherever the issues might arise. But, Mr. Speaker, that sense that people have is that somehow we're not getting the proper care. That is a real concern. And, Mr. Speaker, we frankly expected a little more money, a little more

of a response to this.

Now I was quite — oh what's the word — I guess concerned that the Minister of Health today was trying to go and dig into a number of areas and say, well this answers that question. I have a lot of respect for the Minister of Health. He used to work for me. I think everybody knows that, but maybe they don't. But he worked very carefully in our team that developed the health plan for the province. He was a new graduate from Luther College, University of Regina. And he ended up working and developing a lot of the health policy. So he knows this information very well.

And, Mr. Speaker, he then went to work for the Saskatchewan Party caucus. And I think all of you remember how, when there was a particularly cumbersome question that we would get from somebody, I would always say, well let the member from Weyburn work on that file and prepare the question because at least then we'll get an understandable question. So, Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of praise you get when you're in government, you give toward an opposition staff member. And I think, you know, I appreciate his work, but now when he's gotten into this new role, I think he's forgotten that how you build health care in this province, how you build social policy and social services, how you build in any of the policy areas in this province is that you build on the work from before. And I know that the Minister of Social Services knows that and that she's built on a number of different things.

And, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't serve the public well, it doesn't serve the people of Saskatchewan well when the kinds of comments we heard today in question period come from the Minister of Health, or the comments that we've heard the last couple of days from the Premier, because, Mr. Speaker, what the public want is they want to know we're going somewhere and that we're going to be providing things for the public. And unfortunately I think that there's been some distractions or something that's gotten the leadership, the Premier off on some other tracks, and we've gotten some difficulties in the actual use of a very expensive management tool because there doesn't appear to be direction or leadership around that particular use of that tool.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when you get huge numbers of employees afraid to tell their superiors that there's something funny about this, there's something that doesn't work about what you're telling us on this particular management program, well then we all have a problem. Because what suffers is the care for the people. What suffers is, if this stuff moves into the education system, what suffers there is the education of our children. We know that some of these things have caused difficulties within the Department of Social Services and that we are getting stories and questions raised there.

So, Mr. Speaker, all of these things go back and reflect on, what is the central goal? What is it that is the plan or the leadership that comes right from the top? And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's where we all have a problem in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, we can go and look at a number of other issues. We know that the evidence is against this whole issue of using standardized testing in schools. And the practical advice from the front-line workers is we could use some dollars for

some other things, and we know what the evidence says about this. But what happens here? The minister goes ahead, the Premier goes ahead, and they are off on some track that comes from we're not certain where.

Now I know from a lot of meetings that I've gone to with legislators from other states and other provinces that there's a certain bent and a certain perspective that brings this stuff forward. And, Mr. Speaker, I think here in Saskatchewan we're smart enough to use and do things that make sense to us, not bring in some of this other stuff from other places, which is only going to create problems, and unfortunately it's expensive. So how many different things are we going to do where we'll ship money out some other places?

The Minister of Health is here now and maybe he can listen a little more . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . He's shouting from his seat and, Mr. Speaker, what we know is that he's put in a very difficult position because he's brought in on all of these issues and is asked to defend some things that were done by the previous minister of Health, who's now the Minister of Highways. And we know that there's some sort of gung-ho feeling about this management plan that once again goes back to my comment that it's about, what is the leadership saying? What is the goal of using this particular information? And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's where some of the problems have arisen, is that you need to articulate what it is that you are doing. You need to lead to where you are going. And that's where we have some of our problems.

Now we know that the size or the demands on our school system are continuing. We know that the class sizes are getting larger and larger and that we need to deal with that particular question of how we can make sure that our well-trained teachers in this province are doing the best job that they can. Mr. Speaker, I think that's an area that's being neglected.

Now I know that the government has had a great deal of difficulty figuring out how to pay for a lot of things that they've announced or proposed or whatever. And, Mr. Speaker, they've tried some ways of trying to spread the cost out onto future generations. And so basically, many of their P3 [public-private partnership] proposals appear. You're basically asking the kids in grade 1 to pay for the school when they're 35. And so, you know, how smart is that? I mean basically what we all want for our children is that they are launched into adulthood with a good education and without a whole huge amount of money put on top of them. Usually we talk about tuition for SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] or post-secondary education as being a burden that students will have when they are finished their education.

But, Mr. Speaker, the policy choices made by this Premier, and this crew across here, are basically going to put the cost of the elementary school that they start in kindergarten on the people who graduate from that school. And, Mr. Speaker, they're still going to be paying for this way down the line. And, Mr. Speaker, what's the point of that?

This is the time in this province when we've had the most income from a whole number of areas, and people are resorting to some of these pushing out of financing way, way down the road. And, Mr. Speaker, why is that happening? Mr. Speaker,

why is that happening? The only thing I can say is that there doesn't appear to be a central leadership and there doesn't appear to be management of the resources that we have.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when we end up basically saying that priorities and needs of today aren't being met, the long term isn't being looked at, Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of thing that we're saying is that there's a lot of decisions where they're not really thinking about the consequences. And it's those financing decisions are the ones that are the most difficult.

We know, and you've heard me talk about this before, that there was a group of accountants headed by Mr. Gass who tried to sort out all of the financing schemes that were there from the 1980s government. And, Mr. Speaker, what we know is that we all were put into very constrained positions for a number of years, probably even extending to now, because we still are working to deal with some of the things that we didn't work at and deal with in an orderly fashion. Mr. Speaker, why do we then fall back on some of these ways of looking at things? Why do we not plan for the long term?

Now the whole issue of Mr. MacKinnon's report and setting up of a bright futures fund, or the pension fund they call it in some countries, or the oil fund or the resource fund is very curious in how this government appears to have responded to this. Because I listened a little bit to what the Premier was saying yesterday and it was kind of like, oh well, we're going to do it; but no, we're going to wait. No, we're going to do it; no, we're going to wait.

[11:30]

Mr. Speaker, what has to happen is there has to be a plan. It can't just be on the whim of the Premier. We've seen enough situations where the Premier gets a bright idea and everybody's off in one direction. He sees something else, he goes the other direction.

I mean, I remember getting to give quite an interesting, fun speech about Louis Riel when the Governor of Montana was here to sign a big deal with the Premier about some kind of a pipeline going to Montana. Well where's that? I mean we haven't heard anything more about that. And if we go back and look at the different kind of whims that this Premier comes up with over the last few years, we would have quite an interesting little story about how we've moved here, moved there. And, Mr. Speaker, people are finally getting fed up with that. Mr. Speaker, they're finally getting fed up with that.

Now the Minister of Agriculture is talking about some of these things and maybe objecting a bit. Well the Minister of Agriculture has to listen to the people of the province as it relates to the community pastures. As a former minister of Environment, one of the largest continuous areas of prairie in the world is under the sponsorship and responsibility of the Minister of Agriculture. And, Mr. Speaker, this is land that is prairie and it's down to, I think . . . I don't know what the percentage is. I think it's about 3 or 4 per cent of the land that used to be here in this province that's very, very different than most every landscape in the world.

And we have then the Minister of Agriculture who has the

responsibility as the trustee for that land. And, Mr. Speaker, we have not heard him listen to the people who are using that land now. We have not heard him listen to all of the others who are saying, look, Saskatchewan, this is an important part of Earth, let alone an important part of Canada or important part of Saskatchewan. And so where are the plans, where is the long-term plan that recognizes that we need to preserve these parts of our prairie?

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm speaking this as a Saskatchewan person. I know my rancher relatives out along the Saskatchewan River, my farmer relatives, they have a similar perspective. And, Mr. Speaker, they are all asking the question, where's the plan? Mr. Speaker, we're getting something from the Premier and from the Minister of Agriculture that does not recognize how important some of this land is for us. And clearly prairie is for grazing. I mean it's great for that, but there's also another responsibility that we all have.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I challenge the Minister of Agriculture to sit down and listen to the people who are actual pasture patrons and put together something that actually we all can be proud of. Mr. Speaker, I think he has it in him to do that, but we're not hearing it yet. And, Mr. Speaker, you know, it's the same way in whole number of other areas, where there just doesn't appear to be any listening from the government.

