

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
February 21, 1995

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have petitions from the Gull Lake area to present this morning. I notice that the mayor of Gull Lake has signed this one and some other good folks from around the area — Swift Current, Medicine Hat even, and some of the other small towns. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your 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 projections in the province.

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

And I'll be happy to table these today.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll 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.

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

These petitions come from Tribune, Goodwater, Weyburn area. Mr. Speaker, I table them now.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition from many of the constituents in my constituency, and the prayer is as follows:

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 petitioner will ever pray.

And Mr. Speaker, many of these constituents are from the . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of these constituents are from the Glentworth-Mankota area of the constituency.

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 costs of Saskatchewan roads.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have two notices I'd like to present today. I give notice that I shall on day 17 ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Department of Health: how many employees within the department have been severed, laid off, or otherwise displaced due to government restructuring of health districts in the fiscal year of '94-95?

And I also give notice that I shall on day 17 ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Pipestone District Health Board: what was the total amount spent on board members' remuneration for the '94-95 fiscal year; how many employees were on staff working directly for the health board, i.e., support services, administration, communications, etc. for the last fiscal year; what was the total spent on communications and advertising for the last fiscal year; (4) what was the total expended on severance packages for the '94-95 fiscal year; and (5) were any employees severed by the health board rehired, and if yes, provide names and severance package details.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have two separate questions today. I give notice that I shall on day 17 ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Commission: what is the revenue from video lottery terminals in the fiscal year to date on a community-by-community basis for each community in which there are

three or more site contractors?

And I shall give notice, on day 17, ask the government the following question regarding the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Commission:

Who are all of the site contractors for video lottery terminals in the province; how many terminals do they have; and in what community are they located?

Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would draw your attention to a visitor in the west gallery. A few months ago I had the pleasure to participate in the opening ceremonies of a new branch library of the Regina Public Library. The library was named in honour of a long-time trustee who's active not only in the local library board but also Saskatchewan libraries and Canadian library trustees. And I would ask the members to join with me to welcome and recognize George Bothwell.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's an honour and a privilege to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly two distinguished visitors from the Free State province of South Africa.

In your gallery we have the Hon. Tate Makgoe, Minister of Finance; Doctor Bethuel Setai, director general to the Premier of the Free State province.

Minister Makgoe has been a member of the African National Congress since 1984, and like many of his fellow citizens spent time in prison in pursuit of the goal of equality and freedom for all South Africans.

Doctor Setai holds a number of degrees from New York University and Columbia University. He is the senior public servant in the state government and the senior adviser to the Premier. He also serves as cabinet secretary.

As you will recall, the Government of Saskatchewan has over the past two years hosted similar visits by other South African officials. These visits are part of an ongoing familiarization program called the public service policy project, established two years ago in South Africa.

The program was developed by the Canadian International Development Agency and the International Development Research Centre in collaboration with members of South Africa's democratic movement.

Both Minister Makgoe and Doctor Setai will spend the next few days meeting the senior government officials to get a hands-on view and perspective of the workings of our provincial government through briefings, meetings, and other opportunities to see government in action on a daily basis.

It is particularly interesting to note that Minister Makgoe and Doctor Setai represent the political and bureaucratic sides of their governments respectively. Indeed their distinct but complementary responsibilities will serve to provide them with a well-rounded corporate perspective of government upon their return to South Africa.

Let me close by saying, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan is once again honoured to have been selected to participate in this program. Saskatchewan is in an excellent position to assist in the structuring and functioning of provincial governments in South Africa.

And if I may, Mr. Speaker, I believe this recognition of Saskatchewan's experience and expertise in this area speaks very highly of the competence and professionalism of our own public service. I believe our government can provide Minister Makgoe and Dr. Setai with valuable insights into the workings of government through the various meetings and activities planned for them over the next few days. And, as in any exchange program, Mr. Speaker, our own government officials will also benefit and learn from the time shared with Minister Makgoe and Dr. Setai.

I would also ask the minister to extend our warmest greetings to his Premier, Patrick Lekota. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to warmly welcome our very special guests from South Africa.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the hon. Finance minister in welcoming our two distinguished guests from South Africa, the Hon. Tate Makgoe and Dr. Bethuel Setai. My colleagues and I are honoured that you've come to Saskatchewan to further your efforts in bringing about democratic and responsible government to the people you represent.

Our province has a long history of being a leader in government and democratic reform. But as with many worthwhile endeavours, it takes a great deal of hard work and perseverance. Often progress is made through a series of compromises, adjustments, and concessions. There's a great deal we can learn from each other. And as such, I congratulate you and your government for taking the initiative.

Again, on behalf of the official opposition, welcome to Canada, to Saskatchewan, and to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I join with the Minister of Finance and the Leader of the Official Opposition in welcoming these two distinguished gentlemen to our Assembly today. To our guests, the Hon. Makgoe and Dr. Setai, welcome to the province of Saskatchewan on behalf of the Liberal caucus.

I am pleased to see the public service policy project continuing in this manner with their visit to our province, Mr. Speaker.

And like the minister and the Leader of the Opposition, I believe that Saskatchewan has had a highly competent and professional public service. I know that their visit will be valuable, not only to them but to us as well.

And I hope that you enjoy your stay here and that our balmy February weather continues throughout your visit. I trust that your time in our province will be a memorable and valuable one and that you have a very safe journey home.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you, sitting in the west gallery, a long-time friend and community worker in Vibank, Mr. Tony Deck, who frequently drops in to observe the proceedings here in the Chamber. And I ask all members to join with me in welcoming Tony here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the House a very good and long-time friend of mine, Mr. Jim Feley, who is seated in your west gallery. Accompanying Jim here today is his son, Jeff, who is a third-year education student in the University of Regina.

And, Mr. Speaker, they're taking — both of them, Jim and Jeff — are taking some time out of a busy schedule to come down to the legislature today and to view the proceedings of the House, and I'd like to ask all of the members to offer them a very warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure . . . first of all I wanted to say hello to a good friend, Tony Deck, who I've known for many, many years.

But I would really appreciate the opportunity to introduce to the Assembly my daughter Sacha, who is seated in the west gallery with her friend Jeff. Sacha obviously, since the time she was six years old, has had to put up with a politician in the house, and I say that because I think oftentimes we forget about the other side of the formula; that's our families and what they have to put up with on a day-to-day basis.

So welcome to the Assembly, Sacha.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

TransGas Pipeline

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The town of Goodsoil in my constituency is where I grew up, and it is also the gateway to the Meadow Lake Provincial Park, the loveliest park in our province which I'm sure you've heard me say many

times before.

That should be enough for any town, but there is more good news from Goodsoil and for other communities between Goodsoil and Rosetown. Local economies and the Saskatchewan economy in general are about to get a major boost. TransGas Limited has announced a 350-kilometre expansion to its high-pressure pipeline system. This \$114 million project will run from Goodsoil to Rosetown and result in 350 person-years of employment. That's jobs for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. As well, TransGas will use Saskatchewan suppliers where possible, providing a further boost to the provincial economy.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, there will be rural and local spin-offs to this project. RMs (rural municipality) and farmers will be compensated for land use, and local businesses such as hotels and restaurants and grocery stores will benefit from the construction crews working along that route.

Mr. Speaker, natural gas producers have invested more than \$260 million in development in the past year, and they are lining up for the transportation services provided by TransGas. This project will allow TransGas to transport an additional 189 million cubic feet of natural gas per day through its system, increasing capacity by 18 per cent.

This is good news, Mr. Speaker. It is good news for a Saskatchewan project, in Saskatchewan, providing jobs and investment in Saskatchewan while strengthening the infrastructure necessary to transport and export Saskatchewan resources.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Agriculture Seminars in Yorkton

Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I am very pleased to rise and report to the people of Saskatchewan exciting work that's being offered and promoted by the extension department of Agriculture and Food in Yorkton.

Regional extension staff were completing a series of seminars which were held this winter in Yorkton. The focus of the seminars are to promote awareness and enhance agri-business in the region. These seminars included market outlook and farm management, forage and grazing, beef cattle seminars, and traditional crop production meetings.

The highlight of the winter series was a recent seminar on herbs, spices, and horticultural crops, which drew approximately 250 people from as far away as Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Weyburn, and Dauphin. This seminar focused on market potential for herbs, spices, small fruits, and horticultural crops, and at the same time encouraging producers to explore new opportunities.

Crop considerations ranged from seed potatoes, choke-cherries, saskatoons, dill, mint, and coriander. Mr. Speaker, research

indicates that our favourable climate and potential free environment offers Saskatchewan producers a natural competitive edge to produce these crops in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan producers are looking to new and innovative ways of expanding and diversifying their farming operations.

I want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to commend and congratulate our extension service Department of Agriculture and Food in Yorkton for the work they are doing in providing producers with the latest and the best information on the wide variety of crops and topics, as Saskatchewan farmers look to diversify their farming operations. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Artists in Residence Program

Mr. Roy — M. le président, vendredi, février 10, j'ai eu l'occasion d'assister à l'ouverture officielle d'un programme d'artiste en résidence dans la petite communauté fransaskoise de Bellevue, 60 kilomètres au sud de Prince Albert.

Ce programme, parrainé par le Conseil des arts de la Saskatchewan, en collaboration avec le Saskatchewan Council of Cultural Organizations, la Commission culturelle fransaskoise et l'Association culturelle de Bellevue, est un autre excellent exemple du dynamisme de cette petite communauté rurale qui, au fil des années, a développé d'excellents artistes visuelles.

