

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
February 14, 1995

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I'd like to read the prayer from a petition that is coming from our area:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that the Hon. Assembly may be pleased to allocate adequate funding dedicated towards the double-laning of Highway No. 1; and further, that the Government of Saskatchewan direct any monies available from the federal infrastructure program towards double-laning Highway No. 1 rather than allocating these funds towards capital construction projects in the province.

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

I'll turn these in now. I have another petition that I will also read at this time, Mr. Speaker, totally unrelated to this first one. I will read the prayer and I'm sure that some of my other colleagues will join in with this.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to the present legislation regarding firearms ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

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

And I think the Minister of Justice will know that we are cooperating in this matter.

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I as well have petitions to present to the Assembly, and I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

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

And these petitions that I'm presenting today, many are signed by individuals from the Manor, Carlyle, Qu'Appelle areas; Arcola, Rocky Mountain House, and Swift Current, Gull Lake,

Viscount, Warman, Leader, Prelate. Mr. Speaker, there are just too many to try and go through all the areas they've been signed from, and I'd like to lay them on the Table.

Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions that I would like to present from concerned citizens. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

And these petitioners come from Gronlid, Melfort, Meadow Lake, and many other communities. Thank you.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have some petitions to lay on the Table this morning. And I would like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to the present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

Mr. Speaker, these also are a cross-section of the province by very, very many people, and I would like to lay them on the Table at this time.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also will be laying petitions on the Table today on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are opposed to changes in the firearms ownership:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And I also today, Mr. Speaker, have citizens from all across the province of Saskatchewan, some also from the province of Ontario and the province of Alberta, who were travelling through and have seen fit to add their names to this petition which I table today.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to add names of petitioners, as my colleagues from both sides of

the House have already done this afternoon. The similar petition on the ones that I have here, which the prayer indicates:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

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

Mr. Speaker, my petitioners essentially come from the Swift Current, Val Marie area, and Fox Valley — and literally all the other pages are from Fox Valley, Mr. Speaker. I didn't know there were that many people in Fox Valley, but they must all have signed.

Thank you.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I as well have petitions with respect to the gun control issue. And I'll just quickly read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to the present legislation regarding firearms ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions come from the Maple Creek area of the province as well as into Alberta, from Redcliff, Alberta, as it is an issue of national interest.

And I lay these petitions at your . . .

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like members from the Progressive Conservative opposition and another member from the government side of the House, I too have petitions to present to you. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, recognizing that gun control and crime control are not synonymous, and allowing provinces to deal with gun control legislation on a provincial basis.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 11(7) they are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to allocate adequate funding dedicated toward the double-laning of Highway No. 1.

And of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to allocate funding toward the maintenance and capital cost of Saskatchewan roads.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I given notice that I shall on Thursday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Commission: (1) how many calls have been received to date on the gambling addiction line, 1-800-306-6789; (2) what has been the cost to install and maintain this phone service; and (3) what date did the service become fully operational?

Thank you very much.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly, 11 members of the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) young mentors program. This program is a pilot project and it's funded by Youth Services Canada. It's running in five centres with Regina being the only centre in Saskatchewan.

The mentors work with youth at risk, providing tutoring, social and recreational activities, and life skills enhancement. The Regina mentors work in partnership with the public school board and each are assigned to a school where they work with about five to thirty children, young adults. And the YMC coordinates the project and trains the mentors. And as you can see, they are young adults in our community. They're seated in the west gallery and they are accompanied today by Darin Banadayga. And I would ask all members to welcome them as they watch the proceedings of a lively question period debate. And I hope they enjoy their visit to the Legislative Assembly today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to acknowledge the guests from the YMCA mentor program. There's somebody there that's very special to me, and being introduced for the first time in this Assembly, that's my sister Donna. I would like all members of the Assembly to give her a warm welcome here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce a friend from the Shaunavon area, actually Allen Lind from the Admiral area. Many of you who curl in the province will know Allen as one of the best curlers in the province of Saskatchewan. And I want to welcome him here today and look forward to saying hello to you a little later on, Al.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Carson: — I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly some very important people who are in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon. They are representatives from people who work in a very exciting and expanding industry in Saskatchewan — that's the film industry.

And I would like to introduce to you Jerry Ferwerda, the SaskFILM . . . chairman of the SaskFILM board of directors. We also have Mark Prasuhn, the general manager of SaskFILM. We have board members of SaskFILM, Andrew Gordon — Andrew also is on the SMPA (Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association) board and is a member of the Association of Canadian Film Craftspeople — and Kevin DeWalt. Kevin, as you all know, is the owner/manager of Minds Eye Production and doing very exciting things in Saskatchewan. And the executive director of the motion picture association, Elizabeth Verrall. And the other people up there are from my staff and the department.

I would ask all members to join with me in bidding welcome to these people to the gallery this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Love's Valentine Winter Festival

Mr. Keeping: — Mr. Speaker, on Saturday I was in Love. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I'm often in Love and even sometimes I'm in Love before I go home.

The member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden told me that she had been in Love three times. And I don't know if the Leader of the Opposition has been in Love, but I suggest he try it if he hasn't.

Mr. Speaker, no matter how much other members may wish it were otherwise, Love is in my constituency and my constituency alone. Others may wish to have Love but I am the fortunate one.

On Saturday, February 11, the village of Love held its 24th annual winter festival, a Valentine festival they call it. Mr. Speaker, the former mayor of Love was Mrs. Carr, and as those of us of our age know, a car and love often go together like, well you know some other things, I tell you.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Love know how to enjoy a winter festival. The evening started out with a non-denominational service, a church service, where they apologized for what we were about to do, and then they cut loose.

The events in Love engaged in pillow fighting and a smooshing — whatever smooshing is, I'm not sure — leg wrestling and mail bag races. There were stage events and a pancake breakfast and a dance until the small hours of the morning.

Mr. Speaker, the people in Love, Saskatchewan, know how to have a good time and they know how to live and I congratulate those in Love for another successful affair, and I look forward to the 25th. Happy Valentine's Day.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Weyburn and Area Child Abuse Council Grant

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to bring a group of hard-working volunteers to your attention.

Last week the Minister of Social Services announced several grants to groups across the province involved in prevention and support programs for vulnerable children, youth, and families. These grants are part of the Saskatchewan action plan for children.

One worthy recipient is the Weyburn and Area Council on Child Abuse. The council represents several agencies and groups in Weyburn and the surrounding area, groups in education, social services, law enforcement, health, and church. The overriding purpose of this council is to prevent child abuse through education, advocacy training, and publicity.

Mr. Speaker, I and the member from Weyburn were privileged to be present at the ceremony announcing the grant, and we had the opportunity to further familiarize ourselves with the work of the Weyburn council.

The Weyburn and area council came into existence in 1985. All its members are volunteers working for the betterment of their communities.

In its 10-year history, the council has to its credit 63 separate accomplishments, ranging from conferences to Child Abuse Awareness Week, to training programs, to the development of education materials, and much more.

With this grant it will carry on its established work, as well as launch new plans such as fathers and tots program, and a family support program.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Weyburn and I applaud the work of the volunteers of the Weyburn and Area Council on Child Abuse. They are a perfect example of the Saskatchewan spirit of community, cooperation, and compassion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Memorial Hockey Game

Mr. Kluz: — Mr. Speaker, recently the feared MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) hockey team under the dictatorship of Coach K was involved in a fund-raising hockey

game in the town of Wynyard. The Wishart Golden Aces from my constituency provided the opposition.

This event, Mr. Speaker, was indeed special because it was a memorial game held in honour of two former Golden Aces team members, Brian Gudmundson, who passed away in 1989, and Andrew Fedoriuk, who died in 1994.

Both Brian and Andrew were my friends, as well as being people liked and admired by everyone in the community.

Brian's parents, Arnold and Jean, were very appreciative that the game was organized in their son's memory. They said that Brian would have made the same effort for anybody.

Andrew's wife and family also expressed their appreciation for the event. And Andrew's son, Dwayne, drove all the way from Calgary to play for the Golden Aces. Mr. Speaker, it was an enjoyable evening with good entertainment and, as always, first-rate hockey. And as nearly always, the MLA team won; Coach K kept them from running up the score. But the real winners were children because the evening's proceeds of \$507 went to the Children's Wish Foundation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Safety Council Contest Winners

Mr. Roy: — Mr. Speaker, today I'm pleased to announce that 25 students from the riding I represent received top honours in a contest put on by the Saskatchewan Safety Council. Mr. Ralph Galambos and his grade 6 class at Birch Hills School are to be congratulated for the hard work in winning this contest. These students were asked to come up with a contest entry that would help promote seat-belt safety. After giving it some careful consideration, they decided to write and record a rap song about seat-belt safety.

Mr. Speaker, every year people are injured or killed in traffic accidents in Saskatchewan, and many of these accidents could have been prevented if the occupants had been wearing seat-belts. Tragically many of those involved are young people.

These students wrote the words to the song and produced their own sound effects in the classroom. This contest was developed after the Safety Council's crash dummies — in reality two drama students from the University of Saskatchewan — visited some 57 schools across the province to promote seat-belt safety. Mr. Speaker, not only did these students win the contest but the \$200 in prize money will be put to good use to further the education of students in the school. Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Mr. Galambos and his grade 6 students. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Provincial Sales Tax Reduction

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, as you know, we've been having so much fun asking questions in the legislature here every day that we decided to share the opportunity with everyone else in Saskatchewan. Once again the PC (Progressive Conservative) caucus has invited Saskatchewan people to send us questions that they want to ask you, Mr. Premier.

And you know what, lots of people across this province, in fact 800 people, responded in the first week of our, Mr. Premier, I want to know . . . initiative. So we're going to start today by asking some of those. And one that we received . . . the first one is one that we received on the Internet, the information super highway.

The question comes addressed, pwr123@arts.usask.ca. The question says: Mr. Premier, since the budget is so close to being balanced, Saskatchewan residents deserve some kind of tax relief.

An obvious answer would be to reduce the 9 per cent PST (provincial sales tax). Mr. Premier, I want to know, will your government reduce the provincial sales tax from its current rate to one which is lower in order to allow all residents of the province a much-needed break from our already too high tax load?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, on Thursday the Minister of Finance will deliver this province's budget. I'm sure members opposite will join in the pride that most Saskatchewan people will feel in what will have been achieved. So I know members will want to look forward to that day and to a day when all Saskatchewan people see it come together.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Deficit Reduction Tax

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have also received a lot of questions from the constituency of Rosthern. And the one that I'm going to read now is obviously very timely as well, and it comes from a Mr. Bert Senft from Rosthern. And he wants to know, Mr. Premier, what was the total amount of the 1993 deficit reduction tax that was applied to reduce the deficit that year. And will this tax be eliminated immediately upon balancing the budget?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Once again the member will have to wait till Thursday for the answer to that question. Suffice it to say, I think that constituent and all others are going to share a real sense of pride when this province finally puts behind it the dark, dreadful years when that government was in office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Provincial Sales Taxes Comparison

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today comes from D. Jansen of Leroy, Saskatchewan. Mr. Premier, you stated, when asked why you allowed gambling VLTs (video

lottery terminal) at the SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) meeting, it was because the neighbouring provinces and states have it so we have to "keep up with the Joneses."

Therefore Mr. Jansen wants to know, why not do the same with the provincial sales tax — reduce it to Alberta's zero per cent level?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, the last people on earth who should be tendering advice on how to manage a budget should be members opposite. In responding to Mr. Jansen, you may want to point out that this government has had a real challenge trying to come to terms with the enormous mess left by members opposite when those two members were in Executive Council.

I'm sure Mr. Jansen will be pleased to be reminded that in Saskatchewan there aren't any health care premiums. Health care premiums which, I might add, have gone up by some 60 per cent since 1990, some 67 per cent in Alberta. Gone up from 400-and-some-odd dollars to 700-and-some-odd dollars.

You may want to remind Mr. Jansen that in Saskatchewan, kindergarten is freely available to all children of every economic circumstance without regard to their ability to pay. And Mr. Jansen is no doubt going to be very, very thankful he doesn't live in Alberta.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Proposed Firearms Legislation

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question comes from Mr. Dave Crook from Wynyard. Mr. Premier, I want to know, if Mr. Rock's proposed gun registration law is passed, will Saskatchewan make use of the notwithstanding clause in the charter of rights to make residents of this province exempt from this unbelievably stupid piece of legislation?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I agree with the characterization of the legislation being proposed by Mr. Rock. You wish you could use the notwithstanding clause in the circumstances. We wish it were available for us to use to notwithstanding a piece of federal legislation.

Unfortunately, the only use that we can make of the notwithstanding clause is to protect any legislation passed by this legislature from certain kinds of attacks or challenges under the charter of rights. So we can't do it; we wish we could, but we can't.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Gaming Expansion

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Premier, comes from Janice Wychopen from North Battleford. Mr. Premier, I want to know how you can

rationalize wellness in the community with increased gaming, i.e., casinos, lotteries, VLT machines, bingos, etc., when the end result of this is, number one, addictions; number two, hungry, poorly clothed, impoverished children; number three, lack of parental supervision leading to increases in child and youth problems such as substance abuse, behavioural problems, break and enters, etc.

How can you justify this?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank you for your question.

We have consistently taken the position that we . . . our policy is to have tight regulation of gaming, to limit and control, to deal with impacts, and to have revenue sharing that benefits the public.

We are not in a position to decide on whether or not gambling exists. It does. It has since 1969 in this province. What we are in a position to do is to limit it, to regulate it, to control it. You may note that we have set it up in such a way that minors are denied access to gaming sites.

We have set up provisions in both of the agreements to deal with the impacts of gaming, to deal with addictions on a broader basis than just the gaming addiction, but to provide resources into the broad band, including alcohol and the other problems that already exist in society.

And I would have to say that we've taken a measured and reasoned approach. We're concerned, and we're carefully monitoring the situation and adding resources as needed.

But the resources dedicated to this area have tripled to make sure that all the services are in place throughout all the health boards in Saskatchewan, not because we see that the problem has increased, but to make sure . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I have recent statistics. To make sure . . . the problem has increased, but to make sure that we're ready to deal with whatever does develop.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Federal Gun Control Legislation

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Minister, the new federal gun legislation is being introduced, I understand, today in Ottawa. As you know, most Saskatchewan people strongly oppose the Liberal plans, particularly the proposal to set up a national gun registry. Earlier today the PC caucus tabled hundreds of petitions containing the names of Saskatchewan people who oppose the Liberal gun laws.

Over the past few weeks, I've spoken at several gun rallies; two, in fact, in the last two nights. These rallies have been attended by thousands more Saskatchewan people opposed to the Liberal plans.