Now one area where they did have another little bit of a whim or a suggestion from the Premier, about using education tax on property for something else other than education, that one kind of got shut down fairly fast. Now I don't know if that's the style of management of issues or creation of issues that is planned or not. But it doesn't look planned, and I think the public doesn't see it as being planned. And, Mr. Speaker, that's why, as going back to my previous point, there may be a happy grand send-off of the Premier on to his next career. And the sooner the better, from this side of the House, for sure.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that this budget does — and it's done it over a few years, but last year was kind of hard to tell what was going on; but this year we're getting a little better picture — but what it's done is it's shifted the debt onto the Crowns. And basically we've increased the debt \$4 billion over the last four years . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And, Mr. Speaker, the member from Moose Jaw always has comments from way over there. But on this particular issue, I know that all of the public sees what's going on. They see it in their utility bills that come. They know that they're paying more because there's a lot of money that's been borrowed in the Crowns. And, Mr. Speaker, we've ended up having a Minister of Finance who has taken money from that place over the last few years.

Now it may be in this particular budget that they've taken as much as they can and so they've got to figure out some other ways to get resources. And I think this budget balances if you add in, under summary finances, the Liquor and Gaming Fund, the Crop Insurance Fund, the Auto Fund, a few other funds. And basically what you end up with is a balance on the summary.

But, Mr. Speaker, what we all will be paying over the long term is these debts that have been created on the Crown's side. And

that's where the cost-of-living issues in the province are right front and centre. I know that when people sit down and talk over coffee or look at some of the issues, it's these kinds of things that are of concern to them.

And we're proud of the kind of service and the work that's been done through our Crown corporations — SaskPower, SaskTel, SaskEnergy, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] being the key ones — and we're very supportive, as some marketing people say, almost loyal to a fault to SaskTel in a way. But I think we all know that our support of a Crown like that is in our interest in the long term.

And Mr. Speaker, we have lip service from the Premier about this because he knows of the political consequences of not having that lip service. What we want to make sure is that there's also the budget, the plan, the long-term plan that makes sure that our locally controlled institutions are here for the long term.

And Mr. Speaker, how do we respond to concerns that people have around higher costs? And I think there is a number of things that we can do. But I think the most important thing is that we take our job seriously and we make sure that we make the right choices about how we spend the money of the public. And that's the part where I'm having some difficulty with the budget that we have here.

Now when we look at a number of other issues, I've made some brief references to some issues around the environment, but practically Canada and Saskatchewan, following in the same track, have made some substantial steps in the wrong direction around how we deal with a number of these issues. And, Mr. Speaker, where are we going to make a change? What are we going to do? Well then you end up with a budget which further diminishes the ability of our Ministry of Environment to respond to a number of these issues. We also, we know that that has long-term effect on how our . . . what we're going to deal with as a province.

Mr. Speaker, we do live in a place that I call a green space on Earth. That's because we have 1.1 million people living in a very large area and we have a role as trustees and as people responsible. As I indicated, the Minister of Agriculture is trustee on all of that important land in the southern part of the province in the same way that the Minister of Environment is the trustee for the North of the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, those are very serious jobs, and in some ways maybe the most important jobs if we're thinking in the long term for the province of Saskatchewan. And how those decisions are made about our land and our water and our air, all of those ones are crucial. And, Mr. Speaker, it appears that in the cutting or tailing back or the perception of, well let's reduce government, they've forgotten the important role that is there for the trustee of the land and the water and the air: Minister of Environment in the North, Minister of Agriculture in the South.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I say let's have those members of the cabinet, along with the Premier and the Minister of Finance, take that role seriously and make sure that we have sufficient resources, both in dollars but more importantly in people and managers. And that's where we see there's been some very,

very dramatic changes that affect many, many things.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you're trying to deal with a budget, we know that it's the spending plan where the government tries to set out what it is that they intend to do. And I guess my point and why I'm supporting the amendment to this budget motion is that we don't have a plan. We have lots of places where people are going to be suffering because of the decisions that are made, where our province is going to be suffering because of the decisions that are made. And so, Mr. Speaker, with that I will conclude my remarks. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — Debate will continue on both the main motion and the amendment concurrently. Before I recognize the next speaker, I'd simply remind members that there's sufficient time for all members to enter into the debate. And as such, I would ask them to save their comments until they have the opportunity to enter into the debate. I recognize the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's truly an honour and a pleasure for me to stand here in this Assembly today and enter into this debate on our 2014-2015, our balanced, summary budget that was delivered by our Finance minister in this Assembly yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

Just at the outset, I'd like to just make a couple of acknowledgments, as often happens in the Assembly. I would like to acknowledge my constituency assistant who was down yesterday to observe the proceedings on budget day. She headed back today, Mr. Speaker, to get ahead of the snow on the roads a little bit, but Ms. Sally Fitch is the eyes and the ears and the face of the constituency office in Rosthern-Shellbrook.

As well my family, Mr. Speaker. As I've alluded to before, no individual serves in this Assembly alone. It definitely is a family effort. And I'd like to acknowledge my son who's in university up in Saskatoon and, quite frankly, got a summer job here the other day in his field. I'm thrilled about that. So is he. And my daughter . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . We're all thrilled. And my daughter, Mr. Speaker, who wakes up with a grin on her face every day and attends school, attends dance, taken up snowboarding this winter, Mr. Speaker. The love and laughter that she approaches every day of her life is truly inspiring for myself, Mr. Speaker. And my wife: my wife, Krista, is truly my best friend and my rock. And she is a good woman to put up with me the last 20 years, most definitely, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is the third budget that I have taken part in since I was elected in 2011. And I can't help but think, and I'm sure many in this Assembly can relate in it, that this budget was just a little bit different maybe than the last two I've seen and the ones previous to that, Mr. Speaker.

[11:45]

And I think it has the opportunity to be quite a bit different, Mr. Speaker, when we come to voting on it. Because when I watched the Minister of Finance release the budget yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and when he announced that there's going to be no tax increases in this budget — no personal tax increases, no education tax, property tax increases, Mr. Speaker, and

specifically no increases to the credit unions' tax incentives that they receive — Mr. Speaker, I saw members of the opposition applaud that initiative, Mr. Speaker. And I was encouraged that they might have a look at this and vote in favour of this budget, Mr. Speaker, make it a unanimous vote in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, there was also applause across the way from opposition members when our Finance minister announced that in addition to the nine joint-use education facilities that have been announced previously this year, there will be additional renovations to many schools as well as two more facilities, Mr. Speaker, two more education facilities right here in Regina, being Connaught and Sacred Heart School, that'll be funded in this coming budget, Mr. Speaker. And the members opposite acknowledged that with applause yesterday, and I again was encouraged that we may have a unanimous vote when it comes time to vote on this budget.

Mr. Speaker, one other note and something that makes this budget maybe just a little bit different than many of the others that, or a couple of the others that I've seen in this Assembly but many of the others most significantly since 2004, Mr. Speaker, in 2004 this government moved, and to the NDP's credit — they were in government at that time — but they moved to reporting on not only the GRF [General Revenue Fund], Mr. Speaker, but the summary financial basis. And it's been that way, Mr. Speaker, up until yesterday.

Yesterday this Finance minister in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, tabled a budget or introduced a budget, Mr. Speaker, that focuses on the summary financial statements. Mr. Speaker, this is something that the Provincial Auditor has asked for and it's something that this Premier, this Finance minister, and this Saskatchewan Party government delivered yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to read actually the Acting Provincial Auditor's comments on yesterday's budget, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to read them into the record. I think they're significant and they're important in light of the budget that was announced yesterday. And this is the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, "Our office strongly supports these changes. They will eliminate confusion and help legislators and the public better understand the government's finances." Mr. Speaker, that's the Acting Provincial Auditor, Ms. Judy Ferguson's comments on yesterday's budget that was introduced in this Assembly.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm encouraged that the members of the opposition will be supporting this budget and it'll be a unanimous budget as the member from Rosemont, Mr. Speaker, has been on his feet or asking questions in excess of 120 times, calling on the government to report on summary financial statements. And it happened yesterday, Mr. Speaker. And I look forward to a vote on this budget next week.