Le programme d'artiste en résidence permettra à Mme. Anita Rocamora de Meacham, Saskatchewan, d'offrir des ateliers de sculpture en argile et porcelaine, de dessin et de peinture pendant la prochaine année à des élèves, des enseignants et des adultes dans la communauté de Bellevue et des environs qui comprend aussi les villages de Domrémy, Hoey, Saint-Louis, Batoche et Duck Lake.

M. le président, ce programme d'artiste en résidence à Bellevue est un autre bon exemple de fonds des loteries de la Saskatchewan qui sont utilisés pour la promotion et le développement des arts et de la culture dans la province de Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Friday, February 10, I attended the official opening of an artists in residence program in the small French Canadian community of Bellevue, 60 kilometres south of Prince Albert.

This program, sponsored by the Saskatchewan Arts Board in partnership with Saskatchewan Council of Cultural Organizations, la Commission culturelle fransaskoise, and Cultural Association of Bellevue, is another fine example . . .

(Translation continued: . . . of the dynamic nature of this small rural community which, over the years, has developed many good visual artists. The program employs Meacham, Saskatchewan artist, Anita Rocamora, to give regular clay sculpture, sketching and painting workshops to students, teachers, and adults in the Bellevue area which also includes the communities of Domrémy, Hoey, St. Louis, Batoche and Duck

Lake.

Mr. Speaker, this is another fine example of Saskatchewan Lotteries dollars working for the enhancement of the arts and culture in the province.)

The Speaker: — Order. The member's time has run out.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Kelvington Outstanding Citizen Award

Mr. Kluz — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell you about a special person who has made a significant contribution in my riding. Earlier this month, Mrs. Annie James was honoured with Kelvington's outstanding citizen award. Annie's children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and many friends were present as a presentation was made at the Kelvington lodge where Annie now resides.

Annie has contributed to her community in many ways. The inscription on the plaque she was presented with reads like this:

Annie James, Kelvington and community outstanding citizen award. In appreciation for the years of your caring, sharing, living ways that will always help to enlighten our tasks and brighten our days.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, Annie's family always came first. Annie enjoyed the gatherings at her home when her children were teenagers and the many functions for friends and relatives on anniversaries and birthdays. After the formal award presentation, those who attended the ceremonies joined Annie in an afternoon tea. And then the family had a luncheon at the James place, as her former residence is now referred to.

Annie James is held in high regard in the community for her contribution to enhancing the lives of others. I extend my congratulations to Annie James and her family for making Saskatchewan a better place to live. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cline — Actually, Mr. Speaker, if the private members' statements are done, and I think they are, I wonder if I might ask leave to introduce a further guest.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Cline — Thank you. I notice in the west gallery a very distinguished visitor from the city of Saskatoon, Mr. Bev Dyck, who is known to many people here because he was a member of this legislature between 1971 and 1982, as well as being a former member of the Saskatoon City Council from 1986 to 1991. And Mr. Dyck was also the chairman of the government caucus during the '70s. And I know all members will want to join with me in acknowledging Bev's presence and welcoming him here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Lorje: — With leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

Ms. Lorje: — I would like to join my colleague from Saskatoon Idylwyld in welcoming a former colleague of mine, Bev Dyck, to the legislature. Bev and I worked together on Saskatoon City Council and I was always extremely impressed with his integrity and dedication to the cause of working people in this province. So welcome here to the legislature, Bev.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Health Care Reform

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question comes from Maurice McGratten from Tisdale, and it's addressed to the Premier. Mr. Premier, I want to know when you are going to do something about medicare. If Tommy Douglas knew how you screwed it up, he would turn over in his grave. Insulin, for example . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member knows that that language is really unacceptable and he should put it in terms that are more acceptable to this legislature.

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Speaker, I'm reading from a . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. The member must put it in his own terms, in language which is acceptable to this legislature. Order.

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Speaker, if Tommy Douglas knew how you fouled up medicare, he would be turning over in his grave. Insulin, for example, used to be \$1 for a bottle and a needle. Now some people get nothing.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question from the concerned Saskatchewan person. I want to say to the member opposite that what the Saskatchewan government has done and is doing in health care is a necessary and logical and next step in the development of medicare, as Tommy Douglas himself advocated and foresaw.

Tommy Douglas and Woodrow Lloyd — and this has been documented in many writings — said that the next phase after the first phase, which was the elimination of essential cost factors to access to doctors in hospitals, was to move into what they described, the wellness model. They realized very quickly that health care was more than bricks and mortar, pills, and high medical technology. Good health care depends upon — say — such things as accident of birth. If you're born into a home of poverty, that child is likely to die in an earlier age than otherwise. And therefore the emphasis is to shift from bricks and mortar to prevention of accident and disease and illness in

that way.

We think we're the leading edge of medicare, and we are guaranteeing its future and protection for the 21st century.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Arts Grants

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a question to the Premier from Mrs. Muriel Poag of Moose Jaw, and her question is: Mr. Premier, I want to know why or how the government can afford to issue grants of up to \$25,000 for assistance to Saskatchewan artists and arts organizations when they say they haven't money for health, welfare, and education, and are cutting so drastically on these necessary things which should be a first priority, not artists and art.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, it is obviously clear that health, I suppose above anything else, education very close behind, is a priority of our society and our quality of life.

I think my answer to the hon. member would be that the question is premised on a wrong assumption. It is premised on the argument that it's one or the other. And what we've tried to do in our province in our budgets is effect a reasonable balance between the various competing and legitimate needs of our society.

I think grants for artists, modest and affordable, if this can be done, is a part of building a Saskatchewan culture, a Canadian culture, and that we should do the best that we can to provide such funding. Clearly it doesn't have a priority over health care, but we're not damaging health care either.

What we're doing is we are reforming health care; we are establishing its security for the 21st century. We are renewing it the way the World Health Organization has developed it, the way the World Health Organization has approved it, the way that the Liberal leader at one time herself advocated, prior the 1991 provincial election, that it should be done, and it is now being more and more understood to be the case.

So I think for the member's assumption, which is that's it's either/or, this is wrong; it's both/and — as much as we can, given our fiscal capacity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Care Jobs

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, I have a question as well from a person in Saskatchewan. Incidentally, Mr. Premier, they are coming in on a daily basis. We've received something in the range of 1,400 of these questions at this point. We sent them to you. I'm not surprised that you would get them, yes.

Incidentally, Mr. Premier, the question that I have for you today comes from a lady by the name of Pam Raddysh from Theodore. Mr. Premier, Pam Raddysh writes: I am a registered

nurse and I'm wondering what do you plan to do to fix it for all of us without jobs or hours in the medical field in this province. We have bills, families, just like you, only we don't have a job.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I want to first of all tell the Leader of the Opposition that I get letters too. There used to be a very famous singer by the name of Perry Como — so I'm told; it was before my time — but none the less he had his theme song: we get letters, we get letters.

And we get the same letters that were supposedly directed to you but they direct them to us because they're afraid that you might not quote these. Time doesn't permit . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well just to make sure that you do. I won't on this occasion because time is running out. I will tell you that we get these letters of people who say you should ask the Tories these questions about health care and the like.

But the answer to the question very specifically is as follows. As you know, the Minister of Finance, in what I think is the best budget in Canada and will prove to be the case over the next weeks ahead, has allocated \$20.3 million for home care and for the wellness model, the shift. We expect . . . This is additional money as part of the program.

And as the Minister of Health has indicated in his answers earlier, they expect 460 additional jobs, many of whom will go to the nurses and people in the health care field of which you've expressed interest.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Board Appointments

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, the budget you allude to will probably be historically recorded as the disaster of North America.

However, we have a question that comes from Elaine Kelln from Regina. Mr. Premier, I want to know how the hospital boards are established, and what qualifications do board members require?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to answer this question to the hon. member and to the letter-writer. This has been well established in the interim first period. Nominations are received from a variety of interested groups in the health care area of people who are both knowledgeable in health care and are community-minded and who have an understanding and an appreciation of the necessity for the health care renewal.

We then go through the process of taking these various suggestions and try to quantify them and qualify them in such a way which produces the best board possible.

As the member knows, subsequently there will be elections sometime later this fall, 1995, and thereafter established on a permanent basis. The elections will take place and they will be selected by the people. We will always have a combination of appointment for continuity's sake and electoral for people's

input sake.

This is really a dramatic, forward-looking step. No other province has ever dared to do this. In Liberal New Brunswick, for example, there is no election of school . . . of hospital boards. In Alberta, we know what's happening there of course. It's straight destruction of the health care system and doing away with the health care boards. So this in fact is a very positive step and that's the way it is being conducted.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Agreement with Rural Health Coalition

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure many people across Saskatchewan are really going to be comforted by the comments the Premier's been making regarding health care, and I've got a question as well to the Premier. It comes from Linda Dyck from Borden. And most of these questions we've been raising today have been coming from rural communities that have been decimated by recent so-called health reforms.

Mr. Premier, I want to know what your government is doing to ensure that all district health boards are implementing all aspects of health service in rural communities as agreed to by the Department of Health and Rural Health Coalition in their agreement signed February 16, 1994.

What are you doing to force district health boards to comply with the agreement? When will the dispute resolution mechanism outlined in that agreement be available for dissatisfied communities to access?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, again this is a very welcome question and one that I think I can answer with the satisfaction of the member and I hope of the letter-writer.

We are committed to the agreement. We are doing the best that we can to implement it. We're committed to it both in spirit and in the letter. In the vast majority of the communities, there are diminishing concerns as they see the implementation of the agreement taking effect. On one or two areas there may be some trouble spots which we're seeking to address.

The point of the question is, what are you going to do? We say we're going to do what we undertook to do in writing; we're going follow those provisions in that agreement and make this a great reform, a great renewal of health care.