Mr. Minister, in spite of the opposition, it appears that Liberals in Ottawa are not going to listen. Mr. Minister, what specific plans does your government have for dealing with this matter? What specific proposals have you developed to change federal legislation and the Criminal Code?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for this very important question. It is true that today the federal Minister of Justice tabled, in parliament, the Firearms Act which does, as he has for so long threatened, propose a system of registration of all guns, and firearm possession certificates for all people who possess a gun.

And this in spite of the protest that he has heard, particularly from all across western Canada, from all political parties in western Canada, all political parties in this province, and the dozens and dozens of rallies that my friend and I have attended and many other members of this legislature have attended.

We have tried in every way we can to indicate our opposition to this. It is however at the end of the day a question for the federal Liberal government to determine. If they're going to go ahead with this, they're going to go ahead with it and we have no effective way in which to stop them. The only means at our disposal is to oppose it and oppose it with all the vigour and the sense of unity that we have brought to this opposition. If that doesn't impress them then I don't know what will.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, let me get this straight. As I understand it, you are developing changes to federal legislation and the Criminal Code in order to ensure Indian bands get jurisdiction over gambling on reserves, but you are not prepared to make the same effort on behalf of Saskatchewan gun owners. Why not, Mr. Minister?

Why aren't you working to develop specific legislation solutions to protect the rights of Saskatchewan gun owners? The people who signed those petitions and attended those rallies believe this is an issue at least as important as your government's gambling on reserves policy.

Why aren't you making the same efforts with respect to gun legislation, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — I'm astonished by this line from the Leader of the Opposition. He as well as anyone knows that we have been right out there at the front of the pack in opposition to this. Of all the governments in Canada, our government has done as much to oppose — done more — to oppose this Bill than any other government, and for good reason.

The member asks what we should do. Does the member propose for a moment that we should introduce our own gun registration system in Saskatchewan? I think not. I've been in

close consultation with a large number of groups in this connection, including probably all of the groups that are opposed to this, and discussed this issue on many occasions and have told them without equivocation that we would never pass a law like the one that Rock is proposing.

Now surely the Leader of the Opposition is not suggesting that we should pass such a law. Indeed, we think there's more than enough gun law on the books of Canada right now as it is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Care Reform

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, two years ago your government closed down 52 rural hospitals and eliminated hundreds of health care jobs in the province of Saskatchewan. This move was supposed to save your government about \$20 million a year. Today we see your government putting \$20 million of spending, new spending, back into rural health care and creating — supposedly — 460 jobs for nurses and therapists.

Mr. Minister, isn't this simply an admission that your health care reforms were seriously flawed in the first place? Why did you have to cause so much pain in rural Saskatchewan just so you could make an announcement like this in an election year?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question and for bringing this important issue to the attention of the House this afternoon and to the attention of the public.

Mr. Speaker, the announcements that were made today, I can say categorically, will mean that in the province of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan people enjoy the most — the most — comprehensive and people-sensitive community health care in all of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the goal of health renewal from the very beginning is to match quality services with the needs of our people as close to home, as close to family, and as close to community as we possibly can. Today we have begun a new era, a new era, Mr. Speaker, in community-based services in this province.

Now I want to address very specifically some of the numbers that the member raises in his question. He talks about the thousands — I believe he used the words thousands — of jobs lost in health care. Mr. Speaker, I want to report to the House this morning the net reduction, the net reduction of employment in rural Saskatchewan health care workers, net reduction, 350 jobs. Today, Mr. Speaker, through these policies and programs, we have created 460 new health care positions in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And further to the minister: Mr. Minister, obviously you haven't been listening

very carefully to a lot of health care professionals who lost jobs in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, today's announcement does nothing to address the real problem which is a severe lack of emergency services in many rural areas. I have here an article written by a well-respected rural physician who has practised in his community for 28 years. He is very concerned about the long distances that some rural residents have to travel to receive emergency medical treatment.

He says, and I quote: purely as a physician, I consider it dangerous to have no acute care between the U.S. (United States) border, 30 miles south of Mankota, and Moose Jaw, 165 miles, and Swift Current, 130 miles the other way. At the other end there is too much pressure on beds in Swift Current and Moose Jaw.

Mr. Minister, why are you continuing to ignore the concerns of health care providers like the individual who wrote this article?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member does not understand, and if he does not, let me clarify. There are emergency services available to people across this province, in communities across this province, Mr. Speaker. In each of the converted acute care situations, emergency services are available.

We have, Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan the best road ambulance system anywhere in the country. Mr. Speaker, we have in this province, I remind the member, a long-standing and advanced air ambulance service in this province, Mr. Speaker. And in recent days and months we have announced and implemented — and it's growing — the first responders program across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the member again that when we began the renewal of health in the province, we set forward a vision — a vision statement. A vision statement that said we want to support and enhance services as close to home and as close to families and communities as we can, Mr. Speaker. We are on track with that, Mr. Speaker, election year or not.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Government Expenditures

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the paper this week the Dolter family of Regina offered a reality check to this government by showing the effect NDP (New Democratic Party) policies have had on their family finances and their quality of life.

For four years the NDP's tax increases, utility rate increases, and hikes in drug costs and car insurance have made Saskatchewan families extremely vulnerable. All along the Premier and his cabinet expected ordinary people to do without so that government could feed its own spending habits. Instead of leading by example, the Finance minister increased the budget of her own department, Mr. Speaker, by \$5 million in 1994 from 1993.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Why is it that you believe everyone can make do with less except your government and your own department?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance who is attending a federal-provincial conference — I might add, attempting to stem some of the damage being done by the federal government on the provinces — in her absence, I would remind the member from Saskatoon Greystone that Saskatchewan has the lowest utility rates, second lowest or the lowest utility rates of any province in Canada. And that is true. If you add up power rates, gas rates, telephone rates, and water rates, which are the utilities, Saskatchewan is at the bottom or second from the bottom in all cases.

I know parties opposite would like to believe that the Crown corporations do not serve the province well. They actually serve the people very well. Crown corporations in this province bring the public of Saskatchewan the best of services and do it at the lowest of cost. Saskatchewan people pay lower utility rates than anywhere else in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact the Madam Minister must be saying, make sure you don't do as we do but do as we say, if we're talking about advice they're giving.

Mr. Speaker, all three prairie provinces are similar in that they depend heavily on agriculture and on resource-based industries. All three provinces will balance their budgets this year but only Saskatchewan has done the job on the backs of the taxpayers.

Both of our neighbouring governments made do with less, Mr. Speaker, and both have created an environment that outperforms Saskatchewan in job creation every single year.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Associate Minister of Finance. Mr. Associate Minister, you went to great lengths in your labour legislation to protect all of us from what you were quoted in *The Financial Post* as saying, the ruthless greed of business.

When will your Department of Finance get serious about protecting taxpayers from the ruthless greed of your government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The last thing that this government needs in meeting its challenge is any assistance from Liberals on balanced budgets. Any assistance at all.

Liberals have been in office in Ottawa for most of the last four decades and the federal government's finances are in an absolute shamble. I would have assumed that the member from Greystone would join the people of Saskatchewan in expressing pride that this province has met and solved its problem.

If Liberals in Ottawa were anywhere near as successful in dealing with their finances as the people of this province are, we wouldn't be in the straits we're in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — As usual we get no answers from the Department of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP track record on taxing and spending speaks for itself. Both Alberta and Manitoba will balance their budgets without increasing taxes. On the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) radio program, *As It Happens*, on February 8, Manitoba's Finance minister said his province has moved from being one of the highest taxed provinces to the 7th on the list, while Saskatchewan is moving in exactly the opposite direction since the NDP took power.

On that very same program, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Finance minister stated proudly that the NDP has done its major cutting, that the cuts are behind us, she said. End of quote.

To the Associate Minister of Finance: Saskatchewan people have been paying through the nose for oversized, overpriced, inefficient government from the NDP for the last four years. Five million dollars more for your department in 1994. Can Saskatchewan taxpayers expect more of the same, Mr. Associate Minister, in this budget, as you've delivered since 1991?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I must say, Mr. Speaker, whether it be in Regina or in Ottawa, Liberals certainly don't allow their style to be cramped by any sort of consistency. On any given day you can hear the Leader of the Liberal Party promising all manner of wild things around the province — hundreds of millions of dollars. And then practically on the same day, she comes and tells us our taxes are too high.

Quite frankly, Madam Member, the public of Saskatchewan have a sense of *déjà vu* when they hear that. It sounds a lot like the former government who were in office here during the '80s, a lot like them, and the public of Saskatchewan has no desire to return to that.

Let me finish, Madam Member, by quoting an editorial from the *Prairie Messenger*. I think you'll recognize the journal. The editorial says:

The current Saskatchewan government inherited a mess proportionately far greater than that bequeathed to Klein, and Saskatchewan has not known the oil and gas revenues which have graced its western neighbour. Yet the success Saskatchewan has achieved in balancing its books makes its neighbour's accomplishment seem quite trivial in comparison.

I rest my case.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, it's most interesting how they applaud oversized, fat government. Mr. Speaker, both Alberta and Manitoba have fiscal programs that will reduce the cost of government.

Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan produced a fall report which clearly showed that this administration is spending 270 . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Provincial Auditor produced a full report which clearly showed that this administration is spending \$278 million more on government and its programs than they were in 1991.

My question to the same minister: why does your government persist in bucking the national trend of smaller, cheaper government by attacking the people of this province, the very taxpayers, instead of your overspending?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, in addition to selectively using statistics to try to establish that our jobless rate is increasing — which it is not — the member from Saskatoon Greystone is now selectively reading from the Provincial Auditor's report.

The Provincial Auditor also said that this province had gone from having the worst set of financial records to having the best. That is something that I would've expected the member opposite would be proud of, as are the public of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has depended on luck and high taxes to achieve a balanced budget. I guess they don't even listen to their own words — they were just talking about the resource industry. But they're making a very generous assumption that luck will continue, just as they did in the 1970s.

My question to the same minister: will your government take the pressure off Saskatchewan taxpayers by reducing the costs of government? That's the only question that I've been asking, and you still haven't answered it.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The public of Saskatchewan have every right to know what programs you'd cut, if you're going to cut taxes. And the public of Saskatchewan do ask that question of you. And it's one of the reasons why the Liberal Party opposite is synonymous in the public mind with inconsistency.

I ask the hon. member opposite, if you want to cut taxes, you owe it to the public to tell them what services you're going to cut. You can't have it both ways. Trying to have it both ways is a sure ticket to remaining in the opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — With leave, Mr. Speaker, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, through you and to all members of the House, I am very pleased to welcome today the grades 3 and 4 class, 20 students from the grades 3 and 4 class of King Edward Public School in the city of Moose Jaw.

Mr. Speaker, with them today are their teacher, Alene Tanner, and their chaperons, Sheri Hansen and Sharon Hall.

Mr. Speaker, it's only a very few years ago that I attended King Edward School and I am very happy to say that King Edward is maintaining the interest that this school has always had in public and governmental affairs.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to welcome the students from King Edward.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — With leave, to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce someone to this Assembly who is a . . . I think I can count him as a friend. I've known the Birkbeck family for a quarter of a century when I practised law in Moosomin.

I know all members will want to join with me in welcoming back a member who spent many years here and contributed a good deal to the public life in Saskatchewan. I want to welcome the former member, Larry Birkbeck from Moosomin.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

SaskFILM Agreement

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, cultural industries are a key economic growth area in Saskatchewan for the 1990s. A moderate investment in them from government yields significant returns.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, the film and video industry contributed significantly to the economic renewal of the province by creating jobs and by attracting out-of-province investment. The total value of economic activity directly related to the film and video industry in Saskatchewan exceeded \$33 million. We expect this year it could be even better.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to announce in the House today that a new, three-year, \$4 million agreement

between the province of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Film and Video Development Corporation or SaskFILM has been approved by cabinet.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Carson: — The agreement is scheduled to come into effect on March 1, 1995 and expires on March 31, 1998. The new agreement will replace a current one which expired on March 31, 1995.

The government's contribution of \$4 million will be paid out in one lump sum. The agreement charges SaskFILM with the responsibility of administering the contribution over a three-year term. The money is to be used to maintain a film fund which is designated to assist in the development of the film and video industry in Saskatchewan.

An independent study of the film and video industry conducted last year shows that SaskFILM investments have generated \$10 million of production activity for each . . . \$10 for each \$1 invested.

Based on these projections, this agreement is expected to generate approximately \$40 million of production activity over the next three years. This production activity will in turn create approximately 1,200 employment opportunities for Saskatchewan people with specialized skills who might otherwise have to look for work outside of the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, this production activity will generate about \$130 million in spin-off economic activity. A healthy and thriving film and video industry will also allow Saskatchewan to take advantage of growth opportunities presented by the development of the information highway and the recent approval of the specialty channels.

The Saskatchewan industry has proven expertise and experience in the development of content for these markets.

Mr. Speaker, the people that I've introduced in the gallery today will be joining with me to sign this agreement in my office later. And I know the people of Saskatchewan look forward with great interest to more exciting news from this very great industry that is developing in Saskatchewan in the months to come. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to acknowledge first of all that the film industry is an important industry in the province of Saskatchewan. It probably was amplified in my mind this past summer when we set up a guest ranch at our place and had people coming down and shooting pictures in order to have advertising across this province.

What it does in fact is it enhances the opportunity for us to develop not only the industry but tourism as a sideline, because people then get to see the landscape and all of the people in it

and the volumes of value that that can be not only to the people of Saskatchewan, but it can be to the film industry.

So I want to compliment the film industry for their involvement in producing and making productions. And I wish you the very best for this year. Thank you very much.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our party and our caucus are on record of being in support of the film and video industry, as we are with all arts in the province of Saskatchewan. And this is an industry that we believe that the government should be supporting with fervour. And we very much support what is happening today.

The government should be doing, however, whatever is possible that will enhance this industry's competitiveness within the Canadian market.

And we want to be on record as well of saying that there are many in our society who see film and videos and other aspects of arts and culture as expendable. We do not. We do not see this as something extravagant at all. What we do see it as part of who we are, a promotion of who we are. And it doesn't just deal with talent; it deals with putting on record what matters.

Furthermore, we do agree that this not only is important as far as tourism is important and employment is important and as far as other kinds of employment and taxation and all the different kinds of revenues that go into local economies. This is beyond that, Mr. Speaker. We know that the only thing that survives throughout civilization are those things that come through printed word and performance, and of course now with this particular era, through film and videos.

We're very, very pleased to hear of this announcement today and we hope that you'll take this even further, Madam Minister. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 10 — An Act respecting Private Vocational Schools

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill respecting Private Vocational Schools be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. Bradley, seconded by Mr. Knezacek.