Mr. Speaker, more specifically to this budget that was announced or released in this Chamber yesterday, this budget is most definitely about steady growth for the province of Saskatchewan. This budget contains, as I said, no tax increases, which were popular with all of the members of the Assembly. And this budget controls spending.

Mr. Speaker, this budget continues to make investments in the

infrastructure for our Saskatchewan communities. And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, this budget continues to invest in Saskatchewan's most valuable resource, and that's our people. Mr. Speaker, it continues the province of Saskatchewan on a path of fiscal responsibility. And this summary financial budget that was released in this Assembly yesterday, Mr. Speaker, most importantly, was balanced. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it had a \$71 million surplus.

And I must say, I must say, Mr. Speaker, that this balanced budget did not come easily. It's only through the concerted effort of our Finance minister, our members of cabinet, and their ministry officials, Mr. Speaker, as well as input from caucus and, very importantly, the co-operation of stakeholders across the province, that we're able to control spending and introduce a balanced budget like we were yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

And this balanced budget is exactly what the people of Saskatchewan have come to expect from this government, Mr. Speaker. We've introduced numerous balanced budgets. We did it again yesterday. And it's precisely what the members of the province of Saskatchewan or the people of Saskatchewan expect on budget day from the Saskatchewan Party government.

I would like to note however that the easier route to take in this instance, Mr. Speaker, because there is spending pressures, there is people that need money for different projects — we realize that, Mr. Speaker — but the easier route would have been to maybe not make some of these tougher decisions and not to control the spending of the Government of Saskatchewan, and this ultimately would allow deficits to creep in. And, Mr. Speaker, this has been shown all too often in many jurisdictions across North America that this has actually been the case, in particular in recent years, Mr. Speaker. Not so in Saskatchewan.

The reality in Saskatchewan is quite simply this, Mr. Speaker. In 2007 residents of Saskatchewan have experienced the largest income tax reduction in the history of the province, Mr. Speaker. In fact, nearly 112,000 people no longer pay any provincial income tax at all. Mr. Speaker, since 2007 the people of Saskatchewan have had the largest property tax reduction in the history of the province, Mr. Speaker. Those are the facts.

Just this week, Mr. Speaker, it was reported that our population continued to grow in the year 2013 by more than 20,000 people, Mr. Speaker. This now means that 1,117,503 people are now calling this province home. This makes Saskatchewan the second fastest growing province in the Dominion of Canada and puts us well on our plan to reach our growth plan goal of 1.2 million by the year 2020.

Mr. Speaker, when we introduce budgets into this Assembly, they are an outlook of the next year of how the government is going to spend or invest the people of Saskatchewan's money throughout the next year, but they are really in essence an outlook through that year and some on either side. Mr. Speaker, I heard some allusions in the member from Lakeview's speech about long-term plan and suggests that we don't have a plan, and I would very quickly refer him to *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*, Mr. Speaker. If he looked in that booklet, he would very quickly see that the amendment about cuts and crumbs . . .

And I didn't hear after that, but I heard cuts and crumbs, Mr. Speaker, which very precisely is not a long-term plan for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. So I encourage members opposite to have a look in *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*.

That plan for growth, Mr. Speaker, again was a vision by Saskatchewan people for Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, the budgets that we introduce in this Assembly are really in essence rungs on the ladder to achieving the goals in that plan for growth. Mr. Speaker, when I look in that *Plan for Growth*, I very quickly go to the page with the six core growth activities. And when I look at our budget, I look at how our budget ties into those growth activities, Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased to say that this one does in a very large way.

First of all, this balanced summary budget that was introduced yesterday by our Finance minister enhances the Saskatchewan plan for growth by investing in infrastructure projects required for that growth. First of all, Mr. Speaker, infrastructure projects are most notable in the Ministry of Highways in the investment of almost \$665 million to build and to operate and to maintain our provincial highway system.

Mr. Speaker, over \$400 million of this money is a direct investment in capital programs, capital programs to catch up on the \$1 billion CAA [Canadian Automobile Association] identified deficit that we inherited in 2007 but also capital plans, Mr. Speaker, to deal with the growth that we have as we move forward in Saskatchewan. Capital plans such as the twinning of the No. 16 Highway from Saskatoon to Clavet, Mr. Speaker. Pre-construction work is going to be done for twinning projects involving highways between Regina, Estevan, and Bienfait, as well as from Saskatoon to Delisle. Mr. Speaker, these are all high-growth areas. There's also growth in the industrial sector in these areas, so there's trucks on the road, Mr. Speaker, and there's efforts being made to make those highways safer and to move more traffic down them.

Mr. Speaker, there's passing lane pre-construction work being done for Highway No. 7 between Delisle and Rosetown, again, Mr. Speaker, a highway with ever-increasing capacity and as well, trucks on the road.

Something that is a little near and dear to my heart, Mr. Speaker, is the municipal roads for the economy program which is funded again this year with twenty-five and a half million dollars. Mr. Speaker, through my work as Legislative Secretary to our Minister of Agriculture, I've had the opportunity to meet with a number of different agribusinesses and value-added food processors and different businesses within the ag industry. And, Mr. Speaker, these places have a lot of product coming in by truck and a lot of processed product going out by truck, and they don't always have the luxury of being located right on one of our provincial highways. This heavy truck traffic going in and out of the plants, Mr. Speaker, it's hard on the access roads. The municipal roads for the economy program is a program that supports Saskatchewan business, it supports the expansion of Saskatchewan business, and it's a good program for the agricultural processing business in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, anyone that's been through Saskatoon or in Saskatoon or tried to move through Saskatoon by vehicle in the last number of years, the unprecedented growth in Saskatoon,

Mr. Speaker, has caused traffic challenges. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think there's anyone that has moved around in that city that hasn't noticed the benefits of the south bypass in Saskatoon. I know I sure have, as we're in there frequently, as I'm through the city as well. Mr. Speaker, in this budget there's a commitment to work with the city of Saskatoon as well as the federal government to look at methods to fund the north commuter bridge in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, which will again affect and improve traffic flow in one of our fastest growing cities, Mr. Speaker, I believe one of the fastest growing cities in Canada at the moment.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about infrastructure, I talked a little bit about highways, but I'd be remiss if I didn't add a few comments in on health care, Mr. Speaker, and some of the infrastructure in health care. As a matter of fact, there's nearly \$95 million that's being invested in Saskatchewan's health care projects across the province, Mr. Speaker. And again to speak about something that I have some experience with and something that is near and dear to me is some of the funding that's available for the 13 long-term care facilities that were announced a number of years ago, Mr. Speaker. As everyone knows here, we had the opportunity to open one of those integrated facilities in the community where I live. Mr. Speaker, it's up, it's operational with full services, and it's paid for.

Mr. Speaker, there's \$27 million in this budget to continue work on five more of those facilities that are going in Biggar, Kelvington, Kipling, Maple Creek, and Prince Albert. There's also, Mr. Speaker, in this budget \$16 million for the completion of a new hospital in Moose Jaw.

Mr. Speaker, something else a little closer to home, to the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook to do with health care, Mr. Speaker — and this is an important project moving forward; these projects take some time — is the funding, the \$2.5 million . . . Or sorry, this is in North Battleford, the \$2.5 million for the early-stage funding of the Saskatchewan Hospital. And I know my constituency gets right up into . . . It's close to North Battleford. I know my colleague from The Battlefords is happy to see that project moving forward, Mr. Speaker. And that'll be an interesting project as we move through the next number of years, not only for the community of North Battleford, but the Saskatchewan Hospital services the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in Prince Albert we have the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital, which is a regional facility, Mr. Speaker. It's my facility. It's where my daughter was born. When my son breaks his ankle, that's where we go to have his ankle reset, Mr. Speaker. It's a facility for many . . .

An Hon. Member: — How many ankles has he broken?

Mr. Moe: — Some of . . . He's broken some of his ankles. But, Mr. Speaker, it's a catchment facility. It's a regional facility, not only for the communities surrounding Prince Albert such as the community where I live, in Shellbrook or Leask or Birch Hills, but it also is a catchment for health care for the entire North, Mr. Speaker. And when I speak of the North, I speak of all of up in the treeline and north there, Mr. Speaker.