And I say when the history of this province is written and when they look at what we did to save health care and medicare for the province of Saskatchewan, and we took Tommy Douglas and Woodrow Lloyd's dictum and we took it to the 21st century, people everywhere in the province of Saskatchewan will be very much in support. And I'm calling on the member from Moosomin to be also in support.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Board Elections

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a further question, and this is to the Minister of Health. As you have heard, Mr. Minister, people are still very concerned about your government's changes to health care and they want a say in the decisions that are being made.

Mr. Minister, your government has been dragging its feet on health board elections well over two years now. Your decision not to hold elections last fall is going to cost taxpayers nearly \$1 million, and it looks like we're going to have to wait almost another year until sometime this fall, as the Premier may have indicated, for elections.

Later today I look forward to moving first reading of a Bill to hold full health board elections in which all 12 board members are elected, not just four, as your commission chairman, Garf Stevenson, has recommended. This Bill will also provide for the elections to be held sooner rather than later, within three months of the Bill being passed.

Mr. Minister, will you support this legislation and ensure that full health board elections are held, and held promptly?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I can absolutely assure this member, all members of the House, and the people of Saskatchewan, that health board elections will be held. Mr. Speaker, that is one of the initiatives in health reform that we are extremely proud of as a government. We are the only government in Canada, Mr. Speaker, to initiate this true democratization of health care delivery, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to clarify for the member because he seems to remain confused.

This fall, Mr. Speaker, this fall we will elect eight of the 12 board members. Eight members will be elected this fall. Following that, Mr. Speaker, we will move to a rotational basis as recommended by Mr. Stevenson in his review of the electoral process. This fall, however, Mr. Speaker, eight members will be elected to the district health boards.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Executive Council Salaries

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I questioned the Premier about the fact that his political staff was one of the largest in Canada and he chose to ignore the facts placed before him and simply defended the 88 political positions whose average salary was \$48,000 per year.

I say was, Mr. Speaker, because we now know that the Premier's political staff will get a \$118,000 pay increase in the next year. That's \$118,000 for the Premier's 88 staff members, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Premier: how, sir, can you allow this double standard that gives \$118,000 in pay increases to your political

staff when the ordinary people of this province are having to make do with less?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, this question by the Leader of the Liberal Party is an interesting one coming from the leader of the party which received how many hundreds of thousands of dollars was it when the hon. . . . when the member from Shaunavon jumped and betrayed the loyalties of the people who elected him; and you, in the new politics fashion, accepted him very willingly. And you accepted him for one reason only. Isn't it a fact, not on principle, but on money? Because automatically you got a party status and you got — how much was it; will you tell the house? — of taxpayers' money for that political staff.

I think it does not serve the public well for the new-style politics, so called — which we really know is the same old Liberal pork-barrel politics that's always existed in this province, and in Canada even under the current Liberal administration — to be talking about political staff and doing things for political reasons in that regard from the member opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is most interesting that it is indeed this Premier, along with all of the other people in the front row who made the rules for this legislature, who is now criticizing the very rules that he created. If they didn't like the caucus third party grants, then they shouldn't have created the rule in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, because of the onslaught of tax increases, utility rate and licence fee hikes, the average Saskatchewan person is having a really tough time making ends meet.

But there is one group, Mr. Speaker, who is treated unlike anyone else, and that group is the Premier's own staff. While the Premier and the Finance minister think Saskatchewan citizens should be oh, ever so grateful for a \$150 rebate in taxes, each of the Premier's political staff, on average, can look forward to a \$1,340 annual increase to their salary.

My question to the Premier once again: explain to the people of Saskatchewan, sir, what your political staff does that makes them deserving of being treated differently from every other person in the province of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, again I thank the Hon. Leader of the Liberal Party for that question. But I want to say first of all, I dispute with vigour her categorization of the deputy minister to my shop, for example, as being part of the political staff.

Coming from this member who . . . I alluded to this, and I'm doing the best that I can to avoid being personal, so I'm going to avoid any further references coming from this member. But I will say this. I don't think it's incumbent upon me to explain, any more than it is on you, what it is about your political staff that the public is paying for that allows them to get the money that they're getting there.

And when you say about the rules, you sit on the Board of Internal Economy that sets these rules. You're the ones there. I didn't hear you utter 1 cent saying of rejection. You didn't say 1 cent that you wouldn't take the money as a result of the member from Shaunavon walking across the floor of the House. You welcomed him.

You took the money and you deposited it and you're using the money. And how are you using the money? Why don't you get up and justify how you use the money.

I say to the hon. member, this kind of questioning is demeaning of her and demeaning of the Legislative Assembly. You know better than to do this.

Except everything else is falling apart on you, including the Statistics Canada figures, including the budgetary figures. And now you're reduced to this kind of a banal argument. I'm sorry; you're not going to get me involved in that kind of a game.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I tabled legislation that would make all of my records available for public scrutiny. We have absolutely nothing to hide, which is more than the Premier can say about his own caucus allowance.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier pretends to have respect for our province's professional civil service. But he admitted in this House that his ministerial assistants do not require job descriptions, do not even have to apply for their positions through open competition, and do not submit yearly performance appraisals.

My question again to the Premier: with a complete lack of performance indicators, Mr. Premier, just what criteria did you base these wage increases on?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Well, Mr. Speaker, why is this double standard sought to be imposed? You tell me by what yardsticks advisers like Mr. Ted Yarrton have been hired by you. You tell me by what yardsticks . . . you laugh. All right, you tell me by what yardsticks Mr. Stringer from Alberta has come out here . . . and by the way, advising the Liberal Party in Alberta, so I'm advised, on a full-time basis and advising you here. By what yardsticks? What are your measurements? Tell me where you've tabled how you assess his qualifications, and the people that work for you. Why do you get into this? Why is it the double standard that that doesn't apply to you, but it applies to us, when you get the same sources of funds from the same taxpayers that are involved here?

I mean look, you have to be absolutely clear about what you're getting involved here, and you should think very, very carefully about what you're getting involved here. I don't think you've thought this out very carefully. Think about this, and I say that when you start showing the people of Saskatchewan that your yardsticks and standards are clear and above-board, then I think perhaps the rest of us in the legislature will feel some compunction to say that we have something to match. Right now I don't think there's very much to match.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Civil Service Costs

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. Madam Minister, your budget calls for a 9 per cent reduction in salaries paid to government department employees, from 407 million to \$370 million. While we originally applauded this effort, we realized that there'd been no announcement of a downsizing of the public service, either in a reduction in the salary base or a cut to the size of the civil service. A \$37 million decrease means that you will have to dismiss about 1,250 employees, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, given this information, I'm wondering if you could explain the magical 9 per cent reduction in your budget?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to point out to the member opposite is the size of the civil service relative to what the size of the civil service was when we came in. We have some 400 fewer civil servants today than when we came into office. I would say that in this last year we are hiring more civil servants, primarily because of problems in Justice — that is, we do have to have people to ensure that the jails are secure — and because of offloading.

But what I find absolutely intriguing is that we have a new supporter for the idea that our government is very tightly run. And it's the Premier of Alberta, Mr. Ralph Klein, who today in the newspaper said: What's he doing when he's cutting spending by 20 per cent? From *The Globe and Mail* he says . . . Mr. Klein maintains that his 20 per cent cut in overall spending will only bring Alberta in line with other provinces in terms of their per capita spending, which reinforces everything we've been saying to the members opposite including to the Liberal leader.

This province is tightly run. We have fewer civil servants per capita in any of the Liberal provinces, fewer per capita than in Alberta. And finally the Premier of Alberta agrees with us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that Madam Minister doesn't even understand her own budget, because if she did she would have found the answers on page 74 and 75 of the *Estimates* which would have shown, Madam Minister, a transfer from the Department of Health to health districts.

There was no cut at all, Madam Minister. It was a transfer from one department to another, which does not show the same breakdown in salaries. That means that the total amount your government will spend on department salaries will still well be over \$400 million. The salaries paid to education and health organizations will still be over \$400 million and the salaries paid to Crown corporation employees will be close to \$300 million. And that doesn't include pensions and benefits, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, I'm wondering if you have budgeted for the 3 per cent increase that is contained in the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union) contract which will be ratified this week? A 3 per cent increase on all government salaries amounts to \$30 million increase to taxpayers. Can you tell us, Madam Minister, if that increase is budgeted for?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say how pleased I am that the member opposite admits that he's confused, that he thought there was a reduction and that the reduction is not there.

What I have said to the members opposite, including the Leader of the Liberal Party, they can compare this and that, apples and oranges, but our government is one of the most tightly run by all indicators outside this province. You look at Statistics Canada. What do they say? Fewer than 10 civil servants per capita. Government of New Brunswick, how many civil servants per capita? — 15. Government of Alberta, how many civil servants per capita? — close to 13. Our commitment is to provide quality services to the people of Saskatchewan to ensure that we sustain not only a balanced budget but a high quality of life, and to do it as effectively as possible.

If the member opposite knows something about the contract, I wish he would tell this House. I don't know what's been decided.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, the \$30 million does not include the increase to the cost to taxpayers resulting from employee benefits and pensions which you so graciously increased.

I'm sure this is going to sit real well with the folks that are doing their taxes as tax time comes up, with the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) money that you stole from Saskatchewan farm families in the recent budget.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I think the member has enough experience in this House to know that that language is really unacceptable, and I ask him to use another word.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll change that to pilfered. Now, Madam Minister, the deal seems to be getting even worse. And I'd like you to confirm the schedule here. We're talking about a two-year agreement — zero in '95; January 1, '96, 1 per cent; July 1, '96, 1 per cent; January 1, '97, 1 per cent.