Mr. Langford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to be part of the government and to speak on the Speech from the Throne. First, I would like to thank the mover from Bengough-Milestone and the seconder from Saltcoats for their fine speech.

Mr. Speaker, before 1991 we had deficit after deficit by the previous administration.

I am very proud to be part of the government to bring in the first balanced budget in just over 12 years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Langford: — I would like to thank each and every one of the people for their support in bringing in our first balanced budget. Our farm families faced high debt loads and poor prospects to train, and long-term investments necessary to build a better future, to have better . . . neglected and too many young people have decided to seek new hope and opportunities elsewhere.

As you know, the federal Liberal budget will be a tough one. We know the federal deficit has to be tackled, just like we have tackled the deficit here in Saskatchewan. But it has to be done with fairness, both to individuals and to the region.

Ottawa's proposed changes to western grain stabilization Act, the WGTA, will affect only the West, and especially Saskatchewan, and this is more than a provincial issue — it is a local issue. This will impact on many local communities.

For example, Ottawa, it is said, is considering a pay-out of the Crow benefit at 2 billion. This translates into roughly 180 million annually or one-third of the current level of payment. That's \$360 million per year taken out of the pockets of western Canadian farmers or half of that from the Saskatchewan farmers alone.

If it happens, there will be repercussions amongst them. This will mean a drop in farm income and a drop in business from every Saskatchewan community, closures of rail lines and grain elevators, and the negative effect of such closures on the local tax base.

(1430)

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we had a couple of rail lines close in my constituency. The rail line from Paddockwood to White Star was closed, as well as the line from Holbein to Prince Albert. With the closure of these lines most of the farmers must deliver their grain farther to elevators. This means a higher cost to road maintenance and road construction as trucking is replacing rail transportation.

Agriculture is the backbone of our economy. I support growing farm families, local communities, and more, like biotech, food processing, and farm equipment manufacturing. The health of

our agriculture sector is reflected in the bottom line of every rural business, and many urban ones, throughout the province.

At a time when Saskatchewan's recovering is really beginning to take hold, it makes no sense whatever to pull the rug from under one of our most important industries. So we should all be very concerned if Ottawa pursues its program of deficit reduction at the expense of individual farm producers and rural communities.

I would like to talk about the great comeback our government was able to achieve. 1994 was an incredible year for the provincial economy. The most recent statistics show record oil and gas . . . (inaudible) . . . sales of 200 million. Crop receipts up more than 30 million . . . 30 per cent over 1993. Total exports up 20 per cent. Restaurant, caterers, and tavern receipts up 7 per cent. Retail trades up nine and one-half per cent.

Mr. Speaker, this summer, in and around the lake resort areas in Shellbrook-Torch River, businesses were up 25 to 28 per cent over last year. Machine dealers are saying sales are up over last year. Automobile sales are up. Mr. Speaker, that has to make me feel good, to be part of a government that is working with people to make things happen.

Mr. Speaker, our population continues to increase. Best of all, employment is on the rise. Short-term jobs in my constituency are happening through the infrastructure program. Smeaton will be getting their new health care facility. RMs (rural municipality) will be upgrading their roads. Shellbrook is upgrading their water system. Canwood will be upgrading streets and sidewalks. Many other communities will be taking advantage of the infrastructure program, which will not only give much-needed infrastructure; also many jobs are needed in our rural communities.

As we look forward to long-term jobs working with REDA (regional economic development authority) and added value to agriculture diversification, processing, manufacturing, this opens up the opportunity for Saskatchewan working together for a brighter tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on our health care system. We have a health centre to be constructed in Smeaton. This is because of the work of the North-East Health Board and the committee in Smeaton that made the decision based on the needs in the community. There is other areas like Christopher Lake and Candle Lake that are looking at different types of health services based on the needs of the community to provide good health services.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After listening to our colleague from the government's eloquent delivery on the praises of the government, it gives me great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to have an opportunity to counter some of the arguments that he has put forward.

Certainly as we begin the debate on the Speech from the Throne, I would be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I didn't say something about the Lieutenant Governor who delivered his maiden speech in this Assembly in that role. Obviously he has been in this Assembly many times before and is well practised at the profession of delivering speeches.

Jack Wiebe and his wife of course are from our corner of the province and we're very proud to have someone from our area representing this great office here in the province of Saskatchewan. And we think that his performance in his duties was certainly well done and eloquently put forward, and we want to congratulate him and his wife in the role that they are playing.

Obviously Mrs. Wiebe is a strong and solid rock of support for Jack. She has always been in their home community, and she certainly will be in the role that they play in the province today.

So I congratulate them and if they're listening I want to say hello and wish them the best.

It must have been though, Mr. Speaker, somewhat difficult for a man of Mr. Wiebe's strong professional and ethical background is to read a document as difficult to read, probably as difficult to read as it was to listen to, because it's always easier, Mr. Speaker, to read and deliver a speech if the contents in that speech is something that you can believe in. That didn't seem obvious at the time that the speech was read, Mr. Speaker.

Once again the government had used the Speech from the Throne to talk about job creation. And for those of us who live in the real world of observation, that simply hasn't happened. And so it makes it really difficult, I'm sure, for someone to read a document that makes those kind of claims when in fact nothing is in it.

It can be said, I think, Mr. Speaker, and with some justification, that this is an empty document. It is a document that isolates Saskatchewan from the rest of the real world. A document that sets us out on a course of adventure in this province for a future that is in dead parallel . . . running the opposite directions to the course of action taken in the province of Alberta, for example.

This document will spell stagnation for our province. It means we do nothing and we go nowhere. There is no plan for any future development. There is no real, true plan for job creation; in fact if anything it will do exactly the opposite.

It is without a doubt a direct parallel to the experiment that has been put to work in the province of Alberta — an experiment that has been put to the test of late with polling that shows that Premier Klein is now up to some 80-some per cent popularity in the moves that he has made in the control of the Alberta deficit problems.

In Saskatchewan we've gone exactly the opposite direction — we've gone the direction of increasing taxes, and we haven't even decreased the cost of government. We have in fact increased the cost of government. Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker,

that we in this province could be hearing our Premier and other people claiming victory for our province in the direction that we've been going politically over the past three years.

And setting out a course for the future that is identically the same as what we have just gone through, seems to me to be so foolhardy as to hardly warrant debating or talking about. But we are hired by the voters to do our job and so we must do that and stand before this Assembly and before the people of Saskatchewan and point out what is clearly obvious to them, which is that we are going in the wrong direction.

I've always said, because I live close to Alberta, things look pretty good over there. Of late I've taken some time and gone over and taken a look, and found out that my thoughts were exactly right. Things are good in Alberta. They always have been good in Alberta. And we've always said in the south-west, if things are so good in Alberta, why don't we do the same things in Saskatchewan. It is clearly obvious to us that if you want to be successful, do the things that successful people do.

But no, we've had the good fortune, I guess, of having socialists run our province. So we run dead last in just about everything, while Alberta runs dead first with almost everything that happens in the world of politics and the spin-offs of business.

I'm not really sure, Mr. Speaker, why the government wants to persist in the topic of job creation — trying to make claims to the unreal situation, trying to make claims that there are in fact more jobs in Saskatchewan now than there were before. I guess it must just be a habit that they're into. It can't obviously be because of the success they've had, because it is so minimal and so marginal that it's really hard to understand why a government would hang their hat on that particular subject. I would've thought they might try something different, something where they at least have done some work at.

Well of course that would be pretty hard, because there really isn't anything they've done much, is there? Well I suppose they're stuck with jobs then. In reality, there has been minimal job creation in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. There has been higher taxes, of course — no job creation. We've had higher utility rates, but not much job creation. And I wonder if the people of this province will soon start to realize that the two go hand in hand; the two go together. The reason we don't have job creation is because we have too high taxes, because we have too high utility rates.

Why does that affect people? Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, people who might come to this province to create jobs simply look at a better atmosphere in another jurisdiction and they go there. It's just as simple as that.

We have some outlandish statements made, Mr. Speaker, about this job creation of the government. And I think we need to set some of the record straight in this area. I think it's important that we do that because once in a while, even though we know what's going on and we understand what's going on, it doesn't hurt to have our memories refreshed so that we don't run into the peril of being brainwashed or having someone give us a snow job rather than a real job.

It just seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that we can look back at some of the history of this government, and we can do it through the throne speeches of the past, as to compare it to the throne speech of this year.

I want to quote a little bit from the 1992 throne speech, Mr. Speaker. It says here:

In spite of Saskatchewan's financial problems, there is reason for hope and optimism.

This is a quote from the throne speech of 1992:

In total, there are currently more than 700 companies which have expressed an interest in either relocating to Saskatchewan or expanding their operations here. If these businesses proceed with their plans, they will have the potential to create or maintain more than 16,000 jobs.

Now that was on page 3, Mr. Speaker.

Now isn't that an amazing thing. Seven hundred companies and here we are now, 1995, three full years later and we don't have anybody showing us any figures of any 16,000 jobs being created anywhere. And we certainly don't find any 700 companies any place in the world looking to come to Saskatchewan to set up business. I wonder if we could even find seven. Well I'm sure if we looked really hard.

Then we ought to go on and quote a little more from the 1992 budget, and this is a quote:

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important priorities for Saskatchewan people is stimulating (the economy or) economic opportunities and creating jobs.

And that was on page 17. Same old story that we have just heard in this address this past week.

In 1993 the throne speech echoes much the same, and I'll quote again:

Of the hundreds of new, expanding and potential business projects in the province, more than half are outside Regina and Saskatoon. Those outside our two largest cities have the potential to create or maintain . . . 8,000 jobs.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's the end of the quote but here we have just a year later, 1993, we cut that estimate down from 16,000 to 8,000. At least they started to face some reality. But again the theme will develop as being the same year after year with no success and with nothing really happening.

In 1993 we had from the budget debate: "Jobs are our first priority." is the quote on page 3. Jobs are their main priority. Well at least they're consistent. They started way back right after the last election, then they've continued to say the same thing. But again, no success, no reality.

In 1994, just last year, the throne speech, and I'll quote from it just to make my point.

The economic development strategy which my government introduced in 1992 — *Partnership for Renewal*, has three key goals: to create a positive climate for economic renewal, to build on existing strengths, and to seek full employment.

The partnership is working.

Page 2 that was on. That was a direct quote from the throne speech of 1994, just a year ago. Still, Mr. Speaker, I will point out for the benefit of the people of this province, that we've had this same trend of opinion of what the government is going to do coming from the Premier and his government and his cabinet. They've had the same theme with no results. The same theme — a good theme — job creation's fine. We agree with that. But after this many years, you would think that they would look for some measure of success in order to continue to use this as their selling gimmick at the start of each session.

(1445)

From the budget of 1994 I will quote, just to bring this fully to the attention of the people. And I quote: "This Budget shows that jobs are also our number one priority." Page 3. 1994 budget projections, 5,000 new jobs.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the government failed to produce on each and every one of these grandiose promises. All of these years they have made promise after promise after promise to this province and to the people of this province. Promises that they would deliver jobs. That there would be something with dignity and respect for each and every person in this province to look forward to. A reason for our children to be able to stay in this province and to work and to develop and to become good citizens in a place that they could call home.

That hasn't happened, Mr. Speaker, because we have in this province a government that can't deliver on jobs because of their fundamental direction in philosophy — the fundamental direction in philosophy that directly counteracts the philosophy that is being used in Alberta. And if people are going to say to me, as some of the government members have, try to think for yourself, don't always look at somebody else, don't look at Alberta; this is Saskatchewan, we've got to be different here. I say to that, that's bunk. Pure bunk.

If something else is working across the border, I'm not afraid at all to admit that they're doing better than we are and I'm not afraid at all to say we'll go and borrow their ideas and use the philosophy that they use and make things better for ourselves. And that's what the government of this province had better do before there's no one left to impress or to bring back.

We wonder, Mr. Speaker, why, after four years, four different addresses at least, the government has continued to say that they are going to create jobs. And then we have to ask the question, why would the people of Saskatchewan at this time start to

believe them? How could they believe them when you've struck out four times already? Why would they start to believe them now?

And that's what's so amazing about this whole process of this throne speech. You've struck out four times, and you've come back with the same throne speech with the same theme and hang your hat on it as your reason for being in government and your reason for the people to re-elect you. And really what it is is a record of failure — a record of failure that they keep bringing up themselves by reintroducing it year after year. I would have thought by now even they would have caught on to having a new theme. But obviously not. So we live with this disastrous approach to government.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the people of this province do believe the government any more. I don't think they believe them one little bit. And I think they're going to keep on going to Alberta to shop and they're going to keep on going to Alberta to look for jobs.

I want to talk a little bit about the stats on this job creation because there was so much talk about it through question periods and other forums in debate here in the last few days.

Particularly we would like to look at the StatsCanada figures here which refutes what was said in the throne speech. I kind of hate to even get into all these figures but somebody's got to do it, I guess, and so I might as well take a shot at it. It's all rather confusing and I'm going to explain to the people of this province when I finish with this number crunching why this is so futile. And so I'm refuting my own arguments here, but I'm going to do that because it has to be done.

Now StatsCanada's revised numbers credit the NDP with 7,000 jobs since 1992. I don't know if we can believe StatsCanada or not but that's what we got. Well the Minister of Economic Development takes great pride in quoting these numbers. So that's fine. If he wants to use that set, I'm sure there's five or six other sets that we can use from somebody else somewhere and probably it'll be a hodgepodge like you've never seen before, and of course that's what we've been seeing this last while.

Now however we must keep them in perspective, these numbers. After all in 1992 the government claimed that more than 700 companies were considering relocating to Saskatchewan and that these companies had the potential to create the 16,000 jobs that I alluded to earlier.

In 1993 they indicated that there was the potential for 8,000 jobs in the communities located outside of the major centres. And we talked about that a minute ago.

Now in 1994 the government's administration promised 5,000 new jobs for Saskatchewan. In total the NDP have promised to create close to 30,000 jobs since forming government. They have made little progress, Mr. Speaker. In fact if you factor in the 1991 employment figures, the NDP are still a thousand jobs in the hole.

Now let's look at the facts according to the StatsCanada. Last year the NDP created 2,000 jobs, not 5,000 as promised in the budget, and certainly not 12,000 that they claimed in the throne speech.

The members opposite jeered when we, on this side of the House, make reference to our neighbours to the west, but there is a relevant point to be made, Mr. Speaker. And while the Saskatchewan government is patting itself on the back for 7,000 jobs since 1992 . . . For the sake of argument, let's give them the fact that maybe they did create 7,000. I don't at all believe that in reality the people out there believe these figures at all, but just suppose they did.