I know there's a couple of members opposite that have self-anointed them as the voice of the North in this building,

which is precisely not true, Mr. Speaker. We have a member across the treeline from Carrot River. We have members from Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Rivers, across Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker, right across to Lloydminster. And the investment in the P.A. [Prince Albert] Victoria Hospital in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker, to further the construction planning for that facility, Mr. Speaker, is appreciated by northern Saskatchewan in its entirety. Mr. Speaker, there's also increased funding for the 24 additional beds at the Pineview Terrace in Prince Albert as well.

And a couple other items within health care that maybe are just off the infrastructure topic a little bit but nonetheless important, Mr. Speaker, is the funding to enhance the primary health care model in many of our communities and the funding to get the other three collaborative emergency centres up and rolling, Mr. Speaker. We have Shaunavon going. We have Maidstone going. And I know in our constituency, we have the community of Spiritwood working closely with the health region to get their collaborative emergency centre up and going this year.

[12:00]

Mr. Speaker, there's investment again in the rural family physician recruitment program to create that locum pool to bring stability to our rural facilities, as well as investment, Mr. Speaker, in house calls for seniors, as well as hot-spotting to recognize those individuals that require a little bit more care and a little bit of . . . to assist the high-risk and high-needs patients, Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan — some exciting investments in health care, not only on the capital side but also on the service delivery side, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, back to my six core items of the growth plan. This balanced summary budget enhances the Saskatchewan plan for growth by educating, by training, and by developing a skilled workforce. Mr. Speaker, to educate and train a skilled workforce, I think it's best to start with the children. Mr. Speaker, this budget definitely does that by an addition of 500 new child care spaces.

These have been . . . To bring this to a local level, Mr. Speaker, last June 18th I attended the grand opening of the Love and Laughter child care centre in the community of Spiritwood. This April 5th, so just coming up here right away, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to attend another grand opening in the community of Shellbrook for the Happy Hearts Childcare that's going to break ground here . . . sorry, not a grand opening. They're going to break ground on a new facility. And we have some other communities that are looking at this important initiative as well. And it gets your kids into the frequency of later getting to school.

Following that, Mr. Speaker, another \$20 million in pre-K [pre-kindergarten] programs which have also been noticed in many communities across the province but also in our constituency. And there's steady growth in our schools, Mr. Speaker, very steady growth. Last year there was interim growth funding for school divisions in Saskatchewan, and this year there's an increase of over \$19 million in operating funding for our school divisions.

Mr. Speaker, there's much needed facilities that are on the

horizon in addition to, like I had mentioned, the nine joint-use facilities that were announced earlier this year. There's also an announcement in this year's budget to replace the Connaught and Sacred Heart School using whatever methods of funding, Mr. Speaker.

These initiatives have been noticed by the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to enter in a quote from Janet Foord, the president of SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], on the record here. And it goes like this, and I quote:

School boards are currently facing close to a \$700 million backlog of education infrastructure funding, and with the average age of K-12 education facilities being 50 years [old] this is a serious problem for students. Today's announcement that the government will provide additional capital funding outside of the previous P3 announcements is much welcomed news [says Foord].

Mr. Speaker, as we move out of the primary system into the post-secondary system, which I personally am having some experience with now with my son being there, post-secondary funding in general has received an increase, Mr. Speaker, of \$24 million, or a 3.7 per cent increase in advanced ed funding. Mr. Speaker, \$17 million, or pardon me, in addition . . . In this, Mr. Speaker, there's \$216 million that are provided in student supports for post-secondary education students. Mr. Speaker, there's \$7 million for the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship. Mr. Speaker, there's seven and a half million dollars in this budget for SAGES, the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings, which I have had many questions about over the last number of weeks and months leading into this. Mr. Speaker, people are interested in this program.

And my personal favourite, Mr. Speaker, a personal favourite student support program, because I hope my son will be part of this one day, is the \$82 million for the Saskatchewan grad retention program, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . He gets the money and I won't get the money, but that's fine.

This budget, Mr. Speaker, just to jump back to health care and health care training, this budget also provides for increasing our nurse training seats, Mr. Speaker. It further increases our seats at the College of Medicine in getting to our goal of 100 College of Medicine seats for our physicians. It further increases our medical residency positions, Mr. Speaker, with the ultimate goal of 120 medical residents working in the province. And it adds five more nurse practitioners' training seats so that we are at 15, well on our way to meeting our goal of 20 by the year 2015-16.

Mr. Speaker, this balanced summary budget enhances the Saskatchewan growth plan by supporting increased trade, increased investment, and increased exports. This begins with a half a million dollars to initiate the start up of the manufacturing centre of excellence, also investment in STEP [Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership], Mr. Speaker, or the Saskatchewan trade or export partnership which . . . And we all know how beneficial STEP has been to our exporting partners in the province.

Mr. Speaker, this government, and more specifically this

Premier, are engaged in supporting Saskatchewan's trade, Saskatchewan's investments, and Saskatchewan's exports each and every day. This is recently most notable, most notable, Mr. Speaker, by this government's efforts on the grain transportation file. Mr. Speaker, it was this government that started to engage with the railway industries last spring. It was this Minister of Agriculture that engaged with the railways and the grain companies last spring in working through a plan to move crops to the port. Mr. Speaker, it was the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Highways that continued those discussions with logistics groups throughout the summer into the winter. And, Mr. Speaker, here when we hit a roadblock through this winter with grain transportation, it was this Premier, Mr. Speaker, that appointed a delegation to meet with stakeholders within the industry — with rail companies, with producers, and with grain companies — to find a solution to this very real economic challenge to our province and to our agricultural producers.

Mr. Speaker, in all my travels the last few months visiting with all these stakeholders, whether it be farmers, grain companies, railways, we heard some great input on the different measures that would have to occur to clear this grain backlog. And that input, Mr. Speaker, was relayed to the federal government through our Minister of Agriculture and our Premier prior to the order in council that was put through not too long ago and, Mr. Speaker, most recently through our Minister of Agriculture, has communicated more information on what this government feels that Saskatchewan needs in the way of regulations with the legislation that will be coming before our federal government here shortly. Like I said, Mr. Speaker, these have been compiled and communicated. We're unsure whether the opposition has had any communications on this file, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, with anybody.

Mr. Speaker, throughout all my travels and in particular those travels with producers the last number of months, when we talked about the grain transportation file . . . And I want to make this clear. Not once, not once in all the producers I talked to did I hear this statement. Not once did I hear, boy it sure is a good thing that the NDP are making you guys address this grain transportation file. Never heard it.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that in 63 times that that leader of that opposition has gotten to his feet to ask a question, he not once has asked a question on behalf of Saskatchewan agriculture and Saskatchewan business on the grain transportation file. Mr. Speaker, producers in this province and people connected with agriculture are fully aware of the lack of engagement of the NDP and in particular the leader of the NDP when it comes to agricultural issues.

Mr. Speaker, on the grain transportation, the lack of grain transportation in this province, Mr. Speaker, it's not an issue that just affects agriculture in our province. This is an issue that goes right down main street, Mr. Speaker. It affects every business on main street in every community across this province, big or small, and it was the largest economic challenge that I've seen since I've been elected, Mr. Speaker. And it's my hopes that through our efforts as a province and as a federal government that we're well on our way to providing a long-term solution to this, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, back to our core growth goals of the Saskatchewan growth plan. This balanced summary budget enhances Saskatchewan's plan for growth by advancing Saskatchewan's natural resource strengths. Mr. Speaker, it's this provincial government that has been very outspoken and a proactive approach to transporting our export products to an exportable port facility by any means necessary that are safe, efficient, and good for the economy, Mr. Speaker. And most notably, I point to a motion on March the 12th, moved by the member from Lloydminster, the Minister of Energy, in support of the Gateway pipeline.

Mr. Speaker, thank goodness the people of Saskatchewan have entrusted enough people to vote in favour of our economy and transporting our goods safely to a port position, as that motion passed with no help, Mr. Speaker, no help as the members opposite voted against it.