Would you confirm the contract, Madam Minister, and a clause therein which says that should any other area of the public service obtain a better deal, that that also goes on the SGEU contract without it being bargained. Can you confirm this for us this afternoon, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite know that I'm not going to discuss the details of any private negotiations.

But I will say this, I will say this. We don't apologize for a moment for the fact that we are one of two provinces in all of Canada which has respected collective agreements, which has sat down and negotiated with our employees, and whose employees, I think, have been very reasonable in their wage demands. So we don't apologize for one second for that.

And I will come back to my main point. The members opposite love to be selective; actually the Liberal leader more so than the Tories.

Talk about how many people does Alberta have in its Executive Council, how many people does Saskatchewan have in its Executive Council, forgetting there are other comparisons that they don't mention: how much does Saskatchewan spend on intergovernmental affairs? Less than \$900,000 a year. How much does Alberta spend on intergovernmental affairs? More than \$5 million a year. Different functions performed by different departments.

What matters is what Statistics Canada says. Statistics Canada says we have fewer civil servants per capita; we spend less per capita on operating . . . (inaudible) . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 18 — An Act to amend The Health Districts Act

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move a Bill to amend The Health Districts Act.

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, may I ask for leave to introduce a ministerial statement?

Leave granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Details of JobStart Announced

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of the Assembly an important announcement made yesterday in Saskatoon by the Premier, the Minister of the Environment, and myself. We have made public the details of JobStart, a \$5 million program that is helping Saskatchewan young people find jobs.

Mr. Speaker, JobStart is the cornerstone of our provincial youth employment initiative. JobStart provides recognized training that will help young people take advantage of the job opportunities created by a growing economy and develop skills that will prepare them for the knowledge-based economy of the future.

In addition to the permanent jobs and portable skills, JobStart will produce . . . we expect that some 2,600 summer jobs will

be created through the partnerships and summer employment programs which are related to the JobStart initiative. New funding, Mr. Speaker, to the reforestation program will provide 200 additional jobs for young people next summer.

These resources amount to \$11.2 million this year, which is in addition to the \$10 million already made available under the Future Skills program. Altogether this represents an education and training investment and commitment on the part of our government of \$21.2 million in job and training opportunities for our young people this year. Mr. Speaker, I invite and encourage members of the Legislative Assembly to put young people and employers in their region in touch with JobStart. There are real jobs; there is real training and bridging opportunities available. Just call the JobStart hotline at 1-800-59START. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for having the courtesy of not sending us a copy of her statement, particularly after we gave them leave to present this.

The minister's statement dealing with JobStart and summer employment is very interesting. The government can't provide full employment for people in this province, yet they can come up with a little bit of money just before the election to provide money for students.

The minister's talking about some of this summer employment being used for reforestation. That's a very good program, Mr. Speaker, very worthwhile project. But why is it being paid for by the Department of Education and not the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which would normally be the area in which it should be done?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to thank the minister for sending over her comments. I would very much like to point out just a couple of things that I hope will be taken into consideration, given the very serious situation with the young people of Saskatchewan.

We as a Liberal caucus welcome anything that can be done to address the fact that we have an increasing number of young people in this province who are in a very serious state, not only in their inability to find employment, but as well, being able to not find the best way in which monies can be spent to benefit them. We still have one out of four people in this province who have left our province since 1991, being youth.

We have increased numbers of young people on social assistance — from 6,800 to 11,000 since 1991. The youth of this province are definitely an area which should be earmarked as a priority.

But if I may, I wish to share with the minister that I had a most interesting meeting with the Labour Development Board. And they had indicated that both of the programs put forward by the

government were done and in fact were in print in glossy brochures, and they had not even been consulted, this group that represents business and labour and all of the equity groups in the province of Saskatchewan.

They felt that their expertise was overlooked, Madam Minister, and as much as we appreciate anything that can be brought forward to benefit young people, we do recommend that you meet with people before such programs are put forward. I think it would save the taxpayers of Saskatchewan considerable dollars. Thank you very much.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as it relate to question no. 5, I hereby table the answers.

The Speaker: — The answer to question no. 5 is tabled. Order. Order.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. MacKinnon that the Assembly resolve itself into the Committee of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — The light's on now, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much for recognizing me. I am pleased to enter into the budget debate here this afternoon. It's the first opportunity I've had to speak during this session of the legislature, and I do want to welcome back all members to the Assembly. I want to have a special welcome to Meta Woods, the new person at the table of the Clerk, and to all the pages. I hope that their experiences here are fruitful, and they can look back on their experiences in this House as a memorable experience in which they have learned something about the system in Saskatchewan and that it will serve them well in future years.

I'd also like to congratulate the member from Kindersley on his election as Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, and I'll have a few words to say about that later on. And if the member doesn't have the chance to stay around, I hope you'll read the comments because I do have something that I think, at least from my perspective, is meaningful to say to you to help enhance your career along the way.

I'd like to also congratulate the member from Saskatoon Westmount for the budget being introduced, for sticking with the deficit reduction plan and implementing a debt reduction plan in Saskatchewan. For her to have brought into place the first balanced budget in well over a decade, I think is a historic and important day for the people of this great province of ours.

I also want to congratulate the member from Regina north-east

who was the previous minister of Finance who started us on this course and has served us well as minister of Finance prior to the current minister.

I do want to say that the member from Kindersley now, as Leader of the Official Opposition, I think brings disrespect to his office, the office that he serves as Leader of the Official Opposition.

I notice that when he rises in the legislature, he plays the petty arguments of an immature politician who does not bring to himself or to his office the respect that should be garnered by someone who holds such a great position of importance within our province and within this Legislative Assembly.

I don't know why it is that the Leader of the Opposition, and in fact the Leader of the Third Party in this Legislative Assembly, cannot deal with the issues that are the principles and policies and concepts that will face Saskatchewan people, that we will have to face as we go into the next century.

Instead they, from their own desks, instead of using someone who's already got disrespect in their back benches, using them to forward the petty arguments of the day, they stand in this Assembly and forward those arguments themselves, instead of dealing with those important concepts which will serve this Assembly well . . . it'll serve their office well, and it'll serve the Saskatchewan people well, Mr. Speaker.

And that's something that I would pass on as advice to the member from Kindersley in particular, because he has worked hard to get where he is, and I don't think he should bring the disrespect that he is upon the office that he holds today.

(1430)

Mr. Speaker, we are entering very interesting times in Saskatchewan. We've been affected by many, many things that 20 years ago we never expected to have to encounter. Saskatchewan in the past, for the most part, could set its own course and survive quite well, sailing across the seas and going around the globe to have our people and our businesses and our system of government, our medicare, be accepted and recognized worldwide.

Today we've moved into a different picture that is more difficult than it has been in the past, because what we need to do is we need to take into consideration many things that affect us, those externalities from behind our borders that we don't have much control over. But we have to adapt what we do as a government and what we have to do as individuals, what we have to do as members of the Legislative Assembly, to adapt.

And I think of such things as deregulation by the federal government which has put traditionally our Crown corporations, that have had a fairly free rein, into a competitive market. And our Crown corporations are going to adapt to that, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud of the success story, in particular the commercial Crowns, that serve a role for Saskatchewan people and serve a role for the province as a whole, and have guided us very well and kept us with affordable utility rates that are as competitive as anywhere you would want to look in

Canada, when you look at the basket of utilities that are provided by Crown corporations in Saskatchewan.

It used to be, Mr. Speaker, that things like NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Free Trade Agreement before that, and deregulation were not issues facing our province. They are issues today. And what happens with the two opposition parties, Mr. Speaker, is that they're in the past, they're stuck there. Whereas when it used to be that society used to talk in terms of the haves and the have-nots, well today we now need to talk in terms of the knows and the know-nots.

And those people in the opposition are the know-nots of our society and of this Legislative Assembly, because they know not what they do if they set on the petty arguments that they've promoted in this legislature and not dealt with the policies and the concepts and the principles that we need to guide us as a group that is in partnership, working together for the benefit of all Saskatchewan people, and not just a few petty arguments that will serve the issues of the day, to try and catch an inch of ink in the media or to get a second of coverage on the radio or the television.

And so I think that this legislature, certainly the government members, have moved beyond that. We've moved to the point where we accept that we have to deal with the externalities that affect us. We've accepted that we have to deal in a more accountable system than ever before — therefore the Gass Commission; therefore the enhancement of the role of the watchdogs such as the auditor, the Ombudsman, and others that are the watchdogs of the public purse here within our province.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that some of the arguments used to date I want to dispel just a little bit. There was talk this week already in the Legislative Assembly, accusations from across the floor that the government is only telling half the story. And they were referring to the Premier being on public television on Sunday evening. Well I would submit to them that there's so much good news you can't put it all out in half an hour.

The other thing is, is if the Tories wanted to put up \$20,000, as the New Democratic Party put up \$20,000, we'll put the Premier back on television for another half-hour so he can tell more of the good-news story that exists in Saskatchewan today. I make that challenge to you.

And if the Liberals would put up \$40,000, we'd put the Premier back on for another hour after that so he can give the conclusion of the good story and how the sun is again shining on the province of Saskatchewan.

The other story I want to dispel this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, is the talk of hidden dollars within the provincial budgetary system that we have. And those watching and listening today should understand that this Assembly serves three very basic roles: we enact laws; we deal with budgets; and we preserve democracy.

On the subject of budgets, there isn't anything hidden, Mr. Speaker. It's all there in black and white for those who want to read it. And I submit to you if there was money hidden, Mr.