The reality is that at the same time in Alberta they created 30,000 in one year alone. One year alone, Mr. Speaker, Alberta outdoes us by creating 30,000 jobs. That alludes back to the comparison that I made earlier that we are going in different directions with different philosophies driving the machine of government and the machine of the province — the machine of our province against the machine of their province. And ours has sputtered and failed and gone dead while theirs has chugged along quite nicely and they have a philosophy and a direction that is working.

During the span of one year, Alberta realized that Saskatchewan . . . or during the span of one year, rather, Alberta realized what Saskatchewan is hoping to gain by the year 2000. And this, Mr. Speaker, is a reality.

We might get there by the year 2000. But Alberta said, no, we're not going to wait that long; we can't wait that long. So they put their philosophy to work and they created in one year what we're going to wait another five years to attain.

I think that's too long, as well. I think we've got to smell the coffee, I guess some people would say, and get with it and do what Alberta has done, purely and simply. If it's been luck, then the same luck should have attributed to us because our base is the same in terms of what our provinces do and what we have available to work with. We can talk about resource industries and all kinds of stuff like that as we go along, Mr. Speaker, but the reality is that by the year 2000 it's going to be too late.

Now Alberta has been able to make these kind of economic strides by reducing government spending, by cutting rather than by taxing. Now the other day we had talked a little bit about reducing government, and the Premier of this province sat in his seat and he said, all you guys want to do is tear down government. And we agreed. He thinks that's terrible; we don't. We're different. We're very much different.

We do believe that tearing down government can be an advantage because we've got too much government already.

In the history of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, very quickly, in the 1930s and '40s — I was looking at some statistical background — we were looking at about 800,000 people in the province of Saskatchewan. In the '50s and '60s we got up to close to the million, 900-and-some thousand. The last 10 years

or so we did come over the million, and back down a little, and up again, back and forth. But we hover about that.

Reality is that Alberta has gone from about 800,000 up to 3 million. They've tripled us over the same period of history. Now what has changed in Saskatchewan? That is my point.

Our population has marginally gone up, but what has really changed is that in the 1930s and '40s we had nine members of cabinet — only nine. I could find no more in the history book I was checking on. But now we've got more than double that many almost.

See the reality here, Mr. Speaker, is that there's a message here. The only thing that has increased very significantly in Saskatchewan is the size of government. And that little example about cabinet you see reflects all through the bureaucratic structure of our entire province. It reflects through the entire structure of everything that we do that is bureaucratic or government related through our province.

So what should we do? Reduce it. Tear down the size of government. Cut costs. Cut spending. And start at the top and work down through society. Alberta has done it. I'm not saying that they've done it exactly right. But certainly it has worked much better than what we're trying. And we'd better take a real careful look.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, in fairness the government ought to take a look because we now have a Premier who told us he's no longer an NDP. He doesn't believe in that philosophy at all, he tells folks outside the province. So if he's not NDP, he could come and join our party and we'd be glad to have him over here and we could go on and do the right things. But I don't suppose he'd do that. So the best advice we could give him then is to pull his socks up and get the rest of his colleagues to go along and introduce those kinds of philosophies and those kinds of policies that are used in Alberta. And I think there's possibly a good chance he may have to do that. It's either that or face the electorate with a plan and a program that will be rejected and will put him into the ranks of the unemployed along with the other thousands of people in this province.

If you want to create jobs, Mr. Speaker, it has become plainly evident that cutting taxes and reducing utility rates is the way to go, because then you attract business and development. That's how you create jobs that are long lasting.

Higher taxation means that you've got to adopt the philosophy of bigger and stronger government. And that can create jobs at the start but it can never sustain itself, Mr. Speaker, quite simply because you don't have a tax base to pay the bills any more. And that's why Alberta's example is going to work and our is destined to fail, because there they're building a job base based on industry, based on manufacturing, based on creativity, based on business development — things that are long and sustainable and will continue into the future.

And so we're suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that this government ought to follow that example and to start to cut taxes. And reality is this: that the government will come out very quickly

here now with a budget speech and they will no doubt balance the books for a year on paper. So that's a fine time to start then. If you've got things lined up and you've got your ducks in line in that way, then we throw you the challenge: start cutting taxes; reduce the utility rates; let's get it going back the other direction. Maybe it's not too late to turn this thing around.

We have to do some other things though, Mr. Speaker, if we really want this to work. We would have to talk about The Trade Union Act and the labour standards legislation because these two things alone would keep most big job creators out of our province, and it will keep even many of the small businesses from coming into our province. No question about it.

Why would you as a business person bring a million dollars, for an example, into Saskatchewan and start a business in, say, secondary manufacturing of some agricultural goods — an ethanol plant, or a soup manufacturing plant using lentils or something like that — why would you do that if immediately that you came to this province to do it, you were faced with the restrictions of the The Labour Standards Act and The Trade Union Act that would almost force you to be fighting with unions from the day you started, when all you had to do was go another 200 miles over to Alberta, locate on any piece of land you want to pick, and they'd welcome you with open arms and not have any of this restrictive type of legislation or these restrictive rules to fight with and worry about for the rest of your life?

Why would anybody in their right mind ever want to do that? And obviously these people who have these dollars and they have these ideals are not going to do that. They haven't and they won't. It just makes eminent sense to me that they're going to go to Alberta or some place else; they're not going to come to Saskatchewan.

Who wants to have the union bosses immediately take over your business and run it for you? Why would you want to go into business to start with if immediately you had another, second boss taking over your own job? Absolutely makes no sense whatsoever. And so they won't do it. They'll just go some place else.

(1500)

Now I do believe though that in reality, to be fair about this, and I think we do want to be fair, business is pleased that the government has finally backed down on some of the provisions of the new labour standards. However, the reality is that they simply didn't go far enough. It was good to save what you could for those who are trapped in this province and can't get out. Save what you could, fight for what you could get, get some breaks, certainly. Business had to do that. They did it, and they did it very well.

Chamber of commerce people and business people from all over this province worked long and hard hours to convince the government to back off just a little bit, to let them survive. And they got that concession — they got a small backing-off and they got some chance to survive. Because there's many people

that just simply are rooted in this province too deep to be able to pull up stakes and move out.

Take my farm, for an example. I can't pick it up and take it to Alberta or it would have been gone a long time ago and you'd have had one great big hole in south-west Saskatchewan because it would have been long gone. But I can't do that. It's not possible. So we're stuck here. So we have to stay and fight for what little bit we can get.

That means that our population will stay and stagnate at that 900,000 to a million people, because we're about the population that is rooted here and can't get away. So we fight to survive the best we can, and we stay on. But as far as growth and development or expansion or anything close to that, forget it. It's just never going to happen. If all my kids had to leave the province to find a job, yours will have to, too. No question about it.

Now the government did back off on seniority rules for part-timers and the onerous severance provisions. And for that we are grateful in opposition. We're glad that you did that. You did at least save a little bit of the potential for some people to survive and not just go bankrupt and have to leave the province altogether and leave us without the kinds of goods and services that these businesses and people provide.

But there are many of these negative provisions that still do exist, Mr. Speaker. They just haven't been proclaimed yet. And that's another one of the problems we've got in our province, the fact that we passed legislation with regulations that can be brought in at the whim of the cabinet and the government. And that threat, you see, remains over people's heads. We have more regulations to come, more rules to come.

How many people want to go into a ball game not knowing what the rules are, and knowing very well that you're going to play nine innings; that's one rule. Okay, we've got one set up. But we don't know the rest of the rules. Because maybe after the seventh inning, if the government's behind, they'll give their side a new rule and they'll have four strikes instead of three before they go out. And if you're getting ahead in the ball game, maybe you'll get two strikes instead.

And that's just about the way this kind of thing works. You don't know what you're facing in the future. And so with these kind of threats remaining and hanging over your head, Mr. Speaker, nobody — I say nobody — is going to voluntarily invest their fortunes or their lifetime's ambitions and lifetime's works to come to Saskatchewan from some place else. They simply won't do it. And the people that are here are simply going to say, if I'm not rooted into the soil or rooted into the business community here in such a way that I can't get away, if I'm not rooted down, I'm going to get out of here. And that's exactly what's been happening and will continue to happen.

In the throne speech it states that the government, and I'll quote here:

... will show the same focus and determination with the job challenge as it has already applied to the deficit ...

Well, Mr. Speaker, all I can say again is what have we seen for success out of this? Where is the proof? They say the proof is in the tasting of the pudding, and if it tastes good it is good, and if it tastes bad it is bad. Well, my friends, the taste of this is bad, because there is no positive result. You've done the same old thing here, over and over and over. You've claimed that you're going to do the same old thing again and again, but there is no proof of success, and there can't be because there is none.

It all makes nice quotations, Mr. Speaker, but however, the taxation policies adopted by this government created the job crisis that we're currently experiencing. It didn't improve it, it didn't solve it; it created it.

And you would say, what can we do about this? Well certainly it is clearly evident again that we must go to a jurisdiction that has success and follow their example.

Taxation. I want to talk a minute about taxation. There's so many subjects to be talked about here, but we have to squeeze it all in. In my constituency the high education and health tax continues to drive people across the border to shop — very simply a fact of life. Medicine Hat malls target the south-west communities to draw them across the border. And this is a problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not unique only to my area, but it happens all across the western side of the province.

If the government wanted to create jobs, they could remove the barrier of the E&H (education and health) tax. And this would help a tremendous amount. There's no question in my mind that if we got rid of that tax or somehow could get on a playing-field that is level with Alberta, we would solve so many of our problems in south-west and along the western side of the province of Saskatchewan.

There is someone that has finally taken note of the problem that exists in the western part of the province and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Dale Eisler wrote on this very matter on February 13. And I want to just allude to that commentary made by Mr. Eisler because it was my good friend, George Kushner, who was interviewed and who was quoted and had the input into that article.

Absolutely a fact of life is the fact that people are taking trucks and trailers to Alberta and loading up and bringing them back to Saskatchewan. Nobody can debate that; it's a fact of life. Mr. Kushner proved it and if people want to read this article they will see how he demonstrated that proof.

He got several appliances into his shop from Alberta, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Very simply put, he was the agent who was required to repair these pieces of equipment because he's the dealer for those particular companies. But before he has to do the work, people have to be able to prove to him that they bought it and where, and the receipts brought in showed that they were bought in Alberta.

He became alarmed at that, notified his member, and let the world know, as well he should have. Because it proves the point that people have been questioning. It proves the point that once

again the tax that we've got that should have been addressed in this budget, early in this throne speech, should have been an announcement of a total change in philosophy, in policy, to taxation — a reduction in taxes across the board, but most importantly dealing with the E&H tax.

If that had been done, we could have stimulated our economy and started the correction in this province that is desperately needed. If Mr. Kushner can stay in business now, can you imagine what kind of expansion he could do if he could stop the exodus of shoppers to Alberta and bring them back to his store and supply the jobs for his community. It's amazing to me some days that there's anybody left in business at all in south-west Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we could go on about this taxation problem and the many problems that we have for a long time, and we will. When the budget comes out we're going to talk a lot more about that.

But there is a solution to our problem. It might sound like it's a bit off the wall. But we just have the native community getting special consideration for gambling. The thought crossed my mind, that after studying the documentation of how the land claim settlements are made . . . and believe me it's no small task; it's a document about that thick, about 3 inches deep. I'm sure there's 3 to 400 pages of it; there's a lot of stuff in there.

But anyway, one of the things it does say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that if the native community buys a certain proportion of land in a municipality in rural areas, they then become qualified to buy property in an urban area.

So it seems to me that maybe the solution is for the business people in Maple Creek, for example, to get together with the native people and help them to find enough acres of land rurally so that they will qualify to buy some in town, and voluntarily offer to sell them a couple of square blocks of the business district, make it into a reserve, and then have the business people lease back the property and work as agents for the Indian band, whichever one it happens to be — I'll say Maple Creek, that would be the Nekanets.

They could own and control the reserve. The agents, now the old former retailers that were there before, could now be exempt from both GST (goods and services tax) and PST (provincial sales tax). We could escape both taxes. And they could offer to the Indian band 6 per cent profit off the retail sale value of everything they sell — certainly a nice attraction for the native community. And I'm sure that they would say: hey, this is pretty good, everything that's sold we're going to get 6 per cent — do nothing, just handle the paperwork; sounds good to me. I'll bet they'd go for it.

And yet because both taxes are eliminated, they could sell — believe it or not — for less than what people are being charged in Alberta then because we'd be 1 per cent under the Alberta price and we'd have an advantage. They don't have a PST right now so we'd cancel that; that's even. We give the natives 6 per cent off the GST and we've got 1 per cent left as an incentive for people to come back from Alberta to shop in Saskatchewan.

Now it seems to me that maybe that's the solution to our problem. I'm not sure how the government will survive financially when all of this happens. But surely under the rules that are being developed and the way that they're being applied in gambling and all these other things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as sure as there is snow up North and dust down South, I will bet you that this is going to happen — that people are not sitting around sleeping for very long. They're going to say: hey, our native friends have got a break here that we can capitalize on, and we'll go and make a business deal with them and we'll solve this problem for ourselves.

I don't know how we can survive as a province when those kind of things start to happen, but that's the kind of mess we're developing ourselves into — empty documents that isolate us from the rest of the world, stagnation for our province and our people, absolutely no future and no hope in this document that we talk about today.

I want to quote a little more to make my impact before I leave this. I'm not as optimistic considering the Finance minister's comments to the Macklin Chamber of Commerce either. And so I want to quote from that and deal with that for a minute, and I'll give you the quote first:

While increased investment in job creation that result from the E&H tax rate reduction would translate into higher tax revenues that could offset provincial revenue loss associated with E&H tax rate reduction, federal equalization payments would be reduced, leaving the province worse off fiscally under the equalization program. New economic activity in the province means that Saskatchewan has an increased capacity to raise revenues and requires less federal financial support.

What a defeated way to look at things, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In other words if she cuts the E&H tax we would see a reduction in our welfare payments from the federal government. I say we get off of welfare and start supporting ourselves. Welfare mentality will never, ever get you any place.

It's a pure fact of life, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the government doesn't understand how to create jobs. They don't understand how jobs are stimulated and they don't understand how an economy really works.

And I will tell you quite simply how you have to start. Because you will say, well it's so massive and it's so complicated. And it is. But there's a simple way to start and that simple way is to repeal your labour legislation and to reduce taxation. Two starters. Easy. Don't have to fight through the maze of all of the other things. Start with those two things and the rest will start to fall into place by themselves like dominoes. It will happen; it can happen.

We've got the same kind of base in Saskatchewan that Alberta's got. And truly we do have good people with good roots in this province. And this province could spring to attention in a minute, and within a few months we could see prosperity return.

We have talked, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the things that are in the throne speech and the things that the government could do to turn the direction around if they chose to.