Mr. Speaker, this balanced summary budget that was introduced yesterday in this House enhances Saskatchewan's plan for growth by ensuring, ensuring the ongoing competitiveness of Saskatchewan's economy through things like supporting safe, reliable transportation methods for oil, Mr. Speaker, by advocating for the grain industry so that they can get their product to port. Mr. Speaker, this is something that happens each and every day in this government, not just on budget day.

Mr. Speaker, as I roamed the building yesterday, talking with different people and talking about the business climate in Saskatchewan and how the budget would affect the business climate in Saskatchewan, I heard two things. The first thing I heard, the budget was balanced. The second thing I heard, Mr. Speaker, was the fact that there are no tax increases in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, a balanced budget, taking into account all government entities and no tax increases in that budget, are good news for the ongoing competitiveness of Saskatchewan business. And the CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] agrees with it as Marilyn Braun-Pollon tweeted yesterday: "Pleased the Saskatchewan budget is balanced and doesn't hike education property taxes." A great tweet.

Mr. Speaker, the last core growth plan goal in the plan for growth is fiscal responsibility. What am I going to say? The budget's balanced. It's an introduced . . . It's a summary-focused budget this year, Mr. Speaker, for the first time that we're . . . introduced yesterday, here today, Mr. Speaker. It's balanced. It's got no tax increases in it, Mr. Speaker. That is showing the fiscal responsibility that the people of Saskatchewan have come to respect from this government.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good budget for Saskatchewan. It's a balanced budget. It's a transparent budget and it focuses on reporting on the summary financial basis.

Mr. Speaker, again I ask the members opposite, and I ask them individually to some degree, the Regina members, and more specifically the member from Elphinstone. Next week when this budget comes to a vote here, Mr. Speaker, I ask him if he's going to stand up and vote against a school in Connaught and Sacred Heart, Mr. Speaker. I ask him if he's going to vote

against those schools.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the two self-anointed voices from the North. I ask them if they're going to stand up and vote against the long-term care facility in La Ronge, Mr. Speaker. And I ask if all of you, all of the opposition members, are going to vote against holding the line on tax increases to the credit unions.

Mr. Speaker, and I specifically ask all the members opposite, but specifically the member of Regina Rosemont who's been on his feet numerous times in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, asking this government to report on summary financial statements, and I ask him to support this budget, Mr. Speaker. It's a good budget for Saskatchewan people.

I won't be supporting any silly cuts and crumbs amendment, Mr. Speaker. I'll be supporting this budget introduced by our Minister of Finance.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to enter the budget debate here. I've been into many of them and like I've always said, this is the budget that was gathered by information from the people. And I know when we went around with my constituents, you know, the number one priority is a balanced budget. They always said we need to always have a balanced budget, and that was the number one priority. And I'm glad that that was part of designing that balanced budget as we move forward.

It was a tighter budget this year, but it was a budget that focused on priorities. And that's what the people of not only rural Saskatchewan but also urban members of constituents of this great province have said that, you know, you have to focus on your priorities when it comes to investing in people. And this is a budget that does that. And it was not that easy not to, you know, just to easily dip into . . . to raise taxes and just, you know, because there always is, as members have said, lots of requests for stuff being built. I mean, you know, and people expect things to be done just now, right now, like highways ought to be twinned, you know, health care to be fixed immediately.

You know, but most people understand that you can't do that. And raising taxes and driving yourself deep in debt isn't the way to go. I mean, other governments have done that in the past and it hasn't worked. They've done that throughout the country and they did that throughout the world and it's always come back to haunt them. The most successful economies are always the ones that just do the steady growth and run the balanced budgets and prioritize their money, and sometimes you have to make some tough decisions. You know out in my constituency, I mean naturally agriculture is very important and this budget addresses that. You know, we have 371.6 million and that'll help farmers go.

[12:15]

The biggest thing that was in this budget is the western livestock price insurance program. I mean I've been through the cattle industry. I've been in the cattle industry all my life, been

through the highs and lows of it, and there's been some pretty bad lows when BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] hit and the low prices over other things. And there was no insurance program. I mean you hoped, you know . . . People, ranchers don't like asking for an ad hoc program, but you know they were, some of them were asking over the years, you know in industry and they crashed bad in the BSE years and when you, you know, you couldn't even sell a cow. So they've been asking to have an insurance program very similar to what we have with crop insurance where they, you know, they pay into it. They pay their share, but it gives them some security down the road and I think this program addresses that. And I was glad we're moving forward with this program in conjunction with Alberta, you know. That's very important.

It's also, you know, this budget's also highlighted by 70 . . . [inaudible] . . . million for strategic initiatives such as research and market development. I mean that's very important to our industry, to the agriculture industry as we move forward. I mean you look at the huge crop that we grew this year. You know, it just wasn't all due to the great weather. It was due to a lot of the new technologies that are out there, the new seeding implements, the new seeding tools, the new how you lay your fertilizer . . . [inaudible] . . . and seed, seed development too. You know, over the years that's all been working towards to help farmers grow better and bigger crops, and I think we're going to be growing bigger and better crops as we move forward with that.

And with that we need market research. We need research for seed development to make more weed . . . you know, so crops are more weed resistant and how to kill the weeds that are out there as they become stronger. So that's very important too. And that's what farmers are asking because those are things that they can't do. Those are things that are out of their hands. You know, the research and the development and that, that's out of their hands. So they look towards government for that and I'm glad that we're stepping up and doing that. And also developing markets throughout the world, that's, you know, that's something else that your farmers and ranchers look forward to as we move forward in how to develop the markets, and our government has been very proactive through STEP. And also the federal government has been very proactive, signing free trade agreements that have increased sales throughout the world, and that's improved the life and quality for farmers greatly over the many years, the many benefits of all the trade agreements and opening many, many new markets, you know, for all the many new crops that are being grown out there.

And every year you always hear of a new crop being tried somewhere on the Prairies and possibly a new market for it. You know, I can remember when peas and lentils were in the experimental stage and, you know, hardly anybody grew them, and now they're the norm for every farm. They're in every crop rotation. That came with research and market development and developing the world market.

And actually, as the member that spoke before me, grain transportation right now is on the foremost of every farmer's mind right now. When you go home, that's what every farmer will be talking about in the coffee shop. It's affecting them greatly, and I know that they're glad that we're trying to work in this. And we know that it's a long-range problem, that it's

going to have to be addressed as we move forward because this isn't . . . As more oil is starting to move down the rail and as this province grows, potash, more potash being moved by the rail, more manufactured goods coming in and going out by the rail, we have to make sure that agriculture isn't left behind and make sure that the railroad companies make their commitments to the shippers, that they are moving the tonnage down there. And we are working with the federal government to make sure that a plan is in place for now and in the future so this situation doesn't happen again.

So we move forward. Revenue sharing is also very important out in my constituency. And the Saskatchewan municipalities are receiving 394 million in direct provincial support, you know, to build communities and enhance the quality of life for the residents. Now that's up 32 million from the 2013-14 budget and up 152 million, or 63 per cent, from the '07-08 budget.

That's another thing. As I have many very small towns in my riding, you know . . . and a very cold winter. I was just talking to the reporter from the *Last Mountain Times*. He'd been at the Nokomis meeting, I think last night, and one of the discussions was broken pipes. As the frost's being driven down deeper, they've had more breaks. A lot of towns have had more water main breaks, more sewer breaks than normal this year just because of the very cold winter. And then even in Saskatoon it's been, you know, mentioned on the news on that end of it.

So infrastructure is very, very important to all my communities throughout my area and also through the urban areas too. You know that's very important as we move forward, is infrastructure. As the population grows in the cities and in the towns and villages, you know, you need the proper water treatment, the proper water lines, and you need them in good shape. So I know our government has been stepping up on infrastructure.

You know, in my constituency, you know, one of the things that is happening is in Blackstrap. An agreement has been reached, so we'll see an estimated 2.6 million of private investment in Blackstrap Provincial Park. Agreements with two separate companies are now in place, so we'll see the construction of a new marina and rental cabins at Blackstrap. You know, that's a provincial park that I think under the NDP was ignored for many years. And we're stepping up and trying to get that park up and running. It's a very good park. It's very close to Saskatoon. It's something that many of the Saskatoon residents can just visit on a daily basis. You can just bring your kids out for, you know, a couple of hours.