Speaker, the members of the Conservative and Liberal Party couldn't find the money if it was hidden. Obviously if they can read the documents, they know where it is, they know where it's accounted for, and every penny of money under this administration is accounted for by credible people who put it out to the public through the documentation, through the debate in this Legislative Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — A good example, Mr. Speaker, of the former government is the tabling of answers to written questions. I remember in the days of the administration, of the former administration, in which written question after written question was submitted to the government. They didn't answer any of them. They never answered the questions, Mr. Speaker. Now we have a turnaround time. If there's a written question from any opposition member, it's answered on the Table within a very few days. We take very seriously our responsibilities on behalf of the people we represent to make sure that there's accountability and full disclosure and access of information.

Mr. Speaker, those are some of the things that bother me a great deal about the petty arguments that are put forward. You also always get the great comparison from the members of the opposition. Not just the Conservative members but even the Liberal members keep comparing us to the great things that happen in the province of Alberta.

Well we pointed out today through the Minister of Finance how bloated the public service is in the province of Alberta that they can't even attempt to get under control what we have got under control in Saskatchewan, not by badgering public employees but working in cooperation to build a better society and a better government to serve the people of the province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — There are many examples that give testament to what we have done, Mr. Speaker. You don't have to listen to what we say, as obviously some bias from the members who serve on the government . . . we're very proud of what we've done. You can look at other articles from credible financial magazines like *The Financial Post*, "Crusade on the Prairies, balanced budgets by '97." The headline, "Alberta flexes muscle in deficit fight while Saskatchewan sugars its medicine."

Mr. Speaker, we've been compassionate in what we do. We have worked with people, in cooperation with people, to help them understand. There's been partnerships formed that will serve us well long into the future. And, Mr. Speaker, it's gratifying for the members on this side of the House to come to the point where we've had a plan to deal with the deficit, and that has been done.

We now have put in place a plan for the debt, and that will be done as well, Mr. Speaker. And it will be done by this government because we have the commitment to do it, we have the intestinal fortitude to follow a plan, and not go by golly and by guess of the former government that served the people of

Saskatchewan not so very well.

It's also gratifying to members on the government side of the House, Mr. Speaker, because we've come through some very tough times. And Saskatchewan businesses and Saskatchewan people have amazingly stuck with us. I thought they may not stick with us, Mr. Speaker, but they have.

I remember when the 52 hospitals in Saskatchewan lost their acute-care beds. I went to six or eight of those communities — as all cabinet members did — went to some of those 52 communities, covered all the 52 communities, stood on the stage in front of the people in that community. Sometimes they were very angry; sometimes 3-400 people in the room; sometimes not very pleasant at all.

But we went there to explain why we were doing what we were doing, and that was to save the health care system and to make it better, to serve the people that it's intended to serve. Those are the people who pay the bills, pay the taxes, the people who are residents of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It was not a pleasant task. But it was the right thing to do. It was the right thing to go and face people in their home communities to tell them why this was happening to them.

Now come to today, we have a balanced budget in Saskatchewan — two years ahead of schedule. This government is to be commended for that. And I believe that the only people that do not commend the government for that are the opposition members opposite who preach doom and gloom upon our province when there's no basis of fact for it. None whatsoever, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the number one priority for this government is now jobs, and we are committed to focusing on the challenge of jobs for young people in the next four years, with the same determination that we applied to beating the deficit in the last three years, Mr. Speaker. We're determined to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the job of the opposition politicians is to try and find bad news in every piece of good news. But no matter how hard they try, the opposition politicians can't deny the simple fact that the Saskatchewan economy has made a remarkable comeback, Mr. Speaker. A very remarkable comeback.

It doesn't matter whether you're talking to the investment people who lend money to the province or it doesn't matter if you talk to the general population, if you talk to businesses, if you talk to working men and women of this province, they acknowledge there's a comeback happening that no one ever expected three years ago.

It's happened because of putting a plan in place, following that plan, being dedicated to our principles and to our concepts, and having Saskatchewan people take a piece of ownership in the plan that was there. And by far the majority of Saskatchewan people have bought into the plan because they saw the necessity after the rack and ruin of the Progressive Conservative years in Saskatchewan.

And it doesn't serve the Liberal Party well either, Mr. Speaker,

to see the old, tired Tories drifting over to the supposedly new Liberal Party, But it's hard to determine this to be a new Liberal Party in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, because they fall back on the petty arguments. They have no plan; they have no commitment to turn Saskatchewan into the province that all residents want it to be.

We have that commitment, Mr. Speaker, and by gosh Saskatchewan will continue on the course that we're on. In the budget that came down, Mr. Speaker, we were able to do a couple of things. We were able to, first off, as I've mentioned, balance the budget two years earlier than we had initially projected. Granted, a good part of that is because of resource revenue, because also of the good agricultural year we've had, but nevertheless a plan that's working.

Mr. Speaker, some of the innovative ideas that we put into place — the corporate income tax rate for manufacturing processing firms will be reduced. The amount of the reduction will be tied to the company's presence in Saskatchewan. That's innovative, Mr. Speaker. That means companies that put more into Saskatchewan will be recognized for that, because the more business activity and jobs that are located here, the more tax rates will be reduced.

For Saskatchewan-based companies, a corporate income tax rate for manufacturing and processing will be reduced from 17 per cent to as low as 10 per cent, the lowest of any province in western Canada, Mr. Speaker. We've also rewarded, in terms of tax breaks, to the many individuals who have helped us come to the point we are today in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it'll be accomplished by an annual reduction against the surtax of up to \$150 per taxpayer, and up to \$300 per dual-income household, and the reduction will mean that 6,000 low income taxpayers will no longer pay Saskatchewan income tax. Two-income families earning up to \$34,000 a year will no longer pay the surtax. And two income families earning up \$65,000 will see their surtax reduced by more than 50 per cent.

Is it enough, Mr. Speaker? No, I don't think it's enough, but it's a sign that we have a commitment to make sure that programs work that are run by the government for the people of the province. And we want to make sure that we are able to ease the tax burden that falls particularly on those people in the middle income brackets that have stuck with us and paid the most in the recovery. We want them to be rewarded as well. So as we proceed along the path and the plan of balanced budgets and the debt reduction plan, we will assure that we keep Saskatchewan people coming along with us to reward them as well, Mr. Speaker.

(1445)

We have to do three things in our balanced budget approach and our debt reduction plan. First off, we have to make sure Saskatchewan people have the programs they want to serve them. Secondly, we have to pay off the debt that was not created by this government, was not created by the people, but was created by an unscrupulous government, the former

administration, that paid no heed to plans or programs or the good and welfare of all people in the province. And thirdly, Mr. Speaker, it will serve us in reducing the tax burden on the people who live within the province.

I don't think the Saskatchewan people are asking for more than that. Would they like more, Mr. Speaker? Yes, they'd like more. Can they have more right now? No, they can't have more, Mr. Speaker.

In this budget, we have a situation where the tax reductions over the four-year cumulative value will amount to some \$262 million, 20 per cent of that going to business and 80 per cent to the individuals who've been through some very, very tough times with this government, understanding the mess that we were in, understanding we were on the brink, but wanting to come back.

And do you know why that is in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? It's because Saskatchewan people have a sense of community — stronger, I would maintain, than anywhere in North America because Saskatchewan people care about each other. They care about their communities. They care about their government.

Saskatchewan people have a strong sense of community, Mr. Speaker, and that's why with a plan we're able to achieve what we're able to achieve as a New Democrat government in this great province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — One of the items that faces us, Mr. Speaker, one of the big uncertainties, is what happens in the federal budget which is supposedly going to come down some time this month. Sometimes we think maybe there's a two-edged sword out there. We all feel good about getting out of equalization. We don't want to be on the welfare end of receiving money from the federal government. We strive — and we will succeed — to being on the paying side of the equalization pool because we have all the ingredients to make this a wealthy province, the wealthy province that it once was; a wealthy province that will look back and think how paltry some of the things were in the past because we have all the ingredients to make that happen.

But at the same time as we strive towards being a have province, the federal government will also look at western provinces and think, ah ha, maybe they have the ability to pay more than other provinces who haven't tackled the difficult economic situations that face their jurisdictions. I tell Paul Martin today, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Finance and the federal Prime Minister should not be looking with an unfair eye at the province of Saskatchewan and other provinces who are getting their financial house in order.

I pass that message on to the federal government through the Leader of the Third Party in this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

I ask what representations has she made to her federal cousins in Ottawa to make sure that they get their house in order? What

has she said to them about making sure that Saskatchewan is not penalized for doing a good job, Mr. Speaker? What has she said to the federal government, her federal cousins in Ottawa, to make sure that they examine the things where they can get money, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if she has gone to the federal government and said that some of the private, investor-owned utilities in Canada get too much of a break?

How many people in this Legislative Assembly know that investor-owned utilities in Canada get back 85.5 per cent of the federal income tax they pay to Ottawa? I wonder if the Leader of the Liberal Party has gone to Ottawa and said, make sure that they get equal treatment out of the investor-owned utilities in Canada?

Mr. Speaker, ending the rebates that come to investor-owned utilities, which would level the playing-field between investor-owned utilities and Crown utilities, which are constitutionally protected from paying federal income tax, would save the federal treasury about \$249 million a year — almost a quarter-billion dollars.

Do you think they'll do that? Well I hope that message has been passed on to the federal government. There are many other examples; I won't need to go into them here today. I just make the point that we are vulnerable not because of what we do, we're vulnerable because of what other people might do in Saskatchewan and we want them to look at these alternatives.

If you look at our neighbours to the west — their utility rates for electricity have gone up over a five-year period about double what Saskatchewan utilities have gone up for electrical generation. Mr. Speaker, can you imagine, if they had to pay income tax on those companies in Alberta, how much their rates would have gone up?