A couple of things that aren't in the throne speech are as bad in my opinion as the emptiness that is written in the document. The lack of comment on a simple issue like gun control, not even mentioned. A number one priority in most rural communities, if not all of the province. And I can certainly see that this issue would affect rural people a little more dramatically than it would many of the city people, although I've seen many city people out in my district hunting and fishing and enjoying the outdoors. So why not tackle this very real issue on this very real day in the history of the world?

(1515)

Gun control is something that's on now. Not next year maybe, not last year — because that's gone — but it's on right now. And we should have had a statement in the throne speech saying that we in this province are prepared to get together with Manitoba, Alberta, and British Columbia and form a union against this kind of dictatorship from Ottawa. And I think maybe we'll do that as this session progresses, but we should have started the session by making that statement clearly and out front in the throne speech.

And so I encourage the government to pay attention to the things that are going on that are pertinent to the people of our province. It's almost like they wrote this document two years ago and dusted it off and said, well this is the same plan we plan to use for the next four years, so here it is, and pay no attention whatever to what's happening in the real world around them.

Another thing, of course, that has to bother me about this speech is the fact that we have dealt so little with agriculture. Being of a farm background myself and knowing that this province has had as the chief engine of the economy of this province for so many years the industry of agriculture, it appals me that agriculture hasn't had some more attention.

One of my neighbours asked me the other day, do you think if a government can take your GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) away retroactively under legislation, that if you got elected, you could bring it back retroactively? I guess we could; I don't know. We didn't even talk about it in the Speech from the Throne. We've just forgotten about farmers. Somebody said to me the other day though, they did mention a little bit about agriculture and said, well farmers are doing better because commodity prices went up. Well input prices went up too, I can assure you.

And I can assure the government of another thing. I talked to a lawyer in our area who deals with farm crises, financial problems. He told me that he's getting three to four new farm cases each week in his office. Right now, this month, this year, today. Not two years ago, not last year, not in the 1980s, — 1995 — right here, right now, right today. That's how many farmers are in financial trouble.

And this government totally and completely ignores them and cuts out the best support program they ever had, costing this province not only millions of dollars but probably hundreds and maybe even thousands of farmers. After a while the land will be farmed, but it won't be farmed by families owning and controlling their own units, owning and controlling their own businesses. It will be done by big corporations or by government. And this government totally ignores the problem and totally ignores the industry.

Health boards and health issues are alluded to as though the greatest thing in the world that ever could have happened to us has happened when this government got elected and brought about the health changes. That's what you'd believe if you read the throne speech and listen to the rhetoric from the government side, Mr. Deputy Speaker; when in reality the health system in this province is in absolute, total chaos. There's absolutely no question in my mind that health will become a major issue in the next election. And ironically the party that claims fame to have brought this great program into effect is the party that's going to be defeated because of their moves that are destroying the fundamentals of health care.

I'll bring to the attention of the members in the government the reality of where Tommy Douglas got the idea from. He got the idea from Germany because they've had a medicare system in the country of Germany since the 1800s. And even a terrible person like Adolf Hitler did not have the nerve to tamper with the health care system in Germany when he was in power.

That was brought to my attention from a person who had immigrated from Germany just a few days ago. They lived through that period of war and said they had their medicare system in effect all through that and Hitler never dared touch it because he could never have faced an election and won if he had tried to tamper with the health care system.

So nothing is new in the world, and certainly not much new in Saskatchewan. But what is going to be a reality is that the people of Saskatchewan are going to reject you because you failed to stick with the old tried and proven methods that worked.

And I'll talk to you a little bit for a minute about the health region number one, just to give you some ideas of what you should be doing in this throne speech. You should have been talking about going back to a plan that worked. The old experimental plan, health region number one, was done in south-west Saskatchewan. It had elected people.

I know that's a terrible word to you folks, but this is how it started. At the municipal level they had elected people, people elected by the folks around them, who went on the health board. Every municipality had one. I think there was 80 or 90 municipalities. And from that group of 80 or 90 people, they elected a board of directors who hired an administrator and they handled the whole thing for the south-west corner of the province. The program worked. It worked then; it could work now.

Revisit the past in this area, my friends, because there is a master plan that was used as an experiment in this province that worked well and could save you hundreds of millions of dollars. And you simply could do it by having your elections along with your municipal elections in the fall. The person elected could either be a councillor or a reeve or someone from the general community, but the election would be held at the same time. No extra cost, just an election at the same time that municipal things are done.

And those people select from them an executive board that would direct health care and you could do it on the same six districts that you have in this SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) method of organizing their assembly. The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, that's how their districts are set up — six of them in the province. You could do it with health care, six major boards. The city of Saskatoon and Regina of course would have to have their own, as they do.

So, my friends, it worked in the past; it could work again. You could get rid of half of the people you've already got hired and the municipalities would probably once again pay for their delegate to go. You could save yourself hundreds of millions of dollars and have a health care system that would bring some comfort to the people, some comfort that they had personal access to the control of the way things are run.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't expect that the folks opposite are listening that carefully, but I had to say it in order for them not to be able to say that they've never, ever had anybody suggest that we go back to a tried and proven thing that could work. And so I've said it and now I'll rest easier tonight. But tomorrow I won't because I'll know we'll have to work harder to try to get them to see the reality of how the world in Saskatchewan should be working.

And that reality, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is simply this. If it works in Alberta, let's do it in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Of course I'm very optimistic about the Speech from the Throne. It's a little hard, mind you, after listening to the member from Maple Creek go on and on and on with his doom and gloom. And actually the member from Nipawin and myself invite him to Love, Saskatchewan, next year during the winter festival. Maybe he'll change his attitude and he'll see what this province is really made of and all the good things that are in Saskatchewan.

I'm honoured to stand in this House to speak in support of the motion before us and I would like to congratulate the mover and the seconder of the motion, the member from Bengough-Milestone, and the member from Saltcoats. I would also like to recognize you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the staff of the Assembly, and the pages, because the session is as hectic for you people as it is for us. And we depend on your skills to make things run efficiently.

I would also like to congratulate the members from Regina Lake Centre and Athabasca on their appointment to cabinet. I

would like to thank the member from Regina Hillsdale and the member from Swift Current, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for all of the work that they have done in cabinet and for this government. We can be very proud of their accomplishments in the public service.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am also very proud to be part of a government which has laid out such a positive plan for this session of the legislature. And I know the members opposite have a hard time understanding plans, but this government in fact has laid out a very positive one.

When I was elected a member back in 1991 for the constituency of Kelsey-Tisdale, the people in that area were seeking assurances of the province's desperate financial situation, assurances that it would be looked after. They wanted their government to get control on the escalating deficit, the mounting debt, which really threatened the economy of the province as a whole.

They were worried about annual deficits in the hundreds of millions of dollars. They were worried about the interest payments, now over \$800 million a year. They were worried about the impact of our deficit on our ability to fund important things like health care, like other crucial services, education for an example. And they were worried about the impact of the debt on their children and on their grandchildren.

They were worried about a government that was completely out of control, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that had lost sight of their priorities. And I'm very happy to say today that, three years later, the budget deficit has been reduced from over \$800 million a year — nearly a \$1 billion a year — to zero.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — This session, in fact later this week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Finance minister will table a balanced budget — the first since 1982, when the hon. member for Regina Dewdney was Finance minister.

The actions that had to be taken to achieve this balanced budget were difficult. Certainly there were some taxes that went up. There were some government programs that were cut. The people of Saskatchewan made sacrifices to balance that budget, but they pulled together and they made it happen. And I want to take this opportunity to thank the people of our province and especially the people of my constituency, the constituency of Kelsey-Tisdale. With their support, with their understanding, we have been able to clean up the mess that we inherited. This is partnership. There really isn't any other way of doing things like that in Saskatchewan. We work in partnership, we work together, we join when things get rough, and that's what we've done in the province of Saskatchewan.

The Leader of the Opposition, and in fact the member from Maple Creek, points to Alberta as a model. I would suggest that he talk to the people that are moving back to Saskatchewan because they can't tolerate the hack and the slash approach that has been taken in that province. That's not our approach in

Saskatchewan; ours is a balanced approach. Our approach is a partnership.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we're introducing a balanced budget legislation in this session so that no government can ever get us back into that position that we faced in 1991.

I want to make one thing clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This legislation is not for the NDP; we don't need it. CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) and NDP governments have always strived for a balanced budget. We have always lived within our means. It is the parties opposite, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the Liberals and it's the Conservatives, and it's their natural urge to waste public funds.

So a dark cloud that was floating over the province of Saskatchewan is dispersed; it's disappearing, except for a small portion which still floats around over the Liberal benches opposite. The Leader of the Third Party goes around the province preaching doom and gloom. But really there's a new day of hope and that new day is here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As the financial situation of the province has improved, so has the optimism of the people of Saskatchewan. In the farm sector, farm income is up nearly \$975 million this year. That's almost double of the 10-year average. Now there are certain sectors of the farm sector that still has some concerns and rightly so. Employment is up. Retail sales are up. Housing starts are up. And people, especially the young people, are coming back to our province. For the first time in a long time, we are seeing a net in-migration, and our numbers are growing — population now 1,016,200, according to Statistics Canada.

Now I can understand, I can understand . . . the Liberal member laughs. Well I can understand why he laughs . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well yes, he doesn't understand those kinds of figures, but he just has to look at the government next door — the Klein government. And people are moving back, and rightly so. And we look at other governments and their hack-and-slash approach. They want to move to a province where there is something happening.

(1530)

Saskatchewan economy is entering a whole new era, and we know that things are good. And we know that we have something to offer. We are selling our knowledge, and our products, around the world.

One example that has been cited here is the implement manufacturing business. Saskatchewan companies like Bourgault in Melfort, Flexi-Coil, to just mention a few, are expanding at such a rapid rate and making equipment that was designed with Saskatchewan conditions in mind, and designed by Saskatchewan people. We also note that this equipment is just as applicable in Australia; it's just as applicable in the United States as it is for the Canadian prairies. And this is the key to our success.

This kind of dedication to quality and innovation is not confined to the private sector either. SaskTel, for an example,

won the contract to install fibre optics in the Channel Tunnel. Sask Forest Products has built the most modern and efficient saw mill in Canada at Carrot River. Combine all this innovation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with a motivated and a skilled workforce and we can actually see results.

This year, Mr. Speaker, we face a shortage of production welders in the province because of this rapidly developing market for made-in-Saskatchewan product. I am proud that this government is introducing an Act to set up the agri-food innovation fund to encourage diversification and new processes to make the most of our farm products.

These are some positive things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and all we hear from the parties across is negatives, doom and gloom. I just want to read you a few things. Actually there's a whole stack of them but I'll just read to you a few — just the headlines, in fact, of newspaper articles in this province that have appeared in the last little while — I would encourage them to listen and maybe they can see the bright side of Saskatchewan for change: PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc.), post-banner year; RV (recreational vehicle) firms gear up to satisfy demand; UGG (United Grain Growers Limited) plans to build concrete grain terminal; Town welcomes Micada industries; Environmental technology firm nabs community bond; Glory days for Dutch Industries; South-west booms.

And the member from Maple Creek was complaining about the doom and gloom in his own area in south-west Saskatchewan and here there's a letter, or an article in the Swift Current newspaper that says: South-west booms; oil, agricultural wealth spreading out.

And it goes on and on, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't know where these people are coming from. Open their eyes, listen to the people of Saskatchewan, listen to the positives that are out there — in my area, Mr. Speaker, the kind of innovation that I was talking about earlier and the skills that has led to the canola boom. Canadian plant scientists took a plant with a fairly limited use and developed it into one of the highest quality oil seeds in the world. And the farmers in the north-east took this new crop and after 20 or 30 years became the best canola growers in the world. Now the value of canola sold is higher than that of wheat.

And Saskatchewan farmers and especially those in the north-east of Saskatchewan are leading the way in diversification through alfalfa processing, high quality honey, flax, and a number of other products. And, Mr. Speaker, our province's farms still produce the highest quality wheat, milling wheat, durum, and the best malting barley and the best pork and beef of any place in the world.

This is clear when the millers and the pasta makers around the world demand our wheat. And this is being recognized when livestock companies like Dalland and National Pig centre their breeding operations right here in Saskatchewan.

In my term as minister for Sask Water I saw the development of new industries in irrigation areas which hold a great deal of

promise. We are selling seed potatoes to Idaho, if you can imagine, and pinto beans to Mexico.

We drive through . . . drive through Outlook and I invite the opposition, both the Liberals and the Tories, to drive through Outlook, smell the mint, smell the dill that's being distilled into high valued essential oils. Drive by Lake Diefenbaker south of Lucky Lake and you will see Agpro Fish Farm which is marketing fish to Halifax, Montreal, and Toronto, and, Mr. Speaker, they are now working on salmon as well.

The future of agriculture is built on these diversification success stories, not the doom and gloom of the members opposite. The biotechnology centre at the University of Saskatchewan is going to create entirely new possibilities for the development of new crop varieties and existing crops which will keep our producers at the leading edge of world markets, in fact like canola we are going to create whole new markets.

The success of diversification as a success story is built on partnerships in Saskatchewan between skill producers, talented scientists, private business, and a government with commitment. We have a skill and motivated work force and we have a tremendous resource base. And we have a government that is prepared to assist Saskatchewan people to do what we do best.

I think of tourism in my area in the north-east of Saskatchewan. We have some of the best recreational resources offered anywhere in North America. Hudson Bay is the moose capital of the world. Tobin and Codette lakes have renowned fishing.

Drive through Nipawin. The member from Shaunavon, I invite him to drive through Nipawin and take a look at the vehicles on main street; 50 per cent of them are from out of the country. They're there to enjoy the tourism of the fine province of Saskatchewan. Instead of being pessimistic and looking at the dark side of life, try looking at the bright side for a change. There's a lot of good things happening out there.

Last week I had the honour to join hundreds of people in Hudson Bay, Mr. Speaker, and you know the area I talk about. They come from all over North America for the Wildcat Musers Marathon which is one of the top dog sled races in the world, Mr. Speaker. Miles and miles of beautifully groomed trails through magnificent forests. These are tourism success stories that have been built by local people promoting their own attractions.

It is for destinations like these that Saskatchewan government has worked in partnership with tourism operators, Mr. Speaker, and local governments to set up the Tourism Authority. We are now in a much better position to expand on our billion dollar tourism industry.

This throne speech looks at the future. Mr. Speaker, the high-tech industries that are the future for many of our young people will be encouraged by software technology centre. We have excellent computer software designers in this province and we want to encourage the growth in this industry as well.

Our access to the world of information and contracts around the world will be enhanced by SaskTel's plans to make the Internet universally available both in urban and in rural Saskatchewan. This one step will help put our farmers and our rural businesses on an even footing with businesses in more concentrated population centres. So there is much to commend in the Speech from the Throne.