It's not like you have to travel, you know, six or seven hours to a park where you're camping. You can just come out. You can zip out on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon and spend a couple of hours there with them. And I think that's very important that we're trying to, ministry and the government, trying to work towards, to make that park as useful as it possibly can. You know, they're looking at an operation of a 190-slip inland marina at the Blackstrap Provincial Park. You know, that's going to be very important for that area as we move forward.

And you know, as I mentioned before, health is always very important throughout my area too. You know, I'm trying to

touch the base of all the things how this budget will touch my constituency. I mean long-term care has always been, you know, foremost in the residents' mind, and also doctors, you know, trying to retain doctors. And I know that we are doing more there with incentives to keep doctors in rural Saskatchewan. I know that we've increased the budget for that, and that's important. Also the collaborative care facilities that we're looking to expand there; I think that's the way of the future. The Health ministry has been doing a very good job there at working with communities to ensure that they have a form of health care in each and every community.

Because when you talk to residents, I mean, that's the most important thing to them is to make sure that there is some form of health care in their area. It doesn't matter how small their facility is. You know, they want to be able to know that . . . like the member opposite, he had mentioned his boy, you know, breaking his ankle. Well they want a facility that they can go to immediately very close by for stuff like that, whether it be serious injuries or sometimes just minor injuries. But you know, they don't want to be travelling 50 or 60 miles for that. So with these centres, you know, as we expand them throughout the province, hopefully that will help to improve health care throughout my constituency and throughout Saskatchewan.

You know, looking at health care, we're looking at the hot-spotting pilot program, you know, to identify and assist high-cost, high-use patients. You know, that's another way of just trying to address the high cost of health care. Because I mean we know health care is very expensive to deliver. It's very important but it's also very expensive. We have to look at ways of where we can save costs or where we could prioritize that money and move it to different areas so that it can be best used. Because them dollars are very precious that we have, that the taxpayers have given us, and they expect the very best use of them. So when it comes to health care we've been, you know, trying to prioritize where we can and work towards where we can make them savings and pass them on to the users of health care.

Highways are, naturally where I come from, are always very important, you know. And we're looking at, I have some highways that do need some fixing, but we are looking at Highway 15. That's a four-year project. I mean it's been on the radar screen for a long time. Last year we did 11 clicks of grading and I know I had a lot of good compliments on it. We widened it. We didn't pave it but we widened it, made a good firm base. And the residents in that area said, at least it's a start.

Now this year it tenders out I think for 13 more clicks and also to pave the first 11 and possibly the 13. We'll see how the tendering goes. But that road is going to be, on 15 Highway, is going to be a wide-load corridor, and that's something that this province needs from Alberta as we move east. Because with No. 11 being as busy as it is, you just can't move these wide loads down there anymore. I mean it's just too dangerous. I mean even as it is, there is wide loads having to move down there yet because they can't move down that route at times.

And even with pilot trucks, you know, you have people that are basically going around them ignoring the pilot trucks. It's getting dangerous on No. 11 Highway to move a very, very wide load because unfortunately people don't . . . When it

comes to traffic safety, they seem sometimes to get in a rush. So we need to move some of these heavy, wide loads down another corridor, and I'm glad we're working towards that.

You know, twinning is always very important to people. And I know we're looking at, we're going to be twinning from Saskatoon to Clavet. And I know that's a very, very busy highway, you know, just with the growth of our province but also with the mining industry out in that area. I know when the shifts change there, it's pretty well steady traffic, from what I understand.

We're looking at, you know, doing more passing lanes. You know, that's been an initiative that's been brought forward over the years that other provinces have tried. And we've had a pilot project, and we're moving towards that. And I think that's a very good initiative because unfortunately you just can't twin everything immediately, you know, because we're also working in the context of a balanced budget, which most of the, pretty well all of the people of Saskatchewan realize that, you know, you can't do everything. But what they want to see is responsible spending with their money.

And I know that when I was talking to residents yesterday that that's the feedback I was getting. First it was a balanced budget, no tax increases. You know, they were very happy with that. They were very pleased with that, you know, and also that they could see that we were prioritizing our spending where we had to and focusing . . . You know, I see there's an increase in the health care spending, which has always been asked for.

You know, as our economy is growing, as you know it is, I mean our population every . . . You know, whenever we release the investments every six months, the population has always gone up. And so people realize that we need to be putting more and more investment into infrastructure, into health care. But also with them people coming, I mean there's a bigger tax base, which most people understand. So that's one of the things they realize. That's something that our government is working towards as we work towards, you know, this budget, as we call it a steady growth.

[12:30]

And that's what they want. They don't want a boom and bust like has happened in some countries and in some provinces. They want . . . if we can keep this province the way we have been on a nice, steady growth. And it has been, you know, with our oil industry and our potash industry, our mining industry, agriculture industry, cattle industry, manufacturing — you know, there's been a growth in each one of the sectors. And with that comes people and comes that with investment. And with the people comes more tax money. And with that then you can do more things for infrastructure and more money in health care and all of them.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, those are my comments on the budget. I fully support this budget. I believe it is as good as any of the budgets we've ever presented. And it is what the people of Arm River-Watrous but also the people of Saskatchewan, urban and rural, are supporting. And this is what they wanted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's a pleasure for me to join in the debate about the budget, budget 2014-15. And right off the bat, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd to thank a few people before I get into my comments about the budget.

I actually stand the first time, our first budget, as a new father. So I've learned . . . Our son was born last May, and I've kind of looked at the budget from a different point of view now as our member from Rosthern-Shellbrook talked about looking at it, as the Saskatchewan advantage savings credit and tax credit is for future young people going to university. And I'm looking really forward to the day when I'm able to put money away for our son's education, which we're going to start doing right away. Hopefully, hopefully, as all fathers hope, hopefully he's going to be signing an NHL [National Hockey League] contract and we're not going to have to worry about that. But we'll have a fallback plan here in case that doesn't work out.

And as always, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a few people we do have to thank, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And first and foremost I have to thank my lovely wife who, I think like many of us, our spouses . . . It all has to do with the job that we do, and it's a strain on their lives as much as it is on our lives. They give up a lot of time with us so that we can do our jobs and go out to community events and represent our constituents.

And my wife does a wonderful job, and with our new little guy she is a wonderful mother. I can't say enough nice things about my wife because she puts up with me as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think that's no small burden. And she's a wonderful sounding board for ideas, and she's, as many members say, our best counsel. She's my best friend, and she's one of the big reasons I'm able to stand and give this address today.

We also have a hard-working group at our constituency office. My CA [constituency assistant] right now took a month holiday. She's in Thailand, but I have a wonderful person filling in, Kate Verbeek. She's is doing a wonderful job. And my full-time assistant, Heather Howell-Shiplack does great work with the constituents. She's great for casework. I think she's doing a wonderful job and the people of Walsh Acres have responded in such, and we get a couple of phone calls that she's done wonderful work for them. And I'm very happy to have such great help in the constituency office.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm kind of going to look at this budget from a different point of view. We all have our budget briefings and usually we get to go over and pore over them. But after the budget briefing this Wednesday I ran home as fast as I could and put Nickson in the tub and was able to give him a bath. And when my wife was putting him to bed, I went over the budget books. And I was looking at it and thinking, you know, in 20 years I wonder what people are going to look back and remember about this budget.