Mr. Speaker, I say these things need to be examined. I've likely gone on about long enough, Mr. Speaker — I know other members want to speak on this important debate — but I do want to say that a new day is dawning for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker; the sun will once again shine on our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It certainly is a pleasure today to rise and come in behind the Minister of Labour, the member from North Battleford, because I'm sure without that dissertation I might not have had a lot to talk about because most people in the public and the media are referring to this budget as not a new dawn but a new yawn.

The Premier has taken the criticism to heart, because he felt he had to go on province-wide television and spend \$20,000 of the hard-earned money of the New Democratic Party in order to try and turn this thing around. I can understand why the Minister of Labour today was so emphatic in making his points, because obviously the criticism that has been levelled at the Premier and his budget about not telling the whole story has struck home.

And we now have the Minister of Labour I'm sure being the first in a long line of ministers who are now standing up and trying to defend what is practically indefensible as far as the Saskatchewan public goes. And what is indefensible, Mr. Speaker, is what the member from Riversdale said when he was opposition leader, when he was campaigning to be premier. He said that taxation, increased taxation, was the killer, the most efficient killer, of jobs in our society.

And you know what? The member from Riversdale has proved his own words in the most emphatic way that this province has ever seen. Going into his fourth year, he is still down a thousand jobs from when the first day of taking over the office. That's after Canada and Saskatchewan's economy, over the last two years, has been showing modest growth. Other places in Canada have shown significant job growth because the economic activity is taking place and the private sector is regaining its feet in those jurisdictions.

But the member from Riversdale has chosen another direction. He's chosen one that is opposite of what most areas in North America have done in order to pull themselves out of recession and maintain sustainable economic growth. He has taxed and taxed; he has used the family of Crown corporations to tax and tax and tax.

You know, Mr. Speaker, 1995 reminds me a lot of 1982 in this province. We had a family of Crown corporations which was swollen and bloated from the takings of Saskatchewan's real families, through utility rate increases. And the family of Crown corporations is doing very nicely today, Mr. Speaker.

We have hospitals around this province that people are saying are not clean any more. You remember that, Mr. Speaker, from back in 1982, 1981. There were allegations right on the floor of this Assembly because of budget cut-backs. There are nursing homes all over this province being cut back. There are senior citizens who are being shopped around like they are something worthless in our society — from home to home, from hospital to hospital in rural Saskatchewan because of what the New Democratic Party government has done to budgeting in rural Saskatchewan.

It reminds me a lot of 1982 — high taxation, health under attack, and a family of Crown corporations bloated and swollen with the proceeds of the pocketbooks of Saskatchewan taxpayers, Mr. Speaker. Members of the New Democratic Party that went through that time should remember the lessons that were delivered in 1982 by the taxpayers of this province, and they don't like what they see today. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, the Premier only tells half the story when he goes on province-wide television.

And I can see why the minister gets up and he's a little bit defensive about some of the criticism. This is a minister that was in charge of some of those Crown corporations. You know the same ones, Mr. Speaker, that said that they were going to contribute \$60 million to this year's budget, and that \$60 million all of a sudden has been pulled back. We don't need it any more. It's going to stay in the family to be used at a more appropriate time when the member from Riversdale decides to

call an election in this province.

The Minister of Labour, the former minister responsible for SaskEnergy, has stood in this House time after time and said there should not be a legislated change; that members of this Assembly should not review their increase in natural gas rates before they're imposed on the people. This new-found democrat says that members of this Assembly aren't smart enough, not well educated; they couldn't cope with reviewing TransGas and utility rate increases.

I take exception to that, Mr. Speaker. I think members of this Assembly could do a wonderful job. And then you know what? The taxpayers of this province wouldn't have to simply take the minister's word for it, why the \$60 million disappeared off of the balance sheet and remains tucked away in the family of Crown corporations for that other day, when the member from Riversdale calls an election.

I don't think that's proper accounting. He talks about privately-owned utilities. Well I can tell the minister that every one of those utilities across Canada has to go before a rate review process before they pass on any rate increases to their customers.

And we might agree that they should pay more income tax, sir, but every one of them has to open its books up to the public. And that's more than the Government of Saskatchewan has to do with any of its utilities. They hide.

And this year even the Provincial Auditor said, we are not getting the whole story on the budget. And the Minister of Finance's excuse was, well we have more Crown corporations than they do in Alberta; we can't use the summary financial statements. Well isn't that a wonderful excuse to hide from the people. And I'm surprised the minister, the Labour minister, the former minister in charge of Energy in this province, has the gall to stand up and say that a Crown corporation which hides from the public is more accountable than a publicly traded utility that has to go before a rate review board to set its rates.

That's a terrible thing for the minister to say. And he knows otherwise. That's the minister that should've been up defending legislation that would allow members of this Assembly to review those rates before they are imposed on the taxpayer. That's what the energy companies tell me. They'd be more than willing to have the amounts which they charge, before they pass it on to the government, reviewed by the public, and the minister knows that full well.

Mr. Speaker, it's the other side of the equation that we in the opposition have taken issue with. It's not balancing a budget; it's not attacking the deficit — those are things which Canadians and Saskatchewan people in the 1990s universally agree with and accept.

This country as a whole, Mr. Speaker, has had to learn some very difficult lessons when it comes to the finances of the public and how they're managed. And those lessons have been learned in every province and territory of this country, and they had better be learned at the national level by the federal Liberal

government.

(1500)

And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that taxpayers across this province, and particularly in my riding, are telling me that the size and the cost of government has to be pared back, that we as a province of around a million people cannot live with the size of government that we have. And that there has to be constraints put on government that all politicians, irregardless of their stripe, cannot move around.

That way the taxpayer will be assured that in the coming years that the CIC (Crown Investments Corporation) dividend won't disappear off the pages at the whim of the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, that \$60 million would have gone to paying down the accumulated deficit of this province, at the very least. And it could have gone a long way, Mr. Speaker, to allowing Saskatchewan citizens to go and be more productive if some of the taxation had been taken off of their backs.

And how much more is stockpiled in there, Mr. Speaker? We probably will not find out until after an election is held in this province. And that's a travesty, because that information should be open to the view of the taxpayer of this province.

Mr. Speaker, when I listened to some of the members of the government as they like to take credit for this so-called new dawning, it amazes me that things like the increase in taxes and royalties paid by potash companies and oil companies and uranium companies which formerly in this province were state-owned enterprises — unproductive enterprises I might add — which now that they have become private entities are generating huge amounts of capital for the Government of Saskatchewan at no cost to the taxpayer, that these members over here, the ones who criticized those privatizations so readily a short time ago, now boast about the revenue that is being generated by those organizations to help them in their new dawning.

Well I can tell you, ladies and gentlemen of the New Democratic Party, you can only be a hypocrite for so long. You can only be a hypocrite for so long and then people are going to wake up in this province and they're going to ask those questions that you should be able to answer.

So if you're going to take credit, if you're going to take credit, then why not give credit where credit is due. Not one dime of taxpayers' money is being put into any of those organizations and they're pumping sunshine into the treasury of this province like we have never seen before. But no credit — no credit given.

You know, if we could actually get into the books of CIC, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of the megaprojects that the Minister of Finance said she had to hold the \$60 million back in case they got into trouble, if we could get into the books of CIC and really see where those things are going, they might have to give some credit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to a few other organizations, private organizations that are contributing to the fabric of this province. And it has nothing to do with the member from

Riversdale or his cabinet or his back-benchers.

It has everything to do with world commodity markets and the fact that a previous administration took the ability of government away to fiddle in those organizations. That's what it has to do with, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The ability of politicians of any stripe to fiddle with the market-place and fiddle with those companies, means that those companies today are generating huge amounts of royalties, taxes, and employment for the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I really wonder, in the face of this economic recovery which Saskatchewan people have paid so heavily for, and they have paid dearly, why the government — bad enough, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they would bring in legislation which prohibits people from coming to this province and investing when they changed the labour laws last year — why the Minister of Labour, the new Minister of Labour, would allow large increases in salary to go ahead at this time when everyone knows that Saskatchewan's position in western Canada is uncompetitive as it is; why he would ask the taxpayer to pony up another \$30 million in one union agreement alone, plus all the benefits that go along with it, and try and couch it so it looks like there's no wage increase in 1995.

Well that tells me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is an election coming just as sure as can be. Now that increase isn't budgeted for — at least nowhere that I can find — and yet these members here are telling Saskatchewan people that there is a new dawn coming. Well I suppose if you only present half the story, you might believe that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You might believe it.

The member from The Battlefords also criticized the opposition for not coming forward with a plan. Well he must have been speaking about the Liberal leader. He must have been speaking about the member from Greystone who, I admit, does go on at length in this Assembly about mostly nothing — about mostly nothing — and follows her Liberal roots truly, because that has been the history of the Liberal Party in this country and in this province for a long time. It's a lot of smoke and mirrors.

But I'm surprised that the member from Battlefords has not recognized that the official opposition in the last two years has presented more real change to this Assembly, in the way that this Assembly works, than in the history of this province.

For the very first time, private members' Bills are put forward as a whole package and presented to this Assembly. And if the government members had the courage to debate them and vote on them, this Assembly would be better off, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Not only have we asked this Assembly to allow members the right to debate utility rate increases before they are imposed, but we've also suggested that there are a number of reforms possible in the way that appointments are made, in the way that this Assembly conducts its business, that all party members — New Democrats, Liberals, and Conservatives — could participate in to make this a more responsible Assembly. And that was continued on this year by the member from Kindersley, the Leader of the Opposition, who has already introduced an

entire package of legislation, not just complaints but an entire package of legislation which the Government House Leader, the member from Regina Elphinstone, probably didn't even read before he dismissed, dismissed it out of hand — six Bills already, Mr. Deputy Speaker, almost as many as the government if not more than the government has presented in the first two weeks of this session, all aimed at improving the way that this province conducts its business.