Now the Liberals and Tories say, I guess it's luck. They use luck. And that's very interesting. The member from Maple Creek said, well the NDP are lucky. I heard the Leader of the Third Party in question period say, well it's luck; this is why it's happening.

I don't know why they will not give credit to the Saskatchewan people. Why do they think these positive things are happening in the province? It's because the people of Saskatchewan are determined to succeed. So you should be giving credit to them instead of looking at the dark side and the doom and gloom.

I don't understand it. And the people of Saskatchewan do not understand that neither. I mean they're very confused. They see good things happening and they listen to the opposition members say, well it's not good. Very hard for me to understand that.

They listen to members of the Progressive Conservative Party who have absolutely no credibility when it comes to talking about financial management of this province. You know, they tell us, they get up there in their chairs now and tell us how we could save money. And I appreciate their points of view but I certainly wish they would have thought about that over the period of time from 1982 to 1991. But they forgot about it then.

I appreciate their points of view and certainly will take them into consideration. But again, like I say, Mr. Speaker, I wish they would have thought about them a little earlier. That \$850 million in interest payments that we have to make each and every year. Now it's hard to take and it's hard to do, and it would've been much easier without that.

We've stood up in the House, as an example, Mr. Speaker, in the last several days, and presented many, many petitions from the people of Saskatchewan, asking more to be spent on highways in this province. And I understand the people writing in and wanting that. I'm wondering if the people of the . . . or the members of the Progressive Conservatives have told them about the amount of interest that this government has to pay on their . . . because of their spending spree. I doubt it very much. I don't think they have.

I wonder if they told them, Mr. Speaker, about where they spent their money — hare-brained ideas like GigaText and Supercarts and Promavia. I don't think so . . .

An Hon. Member: — We shouldn't forget those either.

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — No, I don't think we can forget those.

Well I want to ask the members opposite, while they were spending money like drunken sailors, they didn't spend money

on projects like twinning of the highways? At least now, when we're faced with that \$850 million a year interest payments, we would have something to show for it, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I keep reminding them, and I wish they would tell the people of Saskatchewan, that \$850 million would twin Gull Lake to the Alberta border 25 times a year, Mr. Speaker — 25 times each and every year until the debt is paid. And the member of Shaunavon doesn't understand that, I know, but I will mention it one more time. It's actually 25 times a year — \$850 million would twin Gull Lake to the Alberta border 25 times a year, each and every year, till the debt is paid down.

You know, I would dearly love to be able to announce highway tender schedules which would repair and improve every road to the best possible condition. But we cannot cry over spilled milk. We have to live within our means. So we can't do this. So we have to be very careful with our budget, to get the most work done for the least cost. We have to be creative, we have to build partnerships with other levels of government and with the private sector. We have a common interest in improving the roads. We share the effort and we both benefit.

And this is what this government is doing on Highway 102, 905 in the North, where the mining companies are funding improvements that will allow them to carry bigger loads more safely. The benefit of that is not only to the industry, not only to the economy, but also to the local people and the tourists of that area. Two million dollars from the mining companies will flow into these two highways, 102 and 905, over the next 10 to 15 years to upgrade them, to make them safer. This is what we have to do. We have to be innovative. And what do I hear from the Opposition benches? Doom and gloom.

Later this session, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be introducing a new transportation partnerships corporation, the legislation framework to work in partnerships like the 102-905 partnership to improve our transportation system. And I hope at that time that the members opposite would show some support for this innovative idea.

This kind of creative thinking is how the government is doing more with less. I also want to say we're doing more with less and at the same time we are going to be able to announce a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker.

(1545)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — A lot of credit for sound financial management has to go to the people who work for the people of Saskatchewan at the Department of Highways. Mr. Speaker, our Highways' welders are building innovative snowploughs which are cheaper than those used to be purchased from outside the province and these ploughs work better.

The department employees have set up a computerized vehicle maintenance system which will save money by scheduling preventative maintenance on our vehicles. Mr. Speaker, we have wellness for the Department of Highways' vehicles and the concept is working.

There is another partnership, Mr. Speaker, that needs pointing out and that is the partnership between the people who work for this government and the taxpayer, because many of the innovations in government programs come from the public servants in this province.

Public employees in this province have had to make sacrifices like everybody else. Everyone is being asked to do more with less, and the public service of this province has taken up that challenge. The fact is not being recognized by the member from Saskatoon Greystone, of course. She wants to cut that. She wants to cut back more.

And I point out, Mr. Speaker, that quite contrary to the impression given by the members opposite, highway workers are not just people standing around leaning on shovels. The members of this House might remember last spring, Mr. Speaker, when we had a wet fall and some very cold nights, many of the thin-surface highways in this province literally blew up from frost boils. Some of our highways were in very bad condition.

The Department of Highways' employees worked long and hard to repair those roads and by last fall they were back in shape. And they did it for the lowest possible cost. This is indicative of the spirit of the Department of Highways' workers in our province. Their hard work was appreciated. The member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster in fact made a point of writing to me to let me know what a good job they had done. This is quite a different approach from the Liberal Party opposite.

The Liberal Party, the leader of that party, is quite fond of taking shots at the public service lately. Somehow the Leader of the Third Party would lower the taxes, increase government services, reduce the size of government, and balance the budget all at the same time. Well, that's quite interesting. It is exactly this kind of economic strategy that followed by the members of the previous administration. And what did that get us? A financial mess that we inherited in 1991.

It is not really surprising when you consider who's been flocking to join the Leader of the Liberal Party in her campaign to finish what that government started. I ran into this Liberal kind of economic brilliance the other day in Val Marie in fact. It was my understanding that the member from Shaunavon would spend the entire Highways budget in his constituency. Now he is one of 66, Mr. Speaker, and I wonder what the other 65 constituencies would say about that. I wonder what the Leader of the Liberal Party would think about that. It's a very interesting concept. It's sort of, I guess, the new Liberal politics, the new Liberal style of economics. I'm not sure.

In her speech in reply to the throne the Leader of the Third Party takes the government to task for promising to run the operations of government on \$4.5 billion a year, and then she accuses us of failing. Well I know she's not perhaps that good in mathematics, Mr. Speaker, but if you take \$842 million in interest payments and deduct it from what the government did in fact spend, our operating expenses were under \$4.2 billion. So I'm wondering if she would consider that. If you consider

the offloading that the government — the Conservative governments in Ottawa, and in fact the Liberal governments in Ottawa — have given to us or put onto our plate, this was no small achievement.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor said it all when he said: Saskatchewan people are justifiably proud of how far we've come. Today we look to our Centennial in 2005 with confidence — confidence in our financial stability, in our economic recovery, in new jobs and low unemployment, and in the future of our health care system. But perhaps most importantly, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people look to the future with renewed confidence in themselves, and in their ability to build a better future together.

I agree with His Honour, and I am proud to support the content and the sentiments of the Speech from the Throne. We have gotten to this point through partnerships and cooperation and it's because of our success at working together — every single soul in the province of Saskatchewan — that our future looks as bright as it does.

I would invite the member from Maple Creek and I would invite the Leader of the Liberal Party to travel with me around the province of Saskatchewan to smell the mint in Outlook, to look at . . . to travel down a trail in the Hudson Bay area, to look at the oil boom in Estevan, to look at the mining activity in the North. Maybe they will better understand where the province of Saskatchewan really is.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and hon. members of the Assembly, I rise today to reply to the address from the throne in this the fifth session of the twenty-second legislature. I speak today on the first anniversary of my first reply to the throne speech last February after taking my seat representing the constituents of Regina North West.

As I begin, Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and welcome our new Clerk Assistant, Meta Woods, to the Assembly. I too have had an extended opportunity to work with Meta as we travelled the province during December and January on the Select Committee on Driving Safety. Her combination of competence and congenial personality contributed to the teamwork of the committee.

I'd also like to comment on the teamwork that was built on that select committee. I believe it's a model for cooperative, non-partisan, working relationships that we might emulate here in the Chamber.

I also welcome the Assembly's new team of pages. I imagine their learning curve has been rather steep lately and I look forward to working with them this session.

One other person I would like to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, someone we all tend to take for granted, is our Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Bill Goodhand. His unobtrusive presence

undoubtedly contributes to our most orderly behaviour in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I am the rookie member of the legislature and I'm frequently referred to as such by members opposite — sometimes sympathetically and sometimes, methinks, with a touch of irony or criticism. The past year has been my opportunity to learn new tricks, and I appreciate the hon. members' patience with my attempts at scaling that steep learning curve.

A most significant portion of my lessons this year, Mr. Speaker, has been learned in my constituency of Regina North West. Between sessions I have spent many hours at the doors, in the homes, and on the phone with my constituents, learning that the only way to represent their concerns in the legislature is to listen and then carry those concerns to the floor of the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, that is what I propose to do today. In my response to the Speech from the Throne, my purpose is to represent my north-west Regina's constituents concerns.

Regina North West is a very special constituency, Mr. Speaker. Regina North West is the growing edge of Regina where a cross-section of families live and work. Regina North West consists of thousands of families who are concerned about rearing and educating their children in the north-west's six excellent elementary schools and our highly rated high school.

Mr. Speaker, almost 10 per cent of my constituents are front-line health care workers. They have been sharing with me their concerns about the government's health reform agenda. In the throne speech the government claims that the benefits of what they call their health renewal process are just starting to unfold.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents who are front-line health care-givers tell me they have come through a nightmare of cuts; fear for loss of their job; extraordinary stress because of understaffing and fears about the safety of their patients. They are telling me that despite the grand rhetoric about partnerships and empowering of health care-givers, the government and the Regina District Health Board did not consult with them concerning health care reform.

They were told and are being told what will be, will be. The district board did commission a survey of health care workers last spring, Mr. Speaker. But what happened to those results? From the perspective of my north-west health care workers, they have been suppressed.

Mr. Speaker, my health care workers are telling me that they are feeling very frightened by the agenda of their district health board. They are frightened by the agenda of this government. Not only have my health workers been calling me, but they have been sending me notes about their concerns and I would like to read into the record some of my constituents' concerns.

I will paraphrase a couple of words in this one because this is a person who is very upset about what's been happening:

The government has really (messed up) our health care system (that's the part that I paraphrased). Our deductibles on prescriptions are way too high. Medicine is costly and this has brought hardships to many people. Eye examinations, chiropractic visits . . . all cost us each time we go to one . . . so lots of times we do without. (The) dental plan is destroyed. There aren't enough staff at hospitals and with closing down hospitals they are just making waiting lists longer. I am totally disgusted with what they have done to our health care system.

From another constituent:

I work at a nursing home (CUPE Union) and (I) am very concerned about our job security and wages.

1) I'm concerned about the burgeoning bureaucracy that has accompanied health care reform. Instead of making management leaner and opening lines of communication with . . . workers, there seems to (have been an) . . . increase in levels of management, which makes communication more difficult. 2) I'm also concerned about the nepotism that was involved in hiring the managers (particularly at Wascana Rehab Centre).

Another constituent:

There is a definite need for health care reform.

And I'd like to note that not one of the people who wrote to me indicated that they didn't believe we needed reform. This constituent says:

There's a definite need for health care reform. I do feel though that the plans of our present Regina District Board and our government are either done without thought or the plans are non-existent. If the people who delivered the health care, such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, etc., were involved in the planning, decision making, we would have had a much more workable situation.

(1600)

This one says:

I am a nurse in an acute care hospital. There always is a shortage of beds. Patients are sent home earlier and earlier. Often patients are placed on off-service wards. For example, gynecology's surgical patients are placed on an obstetrical ward. Medical patients are taking beds on surgical wards. This is not acceptable. We in health care are continually concerned about job security and deteriorating working conditions.

This one says:

The cuts to nursing positions have caused a shortage of nurses in this city. The Plains Health Centre was calling staff back from holidays to fill empty positions in the last while. The nurses are being overworked and need their days off. It is common on these days off to be

called in at double pay. Economically this does not make sense. As a possible future patient, I have no desire to have an overworked and overtired nurse attempting to deliver my nursing care.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to remind the members opposite that these are all letters from health care workers and constituents of Regina North West.

There's definitely more administration, unorganized. When you want to find a person in charge of a program or department, they're not in the hospital. Ninety per cent of the time, you can't find them anywhere. Staff have become just a number. The hospital is run like a big corporation. Nurses who have been in administrative positions for years and know what's going on are being let go, and told they aren't corporate minded enough.

We disagree with what is happening in Regina as to closures of hospitals, cutting back on services and nursing staff, and the way our tax dollars are being spent on health care. There is no direction from the top, of our health care system.

I feel the patients are sent home far too soon. For example, my sister-in-law had a baby at the General Hospital. She was discharged after two days. Not even a doctor came up to see her. I find that they treat people like a bunch of cattle, herding them in and out.

This constituent says:

Our health system has served us well; however, it was crying out for change and renewal. It was the way in which the system's policies and programs were reviewed and reformed, with little or no opportunity for public input, that really upsets us. It almost appeared that the government had decided that the public was incapable of contributing to the process so the public could be ignored.

If that wasn't enough, the government handling of the announcement that 52 hospitals in the province would be closed, was received like an iron fist had crashed into the face of Saskatchewan's people. Our people didn't deserve that kind of treatment. The emotions that surfaced following the announcement of the hospital closures reminded me of the 1945-46 time period, when larger school units were introduced, creating a similar shock wave.

Usually the cost of downsizing comes at the expense of clinical staff. Once this happens, administrators are left with less staff to supervise. Why not get rid of that top-heavy administration?

I have been employed in the health care field for 15 years, and have observed many changes, some good and some bad. However, over the past three years with the forming of the Regina Health District, I have never seen so many changes in such a short time.

I believe the quality of health care within the Regina Health District has dropped considerably for patients. The changes have also made it more difficult for the care givers to deliver quality care. On one occasion I was told that if I gave one less bed bath I would be able to complete my work. I believe this statement holds true to all aspects of health care.

Since I have been employed I have experienced cutbacks year after year in staff, always from the bottom. Hospitals have less beds . . . less workers and more management. The quality of care, food, morale and general concern for patients has hit an all time low. People who work in the health-care field in all levels are dissatisfied, doctors, nurses and service employees are all having problems coping with the changes occurring at the grass roots where the care is delivered.

There are a number of problems within the hospital setting revolving around the changes that have occurred. Many employees agree that changes have to be made but they were never asked for input. If they express concern about the changes and offer solutions, they are disregarded. In some cases people have been dismissed because they spoke against changes that were being made.

Management looks after themselves at the expense of patient care dollars. When a position is deleted in management, very often another management position is created and the person in the deleted job is placed in the new job. So the end result is no cost saving to the taxpayer. Management staff that were employed prior to the forming of the Regina Health District who held upper positions were all given jobs in the Regina Health District in lesser decision making roles and new people were hired into their old positions under a new title. Again no savings to the taxpayer.