If 20 years from now, if my son asked me, well, Dad, why did you do that? Why did you do that? I think we should have the answers for them. So I took a look at the budget from that point

of view. And I think one thing our budget is going to be known for is the first budget presented on a summary financial basis, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And that's something which I think is very important moving forward for the citizens of Saskatchewan. It's a change that should have happened. I think the NDP were calling for it for a long, long, time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think the fact that this change has happened is one of the biggest reasons why, and I may be wrong, but I think this may have been the first time the opposition gave the government financier a standing ovation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I listened intently to the member from Rosemont's remarks, long remarks, yesterday, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And for an opposition to come forward, give a standing ovation on one point and then absolutely go off the rails and talk about how bad things are in Saskatchewan, how bad things are for families, well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we talk to constituents as well. And I think that speech that was given by the member from Regina Rosemont could have been cut and paste from an NDP speech in the '60s, the '70s, the '80s, the '90s, early 2000s, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think they've continuously looked in the rear-view mirror and they're missing out on the greatest province in the Dominion of Canada right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I think some of the wonderful things in this budget which I'm sure, and a couple of members clapped on occasion yesterday, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sure that we can all agree and say it's a good thing that we're building new schools in Regina — Sacred Heart, Connaught. And the member from Elphinstone has stood in this Assembly time and time and time on petitions asking for a new Sacred Heart school in his constituency. He gets it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I hope he can stand up when it's time to vote on this budget and vote for his constituents, vote for the people of Elphinstone because they got the school that they deserve, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think it's be a terrible misrepresentation of what people want if that member stands up and votes against a budget that gives them a new school.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I stand in this Assembly, and I think about a couple other things that members opposite have said about our budget. The member from Regina Rosemont talks about the truck traffic on Dewdney. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this budget looks at easing that traffic problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It looks at doing a truck bypass through Regina. The money's in there for this. I can't believe the member can stand in his spot and talk about how bad the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] is for the city of Regina, the economic activity that's going down there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We don't see the GTH as a problem. We see it as a solution. We see it as an opportunity for people in Regina to have good jobs. We see it as opportunity for Saskatchewan to become a leader in logistics, in services, in supply chain management, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And for that member, who represents Regina — and I understands he represents a portion of Regina Dewdney, represents that area — to say the GTH is something that's causing problems, well that's just a different philosophy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They say the GTH is causing problems. I say it's creating solutions, creating employment, creating

opportunity for our city.

And then he wants a solution to the GTH. We're going to bring in a bypass so trucks won't be going down Dewdney. And that member puts forward an amendment to the budget that's going to build schools in Regina, solve a problem that he has in Regina with traffic on Dewdney. Then he brings forward an amendment and he won't vote for a budget that's solving some of the problems he himself says there are out there. And I think that's something where, when they take the weekend . . . I think they should take the weekend and maybe go over the budget a little bit more and realize how many actual good things for hard-working families, for parents are in this budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I'd like to go over a few of those things right now. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we've had a record of doing what we say we're going to do with budgets. And this is the seventh consecutive balanced budget that this government's brought forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On the summary financial basis, a \$71 million surplus, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's something we take ample pride in, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think we work hard as a government to put priorities right. We work hard to make sure we were listening to the people of Saskatchewan, and we're putting the people's priorities first. And I think, first and foremost, one of their priorities is to make sure that the government is balancing their books like every family, every household, every business has to balance their books at home and in the office, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think that another thing that we committed to is steady growth, sustainable growth, helping the economy. We know the businesses, the people, the hard-working people of Saskatchewan grow this economy. I think it's the government's job to make sure that they create a climate where there can be some success, and they stay out of the way of the people of this province, ensuring that government doesn't hinder their ability to do business.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I agree that this budget is about steady growth. It invests money in people and invests money in infrastructure and in some of the things that we need most. Infrastructure is what's going to enable our economy to continue hitting on all cylinders, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And some of that investment we can see is that there is a two point . . . sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is \$681.2 million invested in agriculture, the cornerstone of our economy; \$589 million invested in community development, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And development is something that is very important to our province.

Moving forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the Premier's often quoted as saying, we do not achieve growth for growth's sake. We achieve growth for what we can do with that growth. And there's going to be some great examples in the budget of priorities which we put in place to ensure that this growth is benefiting the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In 2007 this government brought forward a program, a SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program, a program for disabilities and giving people some money that's really going to help them out. We have increased that

investment in SAID, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We increased the investment to SIP, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the seniors' income plan, because seniors are what helped build up this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I remember the member from Rosemont talking about how we're not investing in our people. We're not investing in our seniors. We're not investing in our children. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that could not be further from the truth.

We're increasing our health capital, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our health budget's \$5 billion. And I'm proud to say that that's something we're really working hard, we're working hard to make health care better in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're working hard to find efficiencies because that's what people want, Mr. Deputy Speaker. People want to know that we're trying to make our health dollars go as far as they can.

We're investing in infrastructure, infrastructure for health in Prince Albert. My seatmate was very, very happy to see . . .

An. Hon. Member: — A new hospital in Moose Jaw. I'm happy, happy, happy.

Mr. Steinley: — My colleague, one over, from Moose Jaw is very happy with their hospital in Moose Jaw. And it's nice to see all of my happy colleagues on international happy day, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They're all smiling and having a good time.

We are also investing, like we mentioned before, in K to 12 schools, Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$103.3 million in 2014-15, 96.2 million for school capital. Which is, in a breakdown quickly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, consisting of 46.4 million for construction on 10 ongoing major school projects; \$24 million for school maintenance, up 4.6 or 26 per cent from last year; 9.5 million to proceed to construction for two new schools; 6.9 million for 29 relocatables, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And this is a problem that the opposition probably never really had to look at — relocatable classrooms. Mr. Speaker, I think it's just a lot easier for a government, as the NDP realized in the past, to mitigate stagnation, to mitigate decline, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They wouldn't know that relocatable classrooms are needed because they never experienced population growth. They never experienced enrolments increasing in K to 12 education. And I think these challenges we're facing are challenges that we are happy to face. I think people of Saskatchewan are happy that our province is growing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There's \$1 million for . . . [inaudible] . . . capital projects; \$1 million for 15 new pre-K programs, which in a couple of years pre-K programs are going to be very important to my wife and I. Our little guy will be getting into the pre-K program. And I think it's very important that those possibilities are there for our young people. And like the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook spoke about, training young people early is important, and that's why we are investing in K to 12 education, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We're also investing in post-secondary education, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Advanced education and training infrastructure is \$32.6 million in 2014-15: 20.6 for maintenance in

post-secondary institutions, which is up 4.1 million from the previous year; and 12 million in projected funding, including 6.5 for the Health Sciences facility at the U of S, 4.5 for Parkland Regional College, and 1.1 million for Southeast Regional College.

We've had a track record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of investing in post-secondary education, investing in K to 12 education, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The infrastructure that is needed in these very important portfolios, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is something we take as a very serious priority.

I remember when I was going to school and when it rained, when I went to Waldeck School and when it rained, you had to make sure you didn't trip over the buckets because all the holes leaked in the roof, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And this is something that we're really moving away from. We're trying to ensure that the next future, the future of our province realize we're committed to them. Their government's committed for them to move forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[12:45]

I remember the member from Rosemont talking about seniors, talking about grandparents, mothers and fathers, like we don't have them, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have grandparents. I was happy to go visit my wife's baba in Yorkton last weekend and visit her in her residence. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want to make sure our seniors have the best possible care.

And we actually back that talk up. The seniors' personal care home benefit will increase the monthly income eligibility threshold by \$75, from \$1875 per month to 1950 per month, for an average benefit of 385 per month. The senior citizens' ambulance assistance program will receive increased funding of \$217,000 for additional claims.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't think it can be said enough how when we were in government, one of the first things we did was look at the seniors' income plan. The NDP government had 16 years to show how much they wanted our seniors to do better. Sixteen years to increase the seniors' income plan, and they didn't increase it once, Mr. Deputy Speaker — not once. So for them to sit on that side of the aisle and talk about how much they cared and how much they did for seniors, I think is — one of my favourite words — is disingenuous at the best, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I want to talk a little bit more about some plans we have because this government, this budget, is based on our Saskatchewan plan for growth. Moving forward, our minister is taking long-term care serious in Regina. There's \$1 million in planning for long-term care, Mr. Speaker, in Regina, and I think that's for planning where we need to go. We realize the population of Saskatchewan is getting older. We realize we're going to need more options for long-term care, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think the comment made by the member from Lakeview that we just fly by the seat of our pants, I don't know how their outfit runs over there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we generally have plans in place. And I think if you want to compare plans, well I guess you really can't because they haven't had a plan on

their website. They've had a new leader for a year. Not one public policy planned, not one plan for growth, not one crumb of economic plans within their party, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I don't know. Maybe hopefully they have a convention coming up soon so they can actually start putting some policies down on paper.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate probably one of my favourite ministers, the Minister of Social Services. Sorry . . . [inaudible] . . . She's done probably one of the best jobs in Social Services as a minister in this province's history. The Habitat for Humanity home is . . . We backed that talk up with money. We've provided millions of dollars to Habitat for Humanity. I've been able to go to a couple of key ceremonies with the minister, and when she walks in, everyone recognizes her right away. And they know that the decisions this minister's made for the vulnerable people in Saskatchewan are all because she has such a big heart and she's done a fantastic job.