And they say that the opposition only criticizes and doesn't do anything concrete. Well if any member of the NDP (New Democratic Party) can point out to me a previous period in the history of this province when they were in opposition, when they presented clearly defined alternatives like this opposition has, I will be truly amazed because I believe it never happened.

So you see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the members of the government stand and speak in this budget debate, all we ever get are half truths. All the taxpayers of this province ever get are half truths. And the Premier has to go on television to try and sell the message that might be saleable, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if he had the courage to tell the whole truth.

If he had gone onto television and said, Saskatchewan farm families, we had to take that \$188 million in the GRIP surplus and we had to apply it against the deficit of this province because of A, B, C, and D and we have made provision that you will have programs in place to back you up, you know what? I think they might have accepted it. But you know what? He didn't even mention it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because he's afraid. He's afraid.

If he had gone onto television and he'd said, folks in Saskatchewan, we're going to take a whole pile of money out of our communities through gambling and gaming and VLTs (video lottery terminal) and casinos, you know what? There might have been some empathy, but he doesn't even have the courage to mention it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The word gambling and gaming does not even cross the lips of the member from Riversdale who's the Premier of this province who tells us that we're having a new dawn coming. Well if a new dawn coming, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is all of us standing in line and pulling a handle and watching the lights flash, it's not much of a new dawn, is it, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

And do you know what? People all over this province have said they don't want that. And the member from Saskatoon Wildwood sits in her seat and laughs, but her own city rejected it outright. But I think if given a chance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, across this province, if given a vote, if given the opportunity to exercise their democratic will, people in this province would say that I'm not going to stand in line and pull the handle and watch the light flash to satisfy the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, the Premier of this province.

And Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Premier didn't have the courage to go on television and say to the taxpayers of this province that I'm going to keep taxing you. I'm going to tax the very life and breath out of you rather than have my family of Crown corporations pay back some of the money, pay back some of the money which they have gouged out of your hide over the last

three years. They simply disappear off the ledger, while every other family in this province keeps paying and paying and paying.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not fair. It's not right. And I say to you that if these New Democrats don't pay the price in the next election for doing that to Saskatchewan people, then people in this province will only get the kind of government they deserve.

I don't like the fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that not a week goes by that I don't have some young person in my community come to me and say, is there any possibility that you might know of some place I could apply for a job? I've just gotten out of school. I'm graduating in the spring. I've just gotten married. I've just started a family. They have all sorts of reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And they come to me and they say, is there anywhere that you could point me where I might obtain employment in my home province so I could be close to my family, so I could be part of the fabric of this province and build this province? And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Almost always I have to say I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I don't know where you could go to get that job because everyone I talk to who has the potential to employ those people say, I simply can't do any more because I'm being taxed to the hilt. I have no more room in my business. I have no opportunity to have partners who would come here and invest money because the government, either directly or indirectly, is taxing me to the hilt.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's a hard message to deliver to someone in our society who desires nothing more than the opportunity to work and contribute. All they want is a job so that they can pay some of those taxes, but they want to remain here. They don't want to go to Alberta. They don't want to go to British Columbia. But that's where they go.

(1515)

And these New Democrats can criticize Conservative administrations on either side of them, but both of those administrations recognize the cruelty of overtaxation.

They recognize the words of the member from Riversdale when he said in 1990 that the greatest killer of jobs in our society is increasing taxation. Both Gary Filmon and Ralph Klein have taken that to heart, and they have said yes, we cannot tax our people any more; we have to cut back, or we cannot create jobs, and we will not have a society that will grow.

But these people don't understand that principle. They understand big government. They understand the family of Crown corporations. They understand that very well. They're comfortable with that. They understand big labour unions. They understand those things because it gives them a measure of control.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish I controlled all things in my life too, but I don't. I farm. I deal with an international commodity market. I deal with international competition, and I have to work around the problems as they are presented in that

environment — as most people in this province do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they play in the same environment. And if the Government of Saskatchewan would simply wake up and smell the roses and start cutting themselves back, start cutting the size of government and cutting the tax load on people in this province, then I'll agree with the member from Battleford who says that this province can be a have province and that we have absolutely unlimited potential.

And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if these members of the government and their Premier would have the courage to say those things to Saskatchewan people, I think people in this province would help government, irregardless of its stripe, achieve those goals.

But instead, they refuse to do that. They tell half the story. They care more about their political hides in 1995 than they do about the real families of this province, the ones who pay the taxes, who pay the education taxes, and who are going to be the people that are going to have to keep paying for a long, long time at the rate that we're going. And if the family of Crown corporations would help them out a little bit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the job would get done a heck of a lot easier.

So I say to the government members: why don't you start telling the whole story and then maybe together people will get on with building this province. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's with some pride that I rise this afternoon to support the provincial budget for the 1995-96 fiscal year. Mr. Speaker, there's no question that all members on this side are extremely proud to be members of this provincial government, a government that has engineered a remarkable social and economic renewal in this province. I'm particularly pleased to speak today in my capacity as Minister of Education, Training and Employment.

One of the key themes of the Finance minister's budget address last Thursday was promoting full employability. The role of education and training is critical, ensuring that our people have the education, skills and experience they need to get a job. Mr. Speaker, over the next four years the debt management plan outlined in the budget provides for service enhancements in training and employment and improvements that will account for fully 35 per cent of the service improvements. Education, Training and Employment lies at the very heart of this budget and this government's vision for our province.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to underline the caring and compassionate side of the truly impressive economic picture which this budget paints. In this respect, I would like to remind all members of the Assembly of words spoken by our Premier as we began to rebuild our province, and he stated: others will judge us on a wise management of the public finances and economic development. This is as it should be. But we will also judge ourselves on the progress we make in alleviating inequality, oppression, and fear.

Mr. Speaker, my greatest pride today stems from success in human terms as a provincial government. Our balanced budget plan insisted on sustaining our quality of life, not on just reducing the deficit. We have refused to compromise our basic belief in caring, compassion and community values.

The new debt management plan involves a strategy to improve our quality of life by continuing to improve the quality of our health and education services. The debt management plan, Mr. Speaker, will move us towards the goal of full employment and full employability through better education and training opportunities, especially for the young people of our province. Mr. Speaker, it is about time that someone in Canada staked our future in investing in our most important natural resource, and that's our youth. It's about time, Mr. Speaker, that a government somewhere in Canada staked its future on a full employment strategy — real jobs for real people.

In addition to these principles of community and cooperation, basic principles of our government, I want to again remind you of our commitment to quality and equity in education. As some of you have heard me say before, the real bottom line is captured in the following question: is this good for kids?

This budget advances equity and improves the use of our existing education and training resources. There are important budgetary enhancements in this budget. There are also some very important reallocations of existing dollars to reflect the priorities of our government.

In many ways, Mr. Speaker, this budget may be looked upon as a historic occasion. In the budget speech, education and training is identified as making a key contribution to building our future at a time when there is real hope and genuine opportunity in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is the first province in all of Canada to get its financial house in order, a remarkable accomplishment achieved in just three years. This is an achievement by every solitary person in our province. Our partners in education and training have made an important contribution in this financial turn-around. The credit of our economic renewal belongs to the people of our province.

Today I want to remind members that we have reduced the cost of running government by over \$100 million since we took office. In the Department of Education, Training and Employment, about 97 per cent of the total dollars spent goes to our education partners, our K to 12 schools, post-secondary institutions, and individuals in the form of third party grants. Less than 3 per cent is spent on the internal operations and administrative costs of the Department of Education, Training and Employment. Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the citizens of our province that there is no fat in our department or across our government as a whole.

Today, in spite of restraints, I want to tell you about a new program and new dollars and about new and better ways of directing our existing dollars to problem areas. This budget has good news for education and training. There is help for kids at risk. There's help for youth. There's help for school boards and post-secondary institutions in this budget, with the promise, Mr. Speaker, with the promise of more to come.

The department's 1995-96 budget shows a slight decrease in overall expenditure to \$880.7 million. Major third party operating grants are maintained at the same level, amounting to \$580.7 million of this total. Taking into account the student aid fund and other grants such as that to the Saskatchewan Communications Network, general third party funding represents about 76 per cent of our department's budget.

I'm also pleased to be able to say today that the provincial government is planning a 2 per cent increase in education operating grants to education institutions in 1996-97. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, we have to take into account some serious concerns about the federal budget which is being brought down later this month. But, Mr. Speaker, we will not abandon our concern for vulnerable people and equity in the face of any unilateral federal actions.

Money for capital projects is designated in the '94-95 budget, and work will proceed over the next two years. This construction and related activity means employment and a climate for job creation, especially during the summers of '95 and '96. This is yet another way that we're contributing to the economic growth and to fostering an environment where jobs may be created.

New capital for the post-secondary system amounts to \$9 million, and \$8 million for the K to 12 system, while the previously announced \$18 million program in current projects which . . . will carry over into '95 and '96. And we will see an estimated \$60 million worth of planning and construction activity.

As outlined in the throne speech and emphasized in our budget speech, our government's number one priority is jobs. We know, Mr. Speaker, that jobs spell a future here for our children, and we know that jobs are the lifeblood of our communities. Everyone in Saskatchewan needs to know that we will work just as hard to meet the job challenge as we did to meet the deficit challenge, and we will succeed, Mr. Speaker.