The results of the changes made so far to form the Regina Health District are very poor. The people in the Regina area are receiving a poor level of care and are not going to see any savings because of it. There are however some benefits in the area of purchasing goods and services for the district, instead of individual facilities buying their own supplies . . . Over all people agree changes have to be made, but would like to see change for the better.

Another constituent says:

There is little or no satisfaction in the duties I do, due to the restrictions. Work situations are more and more unsafe for patients and staff.

Another constituent says:

I would like to know how many board members there will be or are in each district and also how much they are being paid because I feel every area of government

run agencies is top heavy with "management" — those who are friends and cronies of the current government.

This one says:

There have been few cuts as far as administration is concerned. Yet nurses, lab techs, etc., positions have been cut to almost dangerously low levels. A lot of these workers feel unappreciated and have taken an "I-don't-care" attitude. The patients suffer in the long run.

And this constituent wants to remain anonymous in fear for their job.

This constituent says:

Being an RN I feel very strongly that changes are needed . . . (and) Being on the inside, I can tell you that it is the patients who ultimately suffer from these cuts.

Another says:

Administration has not suffered at all; in fact I am sure they have increased. I am a nurse, and some of the changes make me ill.

Let's not go back to the pre-med days. Let's not go back to the wives and mothers nursing their families with the aid of a doctor book.

This constituent says:

As a health care-giver I am upset to see the responsibility of expense being put onto the shoulders of my clients. It's unfair and unrealistic to expect each person to have huge amounts of savings for old age health expenses. Not everyone has the same wage as a provincial government employee.

I am a nurse at the Regina General Hospital. We have absorbed the Pasqua Hospital's maternity cases with a 30 per cent case-load increase and less than 3 per cent staff increase. We are working excess overtime. We are called back on many days. This results in very tired staff and the patient care suffers and at times is purely unsafe.

And my last note is from a couple. It's from a lady whose husband was ill at the time of this writing and now both she and her husband have died:

As we have had family in hospital for several months, we feel we have personal experience. The nurses have been giving excellent care, but they are too busy and overworked. It was necessary to hire private duty nurses at critical times — very costly for anyone, especially a pensioner.

Mr. Speaker, these are the voices of my constituents concerning the negative impact of this government's health reform process on their lives. Not one of them disagreed with the need for changes to the health care system. What they have been asking

me and the government is, why did you rush ahead before you had alternative services established? They are asking, why did you refuse to listen to our ideas? They are asking, have you saved any money? They are asking, why has the bureaucracy grown?

Mr. Speaker, my constituents deserve answers to their questions. They deserve a government that not only spouts rhetoric about empowering citizens and health care workers, but actually has ears to hear what these most important stakeholders have to say.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents have been stopping into my office to drop off their résumés because they can't get a job. They have been calling me in tears because the only place their Saskatchewan-educated children might get a job is in Japan. They are calling me because their university-educated children are now enrolled in technical courses to develop marketable skills after receiving stacks of rejection notices after applying for scarce jobs.

One of my constituents received a letter from a school board which told her that she was one of 150 highly qualified candidates for a teaching job and that unfortunately she had been unsuccessful. They told her that hiring these days is rather like a lottery; they might as well pull a name out of a hat.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to my constituents and as Liberal critic for Education, Training and Employment I decided that it was critical for me to better understand and address the pressing issue of youth employment and training. As a result I travelled around the province from August to January consulting with stakeholders. I listened to university presidents, to SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) principals and instructors, to regional college directors, to aboriginal educators, to directors of various youth employment programs, to boards of education, to trustees, to various educational leaders, especially listening to youth.

Yes, I even had work-experience students requesting the opportunity to get experience working in my constituency office. And yes, I also listened to the Department of Education officials on January 18. At that time I offered to share the results of my consultations with the departmental official in charge of youth employment.

Mr. Speaker, I released the results of my consultation last week in this Assembly because I believe that the discussion paper I wrote entitled, Re-opening the Ground Floor Door: Addressing the Youth Jobs Crisis in Saskatchewan can be a catalyst in opening up the problem to province-wide discussion and a concerted effort to keep youth at home.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to share some of the findings of my consultation. 1995 is a special year for Saskatchewan because it marks our 90th anniversary as a province. In 10 short years we will be celebrating our centennial. This special year gives people across the province a valuable opportunity to reflect on what we are, and above all, what we want to become. We must ask ourselves if we want our children and grandchildren joining us for that 100th anniversary as residents of Saskatchewan, or

do we want them coming home from another province or country for a visit, to celebrate with us.

Important decisions must be made. We must decide if we are willing to simply continue as a have-not province, a province resigned to existing on hand-outs from Ottawa, a province on welfare, or do we want to take up the challenge of identifying the ways in which Saskatchewan can be the best and prepare our people for the future.

(1615)

Saskatchewan youth are finding their home province is a place where unemployment is rampant, where many of their friends have given up hope of finding work, and where underemployment, dwindling incomes, and poverty block their entry into the ground floor door of the work world. The youth of Saskatchewan are facing a punishing economic problem — the youth jobs crisis. To them, positive economic indicators and black ink government balance sheets are of little consolation.

Since the government was elected in 1991, it has ignored the youth jobs crisis and its worsening social fallout. This inaction has demonstrated a lack of awareness of the crisis, at best, and a lack of commitment to finding solutions.

As an MLA, I am in daily discussion with my constituents. They tell me that they are deeply concerned about their children and the fate of our youth. They are worried whether their children will be able to find the first job that will allow them to remain in the province. In their eyes, the Romanow government has been unable to create a climate of opportunity. Any economic recovery has been a jobless recovery, denying youth a reason to remain in Saskatchewan.

Our paper explores the root causes of the youth jobs crisis and how the provincial government has failed to notice, let alone address, the problems before they developed into a full-blown crisis. The conclusion of this paper is devoted to several suggestions proposed by a variety of stakeholders. It is not an exhaustive list of solutions, but provides a context for groups and individuals looking for answers to the plight of Saskatchewan youth.

Two key factors are contributing to the youth jobs crisis in Saskatchewan. The first and most important is our changing economy, and the second is the provincial government's failure to provide a vision and implement a plan of action.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has produced some of the brightest and most talented people in Canada. Many young people were given opportunities on farms, in offices, and with small manufacturers to get their first view of the work world. From their early experiences, young people gained the skills they needed to succeed, skills they could market, and a network of friends and potential employers that could provide them with a job.

In the post-war period, Saskatchewan's population was still farm based, and many of our communities had modest service industries, manufacturers, and tradespeople with small shops.

Since that time the farm-based population has dropped from almost 400,000 people to less than 160,000. Furthermore, mechanization, centralization, and automation have resulted in the loss of many other businesses which once provided quality work experience for youth.

One area of work which gave many youth their start was the clerical occupation. In the 1950s this was the ground floor bastion of 40 per cent of all employed youth. By the 1990s, only 20 per cent of working young people are finding jobs in this field. Today approximately 35 per cent of young people find work in the service industry, much of which is in the fast food business.

While all of these changes have been happening, the provincial government has been sitting idly by and doing nothing. Saskatchewan youth receive some of the finest academic training in the world from well-qualified teachers. But despite spending \$900 million on education, this provincial government's lack of a strategic plan is allowing youth to graduate from Saskatchewan high schools and post-secondary institutions, lacking marketable skills.

The Romanow government has had every opportunity to read the signs of the developing crisis, but has chosen to close its eyes. It has not adjusted its education, training and employment opportunities for youth so that youth could gain the experiences lost to economic changes.

It is the government's job to harness the resources, ideas, and energies of everyone in the province toward this goal. Instead this government took note of the financial deficit and ignored the real deficit of opportunities for young people and the threat it poses for the very future of Saskatchewan.

Some of the problems besetting the youth of Saskatchewan are unemployment. When I introduced this paper, the Premier objected to my statistics, claiming they were StatsCanada statistics. But, Mr. Speaker, these are statistics from the Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics. And what those statistics say is the net job loss for youth versus all other groups between 1991 and 1994 — the term of this government — has been 4,000 jobs out of the 9,000 jobs, lost to youth. Job losses among those aged 20 to 24 years are most alarming. This age group lost over 5,000 jobs. Such a severe drop in employment in this age category should be a serious concern to all Saskatchewan people. This is normally the age at which young people search for full-time employment.

While the unemployment rate for the population as a whole in 1994 was 5.6 per cent, it was 10.2 per cent for those between the ages of 15 and 24 years. If one compares the youth unemployment rate to the unemployment rate for those over 25 years of age, the difference is even more dramatic. The unemployment rate for those 25 and over is at 4.7 per cent and is less than half the 10.2 per cent experienced by youth.

Mr. Speaker, young people are losing their faith that Saskatchewan is a province with a future. This fear that the ground floor door is closed is evident in the falling number of

young people working and are actively seeking work in the last four years.

Another problem affecting young people that has been overlooked is the under-employment of young people. Getting a job, Mr. Speaker, is no guarantee that youth will find the door to the ground floor wide open. Many youth graduating from post-secondary training at our regional colleges, universities, or the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology and other post secondary programs, avoid one pitfall only to fall into the trap of under-employment.

One clear indication of the difficulty of under-employment is provided in a SIAST survey of its own graduates. The survey demonstrates a serious problem with under-employment. Of the 1,319 responses, only 507 graduates managed to find full-time jobs in the occupations related to the training they took at SIAST. This represents only 45 per cent of all the graduates who responded to the survey. A majority of 55 per cent were either unemployed or under-employed.

The actual figures may be worse, because many of the graduates without any good news may have chosen not to respond to the survey. One way to lose the key to the ground floor door is in poverty and declining incomes. And poverty is a direct consequence, Mr. Speaker, of locking youth out of the ground floor door.

In 1991 only 24 per cent of all social assistance claims were made by youth. That's at the beginning of this government's mandate. By September of 1994, however, the number of youth on welfare grew to 28 per cent of all claims. Both of these figures are well above the Canadian youth average of 21 per cent. The government has not read the writing on the wall.

In 1991 there were 6,844 youth claiming social assistance. By September of 1994 there were 10,922. And that's a figure which does not include the dependants of single mothers. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the welfare rates for young people in the mandate of this government have risen 43 per cent.

A statistic again, a Revenue Canada statistic, about the loss of taxpayers in Saskatchewan. Between 1981 the Canadian average earnings among young people between 16 and 24 experienced a 17 per cent decline. But the youth jobs crisis in Saskatchewan is forcing youth to drop out of the ranks of taxpayers at a rate 19 times greater than for the population as a whole. Between 1990 and 1992, Saskatchewan lost 3,470 taxpayers as a whole.

The loss of youth taxpayers, however, was dramatically higher; 7,020 fewer Saskatchewan youth were paying income tax in 1992 than in 1990. In their first year in office, Saskatchewan, under the Romanow government, lost 4,000 youth taxpayers.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I had thought the member from time to time was reading from a direct quote, but I think this is the fourth time that she has used the term "Romanow government." And I think she realizes that by the rules, that is not permissible. She must refer to the member's constituency or to the Premier.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be more careful.

Another effect of the youth jobs crisis is the prolonged dependency of youth. Mr. Speaker, pessimism about the potential to get jobs helped to create another phenomenon symptomatic of the crisis. Too many youth are trapped in what we call prolonged dependency. Many youth are forced into putting off independence from family, finding productive jobs, marrying and having children and purchasing homes.

One clear indicator is the growth in post-secondary education. Between 1950 and 1990 the number of young people enrolled in post-secondary education increased ninefold. Most of that growth occurred during the 1980s despite being the decade during which the baby boom generation departed post-secondary institutions for the workforce.

In Saskatchewan certain faculties and colleges whose enrolments were never limited soon became the subject of quotas. Foremost among those was the College of Arts at the University of Saskatchewan. While quotas were introduced at some colleges and faculties, others saw admittance grade averages increase. At SIAST, application dates became strict deadlines. Students became part of long waiting lists.

Youth also started staying in school longer. Some did so in response to the new technology; others, however, chose more formal training as an acceptable alternative to having no job in a dismal looking work world.

Mr. Speaker, youth have been led to believe that a university or a post-secondary education is a ticket to success. But young people, having acquired degrees or diplomas, are finding themselves unable to get work related to their training.

Youth dependency is prolonged with further education when education by itself may not be the answer. Without meaningful work-related experiences, further education may only pull people into the trap of higher student debts, increased education inflation, and ultimately, waste scarce human resources and patience.

Mr. Speaker, across Canada, approximately 60 per cent of all women and 70 per cent of all men between 20 and 24 years of age are living at home while 30 to 40 per cent are in their late 20s, continue to live at home with their parents. And these are figures that are in stark contrast to my generation, the baby boom generation, when we all left home quite early.

Mr. Speaker, the continuing youth jobs crisis is partly fuelled by Saskatchewan's dismal record of developing and offering apprenticeships which combine academic instruction with paid work experiences. In Canada only 1.3 per cent of the workforce is involved in apprenticeship programs while 7.4 per cent of all German employees are involved. Saskatchewan's record is even more dismal with only .8 per cent of all employed persons registered in an apprenticeship program.

This is a tragedy, considering that two-thirds of high school graduates will not move on to SIAST or university education. That's two-thirds, Mr. Speaker, that will get no post-secondary training. If available, an apprenticeship could be the only training they will receive. The government's lack of action in this key area is a clear indication of its failure to understand the needs of average people, especially youth.

The Economic Council of Canada noted in 1992 that apprenticeship programs enable 96 per cent of their graduates to find long-term work related to their occupation. A downside to apprenticeship programs is that they are underutilized in terms of numbers and in the range of occupations they represent.

You know, Mr. Speaker, presently in Saskatchewan, students who graduate from high school and want to enter an apprenticeship program are increasingly being forced to go for upgrading before they can even read the text of the apprenticeship program. The Department of Education is devising ways for them to be upgraded so that they can benefit from the apprenticeship programs that now exist.

At present, of the 34 apprenticeships functioning at the moment, at least half involve the construction trades, while the overwhelming majority are too confined to traditional trades and services. Not enough is being done to prepare Saskatchewan apprenticeship programs for the new technologies in a changing economy with different labour needs.

The lack of emphasis on workplace experience is not confined to the provincial government's policy on apprenticeships. Work experience programs and co-op programs are rare at a post-secondary level. Among SIAST campuses, only Moose Jaw Palliser offers such a program, and it is utilized by only a minority of students.

At the university level, only the University of Regina offers co-operative education, and it is mainly confined to administration, computer science, and some sciences. Work experience programs which offer unpaid opportunities are few and far between at the post-secondary level.