The Headstart on a Home program is . . . I've been able to go to some of the groundbreaking ceremonies, and some of the turning key ceremonies for those too, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the people, to see their faces, walk into their new home and look at the home that they're going to be able to . . . a safe place to raise their family and a safe place for their kids, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think we all owe this Social Services minister a great round of applause for the job she's done . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Justice minister's okay as well.

Mr. Speaker, just to speak about education for a bit more because I think that we've put a lot of money forward for education. And there's a couple of statements I'd like to probably fact check for the member from Regina Rosemont, especially around EAs [educational assistants], Mr. Deputy Speaker. Fact check, yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I think that EAs in Saskatchewan, I am sure that's the decision made by a school board, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm quite certain that there isn't less EAs in the province now than there was before. I'm quite certain there's more EAs in this province than there was under the NDP.

And for them to fearmonger and spread out this false information, Mr. Deputy Speaker, does nothing but an injustice to them because I think a lot of times . . . We've heard it time and time again with their preamble when they ask questions, and our ministers have to stand up and say, well, the preamble isn't exactly right. What the member opposite said wasn't exactly right. So I think at some point in time they have to take a step back and realize that just because they say it time and time again, it doesn't make it true, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We think the teachers in our province are doing a wonderful job. I have teachers in my family. My brother was a teacher. My auntie's a teacher. My cousin's a teacher. My cousin's wife's a teacher. And we talk with teachers as well. And we want to have a wonderful relationship with the teachers of Saskatchewan. We want to make sure that we're both doing as best as we can for the students across Saskatchewan. That's why you see the investment in education capital in our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's why you see new schools

being built in our province — because we want the best possible outcomes for our students across the whole province.

And it's a commitment that the former minister made. It's the commitment that the current minister makes. And I am sure on this side, as long as we're on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're going to continue to invest in children's future all across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a few more things I'd like to touch on and one would be the support for municipalities. I know we've had, we made a commitment to one point of the PST [provincial sales tax], Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that was a commitment that municipalities were calling for across the province. I believe we're one of the first provinces in Canada to allow for a consistent amount of money that municipalities are going to receive. Municipalities have an easier time budgeting because they know how much money they're going to get based on the one point of the PST, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And there's a slight accounting change show there is a little . . . The money that municipalities are receiving is down slightly from last year. But, Mr. Speaker, if you want to look at it as a whole from 2007 to 2014, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the monies that municipalities have received from across Saskatchewan has more than doubled, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And Moose Jaw received 144 per cent more since 2007-08, and I think Regina is around 171, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I think that's a commitment that we make with our partners in government, the different levels of government. They appreciate that commitment from the Government of Saskatchewan. And they know that when they want to do projects, this government will be there to assist them because of the commitment we made with our municipal revenue sharing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And there's a couple of projects going forward. And you see in our budget, there is groundbreaking right now, and there's been an announcement with PCL, who's going to be doing the stadium. So there's \$50 million in the budget for the stadium in Regina, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I believe that when we're . . . I think 2017 is when the stadium's looking to be finished, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think it's something, when it's done all of Saskatchewan's going to look at this facility as something that we can be proud of and something that's going to be a first-class facility, and not just a stadium but a convention centre as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's a few more things I would like to talk about from our point of view that the members opposite, I think they'll be in favour of. And one is the long-term care facility in La Ronge. There's been a member across that aisle that's been asking for a long-term care facility in La Ronge, I think since he's been elected. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when that was announced he looked shocked — not happy, but shocked. And I couldn't really understand his reaction because as a member of the Legislative Assembly you try and get the best possible outcome for your constituents. Whether it be in opposition or government, we all are here to work hard for our constituents. And when someone gets a good amount of money for their constituents, they should be happy. But I'm not so sure the member from Cumberland was happy.

Another thing I'm wondering is that, how is he going to be able to go back to La Ronge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and say, you know, this government is building a long-term care facility and I voted against it? That's going to be a tough sell to the people of La Ronge and I think there are going to be a couple of questions around well, well, Mr. Cumberland MLA, why would you do that? Why would you vote against a new long-term care facility in La Ronge?

And another question I'd have to this member because I remember specifically yesterday the member from Rosemont say there's nothing in this budget for the North. Which again, there's some fact checking that needs to be done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I was running through just a priority for growth and at SaskPower we're investing \$1.2 billion for electricity generation, clean coal, natural gas, and hydro, as well as distribution and transmission. And 380 million of those dollars are for expansion from Island Falls to Key Lake to provide improved system stability for northern businesses, industry, and residents. So how could you go and say a budget has nothing in it for the North? A long-term care home, \$380 million for electrical upgrades in the North, and the member from Cumberland, and I'm taking a wild leap here but probably the member from Athabasca, are going to vote against this budget.

I'm looking forward to their speeches, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because when these two members stand on their feet and they start talking against a budget that, I'm taking maybe a leap here again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but probably one of the best budgets for northern Saskatchewan for a long, long time and those two members are going to have to go home to their constituents and say, you know, you guys got a fair bit of money but we voted against that budget. And I'm going to be very interested to see how many constituents are happy when they voted against a budget that's good for northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've got some time left here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which I'm pretty happy about because I haven't even got to third party quotes I'd like to talk about. And I've never done this; this is my first time doing this in the House, but I'm going to quote a journalist by the name of Murray Mandryk. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a quote from the esteemed journalist, as the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook said, "I want to say this at least once in his career. He might be the best Finance minister I have seen at actually managing the line-by-line costs." I could not agree more with Mr. Mandryk. I think we have a Finance minister, a treasury board that's worked hard on these budget items, line by line, not a seat-of-their-pants change.

I don't remember seeing the member from Regina Lakeview in our caucus meetings, and I'm pretty sure he's never been in one of our cabinet meetings, but this government took every item in this budget seriously, went over it line by line for many, many months. It wasn't a one-day operation. Once again, I'm taking a liberty; I'm not sure how they did their budgets in the '80s and '90s and 2000s. Poorly, I know that, but besides that I'm not sure how they organized them. But the member of Lakeview could've just wrote them all at home actually. I'm not sure. He maybe created the term budget actually.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I want to say is that this budget is one of the things that, in 20 years, one of the things I'm going to be able to tell my son when he asks me about my time in politics, and 20 years is a long time, I'll be able to tell him that this budget, when it brought in the summary financial statements as the main way to bring budgets forward, that brought in seven consecutive balanced budgets, that took the words of people from across Saskatchewan because I think we have a wide growth of people from across Saskatchewan in our caucus, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from all over the province, and it took every person going out and talking to their constituents, having great caucus discussions, prioritizing things that we talked to the people of Saskatchewan, that they had their best interests at heart, investing in people, investing in infrastructure, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm going to be able to tell my son, this is one of the budgets we're most proud of as a government, bringing it to the people of Saskatchewan.

I'm going to be extremely happy to go out door knocking this summer. And when people of Regina Walsh Acres ask well, Mr. Steinley, what have you done for us? I'm going to say . . . I just quoted myself. Well as our MLA, what have you been able to bring, provide? And I would say, and I'll be able to tell them on their doorstep, on their doorstep I'll be able to tell them that, constituents, we brought balanced budgets to Saskatchewan. We brought a new way to deliver our budgets.

As the Provincial Auditor, Acting Provincial Auditor would say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our office, and I quote, "Our office strongly supports these changes," Acting Provincial Auditor Judy Ferguson said. "They will eliminate confusion and help legislators and the public better understand the government's finances." Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think this is fantastic news. The people of Saskatchewan think this budget is a good thing moving forward. I haven't got to what the CEO [chief executive officer], Steve McLellan, has said yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I'm going to have a lot more fun door knocking in Walsh Acres than they're going to have door knocking in Lakeview and Elphinstone.

The Deputy Speaker: — It now being past the time of adjournment, this House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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