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Response to Children's Advocate Report

Mr. Forbes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Children's Advocate released a special report today on the tragic death of a child in the care of Social Services. His first recommendation is that the government develop and implement well-resourced early childhood development and poverty reduction strategies. And we've been calling on this government to take action when it comes to a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy. This is now the second time in a week that the Children's Advocate has formally called for this.

To the minister: will she finally stop with the excuses and finally listen?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We did have a chance to speak about the tragedies today, and I understand what the child advocate has been saying. I also have had the chance to talk to groups like Poverty Costs, and we've discussed the fact that there's a 50 per cent reduction in percentage of people who live in low income in our province. We know that there's always more to do, Mr. Speaker, but that's between 2006 and 2011, there was a reduction of people that are living in low income. Saskatchewan's actually tied with Newfoundland for the second-lowest percentage of people living in poverty in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, other provinces have strategies and Saskatchewan is outperforming all of those other provinces. What we're trying to do is make sure that we put action with our words, Mr. Speaker. We want to make sure that we have people that are ready to go to school, we have an education system that's available for them, that we are working to support families, Mr. Speaker. I know that the issue is something that we tie under our growth strategy, Mr. Speaker, and where all the work that we're doing add together to make sure people are pleased to be in our province.

The Speaker: I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: Mr. Speaker, the Children's Advocate says, and I quote, "It is clear that more urgency must be placed on the need to move forward on child welfare reform." He makes a total of 18 recommendations. To the minister: will this government be implementing all of those recommendations, and can we expect to see more urgency on child welfare reform?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We just had an opportunity to talk about the report that Bob Pringle brought forward, and I accepted the findings, all 18 findings that were brought forward. In fact we have the Yorkton Tribal Council is with us and the representative from the FSIN that know that when we talk together about what we should be doing in this province to ensure that our children are safe, it's our common goal. Mr. Speaker, we don't want tragedies like this, and we know that it's going to take partnerships to ensure that we can work together and look at all the issues.

We have things like the child and family agenda, the Hub and the COR [centre of responsibility], even things like the social impact bond where we can start doing things different, Mr. Speaker. Of course our goal is to do things differently, and we do accept the findings.