(1630)

At the high school level, work experience programs, although very beneficial for students, are still considered to be alternative, not mainstream programs.

Mr. Speaker, while young people have been enduring this crisis, the government has been barricading the ground-floor door by cutting funding for programs that help young people to get started in the work world.

Increases in taxes and utility rates form a big plank in the government's barricade. When the government single-mindedly sought to balance its books, young people were among those who suffered most. In their tax grabs, the government disregarded ability to pay. Within three years, the government has implemented increases in natural gas bills, 12.7 per cent

increase to SaskPower rates, and several increases for local phone service.

The reason I make these points, Mr. Speaker, is that these direct increases in utilities affect those at the lower end of the income scale, where youth rest.

Cuts to school divisions have also taken their toll. But in addition to cuts at the K to 12 level, the government also victimized youth venturing off to post-secondary training. The government spending on post-secondary education in Saskatchewan has dropped sharply since 1991. As a result, the students' direct share in education costs, paid through tuition fees, has increased to help cover some of the shortfall. Between 1991 and 1995, Mr. Speaker, federal spending on post-secondary education increased from 54.1 per cent of the total to 57 per cent share of the overall cost.

In contrast to what they claim, the provincial government share dropped drastically from 30.9 per cent of the total to 23.3 per cent. In dollar terms, total provincial spending on post-secondary education plummeted from 121.466 million to 87.674 million — a cut of almost \$34 million. While the provincial government's share dropped dramatically, the portion paid by students rose rapidly as administrators sought to make up the difference.

In 1991 students paid for 15 per cent of post-secondary education costs. By 1994-95 they were paying 19.8 per cent of the total bill. In terms of raw dollars, the students' share increased from nearly \$59,000 to \$75,000 . . . \$75 million, excuse me, Mr. Speaker.

Lately the government is growing more reluctant to provide money to student loans. In 1993-94 the government estimated it would receive \$28.5 million in repayment of student loans. To its surprise it received \$37.979 million — well above what was estimated.

Despite that windfall and the government's improving fiscal situation, this year's student loan budget did not see at all the windfall money returned to increase available student loans. Rather than placing the entire \$9 million windfall into more loans, the government only increased lending by 4.1 million with the remaining 4.9 disappearing into government coffers.

Another area in which the government's cuts strike directly at youth is through reductions to student employment programs. In 1991 the Saskatchewan government spent \$1.884 million helping students find summer jobs and subsidizing business to employ them. According to *Public Accounts*, under the government, by 1994, the summer of 1994, this spending was cut by 43 per cent to \$1,070,978.

With those cuts went valuable opportunities to acquire experience, to network, and to defray overall education expenses. For this government this program was treated as an expense rather than an investment in a precious resource.

After reeling against the cuts made by the previous government to education and training programs, the government went on to

outdo their predecessors in the cutting department. Other programs which benefit youth less directly were also placed on the deficit altar.

Among those are programs offered by cultural and recreation groups. An increasing amount of money once collected by these charitable groups through small gaming activities is removed daily from the communities by the government's extensive system of video lottery terminals. With each dollar disappearing into government coffers, valuable opportunities for youth to participate in culture and recreation experiences are lost with the dollars of thousands of other charitable groups.

One example of the government's flagrant lack of concern for the youth jobs crisis can be seen in its spending on training for its own senior, departmental, and Crown corporations staff.

In the summer of 1994 various government employees were sent to another annual effective executive program at the resort town of Waskesiu where they took courses like personal financial management, and even effective executive golf. This government decision cost taxpayers a tuition fee of \$4,750 per government employee.

Mr. Speaker, that is an amount equal to the full-time tuition fees for two post-secondary students. No less than 15 of the 28 1993 participants were from provincial government departments or Crown corporations.

Paying for the training and recreation of well-paid and well-qualified senior officials in personal financial management and effective golf, while many Saskatchewan youth go untrained and unemployed, is shameful.

Mr. Speaker, the youth jobs crisis in Saskatchewan has an impact on all of Saskatchewan young people, but none are more deeply affected than the Saskatchewan's first nations people and Metis youth.

Only 1 per cent of the first nations and Metis population are university graduates compared to 9 per cent for the non-aboriginal population. Saskatchewan Indian and Metis youth population is expected to grow by 50 per cent by the year 2011. With full participation of first nations and Metis people, appropriate reforms must be made to provincial social policy to ensure that the future for aboriginal youth is more hopeful than that of previous generations.

While rates of unemployment and poverty are significantly higher among Indian and Metis youth, many jobs both in aboriginal communities and in other parts of the province go unfilled because of lack of training. The FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) and the University of Saskatchewan estimate that 700 to 800 training jobs, not including reserve schools, that could be filled by aboriginal youth are not being filled because of an under-supply of qualified Indian and Metis teachers.

Other opportunities in agriculture and the growing agriculture service industry are also being missed because of lack of training.

Mr. Speaker, in this our 90th anniversary year we have a chance to decide what sort of future we want for both our province and our children. The youth jobs crisis is wreaking havoc on the lives of many young people and shattering their dreams. It is also undermining our hopes of ultimately becoming one of the have rather than the have-not provinces. This is clearly not the future we want for Saskatchewan.

Our future ability to sustain ourselves and build our reputation for social innovation depend on our success in reopening the ground floor door of the work world to youth. To help reopen that door, we need to work together. And after the release of this discussion paper, the Liberal caucus has distributed the paper to stakeholders across the province. We have asked them to study the suggestions provided in this paper and offer their feedback so an alternative can be developed to conquer the youth jobs crisis.

We look forward to hearing from and meeting with as many concerned people as possible, especially Saskatchewan young people. Together we know we can keep our youth at home in Saskatchewan. We will of course be offering this feedback to the government.

Mr. Speaker, moving on to . . . I'd like to say when I was elected as MLA for the Regina North West, I declared that I would not accept per diems paid to Regina MLAs because I found it unseemly to accept money that was ostensibly paid for accommodation and expenses which Regina MLAs do not incur. Mr. Speaker, I have continued not to accept the per diem and I am disappointed that none of my Regina colleagues have decided to forego this allowance.

In conclusion, I have just related the most pressing of my constituents' concerns. This, my first year as a member of the legislature, has been an extraordinary year for me. It has been a deeply moving experience for me as I have begun to understand and to carry out my role as a representative of my North West constituency.

While I understand the enormity of the financial disaster faced by this government when confronted by the excesses of the previous government, and give them credit for managing and taking credit for the sacrifices we as taxpayers have made to eliminate the deficit, I do not agree with the process they have used to implement health care reform. I do not agree with their lack of attention to the youth jobs crisis and commitment to our children's future in Saskatchewan. I cannot support this throne speech.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address in reply to the Speech from the Throne and I don't think it's a secret to anyone in this House or those who follow politics that this is probably my last chance to address this Assembly on this issue.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking first of all, the residents of the constituency of Regina Rosemont, north central Regina, for giving me the privilege, the very, very deep privilege of being able to represent them in the last two sessions of this Legislative Assembly.

It's obviously, Mr. Speaker, an experience which very few people ever get the opportunity to experience and it's a deep, deep privilege and a deep, deep opportunity to be able to, in fact, serve the people who are your friends and who are your neighbours and who entrust you with carrying their message to the highest level of political body in the province.

And so it's with great pride that I thank the residents of Regina Rosemont for that privilege. I'd also, Mr. Speaker, like to take this time to pay tribute to two individuals — one, Malcolm McKinnon, who is a personal friend of mine and has also served as my constituency president, passed away suddenly in the last month. Mac to me represented the kind of individual that has built Saskatchewan. He was 72, 73 years old, he worked as a farmer; was born in the south-east part of the province; was injured in a farming accident; moved to the city; became a mechanic; worked at the Sherwood Co-operative for 25 years; was the chief steward of his union; was a representative of his fellow workers on negotiations with his employer; was active — very, very active in his community; found time to act as a volunteer at the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre.

(1645)

And to me, Mac was not only a political colleague in the sense of seeing eye to eye on a great many issues, he represented to me the kind of people who went through a whole period in the development of Saskatchewan; who made sacrifices in the early years; who worked to bring up his family, all of whom stay in Saskatchewan; were employed, some in Moose Jaw as teachers, some in Saskatoon as steeplejacks; but who have all contributed to the community. And I want to pay public respect to my friend, Malcolm McKinnon, and his passing. Also want to express my condolences to his wife Grace, and to the other members of the family.

The second resident of Regina Rosemont I'd like to pay tribute to, Mr. Speaker, is a young man, and his name is Patrick Fleming. And Patrick Fleming is a grade 12 student at Riffel High School. And when Patrick was in kindergarten and in grade 2, he was held back by the school system because of a learning disability that he was unfortunately born with. And Patrick followed in the footsteps of his older brother, who has represented Saskatchewan several times on international track and field meets, and became an athlete, and is an athlete, and participated in sports at Riffel High School, and in fact in the community basketball association, and in the junior football program; and his greatest wish was to participate fully in sporting activities, because for Patrick this is one of the things which brought him a sense of self-worth and internal reward.

Patrick had the courage this year to challenge the rules governing high school athletics in this province. There was a rule which limited high school athletics to 18 years of age or

over, regardless of any circumstances of how you proceeded through high school. And Patrick challenged that ruling, took it to the Human Rights Commission, and despite some pretty vociferous opposition from people in the athletic community around Saskatchewan, was unanimously seen to be in the right, and to have been discriminated against because of his age.

Also I may say, as a corollary to that, Patrick's struggle to change the rules under which he would participate in sports allowed other people in similar situations to participate, and allowed them . . . In fact I remember a comment of a young man from Campbell high school, who said: the only reason that I stay in school and learn is because I'm allowed to exercise and to participate in high school athletics, and that the school represented an important part — that athletics represented an important part — of his school experience and a way of defining himself.

So I'd like to publicly recognize the efforts of Patrick Fleming, a young man who had the courage to stand up, despite the fact, as I say, considerable pressure was exerted upon him not to challenge the powers that be in athletics in this province. But he had the courage to carry forward in his convictions and I think has changed and provided a positive change for the way in which people are looked upon — the way that they're looked upon as they participate in athletics at the high school level.

I'll return to this issue again in a few moments. But I say that because, Mr. Speaker, Patrick's ability to motivate himself and to motivate others, to support him in this quest of changing the rules, is at the fundamental heart of how I see change occurring in this province. Of how I see that the way in which this province was developed and in the way in which the institutions of this province respond to the needs of every day, at an everyday level of people, comes not necessarily through this institution, but in fact comes through the efforts of the mass of people of Saskatchewan.

When the people of Saskatchewan decide that something needs to change, there is a history and a record of courage in this province, of people being able to stand up and take a stand and go after the change that they want to do.

And I think that Patrick, like Malcolm McKinnon, represents a continuation of people who are trying to build a better life for themselves. This is after all is what change occurs. People say there's got to be a better way of doing what we have to do in order to live at a better quality of life.

And I feel quite privileged to have known both individuals while I've served them as their representative in the legislature.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm no friend of the press at this particular moment in time. I in fact have made it a rule over the last several months not to grant interviews to the press. So some of my friends in the media who have wanted to interview me over this subject or that subject aren't necessarily particularly friendly towards me.

One of the questions they've asked me and taken considerable effort to ask me is: why is it that you're not running again; what is it that's caused you not to run again?

I want to take this opportunity to explain my actions to the House. I find that that's probably the appropriate place to do so rather than at a press conference or rather than have it filtered through the media.

I want to do a little bit of an apologist summa vitae; my good friend the reverend from Moose Jaw here would know that. The apology for my life, I think is the way it gets translated. Not that I feel I have to apologize, but in fact to explanation. Apologist summa vitae. Apologia.

Now, Mr. Speaker, all people who've been involved in politics know that there are majorities and minorities around any political question and any political debate, and that whether that debate occurs in the legislature or whether it occurs out in the Kinsmen Club or Kinette Club, or whether it's at the hockey team, or whether it's . . . wherever it is in terms of the organization where people are debating issues, you will find that there are majorities and minorities. And that's the way that the world works.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, in a great many instances in the debates that we've had in this caucus I've ended up on the minority, which is a natural part of life.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it also becomes I think after a while a bit debilitating. I want to express this in a very personal way. After a while you get tired of being on the losing end of the debate.

And we've had many debates, Mr. Speaker, and I want to say this, that the debates that have occurred in our caucus have been some of the finest levels of political argumentation that I've ever had the opportunity to experience. And I've been in politics, involved at one level or another, since the time I was 18 years of age, the last 30 years.

And I want to thank all my caucus colleagues, both at this caucus and also the preceding caucus, for the opportunity to participate in the kind of debates that have been carried forward.

When people discuss the future of a province and the future of a jurisdiction in which they're entrusted to make those discussions, you find . . . or I have found that the level at which the discussion occurs generally is of a very high calibre, and that what happens in that debate, questions of intention become less important than questions of substance. Questions of what should be done, rather than why should we do it, takes precedence.

I can remember several debates. I remember one debate around the constitution, in particular, which I think every person in this country would have benefited from had they been privy to listening to the kinds of discussion which took place in our caucus at that time.

I don't think I'm breaching caucus confidence or solidarity when I say that. But I can tell you this, that had that debate been seen by everybody in this province, a great many of the constitutional issues which this country now faces would have been much clearer and would have been put in a much better perspective than we find ourselves once again facing.

There is an argument, Mr. Speaker, for openness to be made and I would like to make here on the floor, that if there can be change, which I think there must be, that there has got to be a finding of ways in which real debate, not the partisan posturing that we find across the floor of the legislature, but real, honest-to-goodness debate which occurs in the caucuses of the parties which sit in the legislature . . . If there was some way of finding public access to that kind of debate, I think that not only would this institution be better served, but the citizens of this province would be better served as well.

So if I have any plea to make to my colleagues, not only on this side of the House but across the floor as well, that if we can find some way of getting real debate publicized and made much more public, we'll be doing the electors of this province a great service.

And I think if one were to poll all the members of this legislature that you would find that there would be some agreement to that, that in fact that the need for open and honest discussion above and beyond partisan political wrangling will serve us all much better.

Goodness gracious me, let me be the last one to claim purity in not engaging in partisan political rhetoric or victory, Mr. Speaker. But all that aside, all that aside, that in terms of solving some of the issues, I find that this institution can provide and I think must provide, a greater level of political debate.

Mr. Speaker, I've got a great many more things I'd like to say. I want to talk about the throne speech, about how I would characterize this throne speech, and leave some of my personal thoughts and become a little bit more political on some of the issues that are confronting us, but I don't believe I'm going to have time given the . . . even if the clock were to be stopped. I think I've got about another 30 minutes that I'd like to speak, so at this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move that we adjourn debate on this issue.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:57 p.m.