In education and training, we focused on the linkages to jobs. We have developed and are implementing a comprehensive training and employment strategy. An outstanding example of this is the \$10.5 million multi-party training plan, signed by my colleague, the associate Education minister. This plan works with northern mining companies in aboriginal communities, and with this plan we are now training Northerners — northern Saskatchewan people — for real, long-term jobs. We are supplying the labour pool which expands mining operations, which are needed. We are doing this, Mr. Speaker, by working with business people to give northern residents the skills they need to get the jobs that need filling.

The multi-party training plan will result in more than 500 new, full-time jobs with Northerners targeted to get 60 per cent of those jobs. And in the construction phase of expanded mining operations, another 250 jobs will be created this year alone.

In the budget speech, you heard about a new program called JobStart. You're going to hear a lot more about it because it is a

key program in this year's budget. JobStart builds on the kind of experience and success we've had in the multi-party training plan, on our linking education and training for young people to employability.

Yesterday the Premier and the Minister of the Environment and myself had an opportunity to provide details of the JobStart program to an enthusiastic group of business people, students, and educators in Saskatchewan. The new and expanded youth employment initiatives surrounding JobStart amounts to \$11.2 million in this budget. More than half of this funding — \$6.5 million — is brand-new money.

JobStart is the cornerstone program — a new initiative to help our youth make the transition from school to the workplace and to do so successfully. This budget commits \$5 million to JobStart, to a practical program to help young people who need training or placement assistance to get that new job.

JobStart will help young people take advantage of our economic and social renewal. The program will expand work-based training and job opportunities. Through JobStart, young people will develop marketable skills and secure ongoing employment. The program will also provide information and referral services including an automated registry of Saskatchewan job and training opportunities.

In Saskatchewan we have an answer to that question: training for what? JobStart supports training for real jobs. It recognizes that employers know the skills and experience their industry needs. We're responding to labour market demands and meeting them through the combined efforts of business people provincially, public training institutions and government.

JobStart is a signpost to the future. It gives our youth the opportunity to participate in the global economy and to ensure our continued economic and social development and growth in our province. JobStart is also a flexible program, one that offers a variety of approaches suited to individual young people and their individual strengths. JobStart offers jobs and job opportunities. It offers training to get that first job and it helps remove barriers to training.

JobStart also builds bridges to independence. It will help youth receiving social assistance to get those skills that lead to employment. They will also help young people who face special barriers to training or finding jobs.

(1530)

The New Careers Corporation offers employable people a real chance to become independent of income support programs. The youth-at-work initiative works directly with young people aged 17 to 25, business and community organizations, to develop new jobs. Financial assistance of 3 to \$5,000 per job is available to employers to help with training costs and wages.

And through bridges to independence, New Careers Corporation will help establish up to 50 support groups throughout Saskatchewan and offer help to overcome barriers to employment and create business opportunities for young, single

parents on social assistance.

Mr. Speaker, JobStart must be appreciated in the context of a successful labour force development strategy which has been a priority of our government. JobStart is part of an increasingly successful education and training plan which includes several programs.

Let's look at Future Skills, Mr. Speaker, a \$10-million training program which began last November that is helping both workers and employers take advantage of job opportunities in Saskatchewan.

Employers are forming successful working partnerships with SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), our regional colleges and communities to develop the skilled labour force we need. Individuals are getting jobs. And training projects have been announced throughout the province.

Taken together with the other employment and employability programs I referred to, this represents a total investment of more than \$21.2 million — an investment in our people and in our future, Mr. Speaker.

The Future Skills program provides industry skills training so that Saskatchewan people are qualified to meet industry needs for skilled workers. This involves new approaches to apprenticeship, work-based training, and quick skills options to enable SIAST and the regional colleges to meet the immediate needs of new and expanding Saskatchewan businesses.

Hundreds of new employees will be trained for real, permanent jobs. Future Skills, Mr. Speaker, also provides funding for community organizations and institutions to develop and deliver programs leading to employment for designated groups such as aboriginal people, women, social assistance recipients, people with disabilities, and visible minorities. In other words, bridges to independence.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing, there is really nothing, like securing a decent job to help alleviate the inequality, oppression, and fear that Premier Romanow's words referred to earlier. Or to use the wise words of the Finance minister in the budget speech: everyone needs a job, and everyone needing a job should have one.

Future Skills and JobStart will help provide both recognized and portable skills for participants and build on our strong growth sectors of the economy. While we train to meet particular employers' needs, we are also ensuring that the trainee, the worker, receives long-term benefit in the form of skills transferable to other jobs or further training.

Through Future Skills, we are providing employers up to 50 per cent of recognized training costs per trainee, provided that trainees are placed in long-term and full-time jobs. I emphasize the importance of recognized training being done by accredited provincial training institutions like SIAST and the regional colleges as an integral part of this process.

Mr. Speaker, what is new about these two programs, JobStart and Future Skills, is that for the first time in this country, government is not giving money to business to train people, government is not giving money to SIAST and the regional colleges to train people. What government is challenging business and SIAST and the regional colleges to do is deliver work-based training, that the young person or the trainee will receive a publicly recognized credential that they can then use to career ladder into other opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, a new Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Agreement was also recently signed. It provides for joint planning with the federal government and includes a wide range of labour market initiatives, expanded career counselling, assessment and placement, an automated labour market information system, new work-study approaches, and other innovative approaches involving income support programs for trainees.

These exciting, practical programs are proof of our commitment to the future of our province, to our young people, and to creating the climate for expanded economic and social growth and job creation. We have a plan of action for a development of our workforce, and it's working. We are a significant part of the successful government-wide strategy for economic and social renewal.

Another important element in the Education and Training budget for '95-96 is an increase of \$5.8 million in the department's grant to the student aid fund. In addition to student loans, we are introducing, jointly with the federal government, some limited grants for specific groups of students. This means more money for students, especially for disabled students, women in non-traditional studies, and part-time students with high needs.

The additional funding will provide increased loans for students who are most in need. These changes maintain our commitment to equal access to education and training for all students and ensure a continued focus on supporting those most in need. Mr. Speaker, this is support for the most vulnerable and a compassionate budget priority.

Mr. Speaker, distance education has a pivotal role to play in providing equitable and affordable access to education from every corner of our province. New technology has enormous potential in meeting our diverse learning needs. Distance education is a priority of our government. Accordingly, a distance education strategy has been developed that will help place Saskatchewan effectively in the global information economy.

Effective participation in what is being called the knowledge-based society is critical to our continued growth and success. Education is the means of achieving that participation. Our distance education strategy will facilitate and support educators in the use of technology, see that learners acquire the high-tech skills they need, and position us in the passing lane on the information highway. We need people with the skills to drive on that highway. There is \$1.5 million in new money in the budget for distance education as one of our department's priority areas.

Briefly, the new distance education initiative outlined in the budget will increase the number of distance education training sites and enable over 100 schools to gain access to the information highway. In other words, Mr. Speaker, we're going to wire and cable 100 schools in the province. We're going to support the education communities and build partnerships through a special departmental education and technology unit.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, we're going to support rural and northern Saskatchewan with the necessary resources so that distance education can be delivered in our province.

Mr. Speaker, we're also going to electronically link into elementary and secondary schools across Canada through SchoolNet. And we will be developing multimedia courses in partnership with the film and video industry and the software industry in our province.

As well, we're providing new funding for new delivery and technology training courses. And we'll provide ongoing support to SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network Corporation) for state-of-the-art Saskatchewan education and training network.

In the coming year the Government of Saskatchewan has committed over \$7 million to the Saskatchewan Communications Network for the operations of its two interactive educational networks. SCN will continue to play a major role in the development and delivery of distance education initiatives, and in partnership with the government, they will work to unveil a new range of education and training options for Saskatchewan people.

SCN will continue to work with the government to develop a distance education strategy for Saskatchewan. SCN's highly successful distance education satellite trading network receives active learners in . . . reaches active learners in rural and remote communities to deliver credit and skills programming. SCN's cable network delivers credit programming, curriculum support, and informal educational programming to 246 Saskatchewan communities.

Distance ed, Mr. Speaker, is a window on the future. We can break down the barriers of distance and open the doors to greater educational opportunities for learners everywhere. Our people will have the information skills and the opportunities to learn them. Our province will be assured a success in a global information economy.

Mr. Speaker, there are important reallocations of resources in this budget to address the needs of children with serious social, emotional, and behavioural problems. As I told school trustees at their last annual convention, special education is an area that warrants special consideration.

And today, Mr. Speaker, our government is delivering on my promise to address this need and allocate the resources. There is \$4.8 million reallocated in this budget package for children and youth with behaviour problems, as a result of a special education review that our government ordered, and in

consultation with our education partners, including many parents.

In one way or another, we target a total of about \$50 million to meet the special educational needs of Saskatchewan children. This is one more example of our government's dedication to alleviating inequality and ensuring equity in education and training in Saskatchewan.

There is a spectre, Mr. Speaker, that threatens our many achievements. We may all have to face the difficult choices which a federal budget that is driven by deficit reduction may present us.

One scenario being presented by the federal Liberals is to roll health, education, and social service transfers from the federal government to the province into one big fund. If that one big fund is significantly reduced in total, then all of us will face some very difficult choices.

Having said that, let me suggest that the Saskatchewan experience, the NDP experience, can help the federal Liberals and other provinces. The NDP have reduced our deficit successfully. We're the first government in Canada to do so. And we've balanced the provincial budget in one term. And we will continue to pay down the debt, racked up by those Tories, through future balanced budgets.

Everybody in Saskatchewan, every living soul in Saskatchewan, has contributed to deficit reduction. We've all shared in the pain. Today I want to remind us all that we accomplished this at a time when we continued to protect the most vulnerable among us. We have stuck to a compassionate agenda.

Today I invite Mr. Martin, the federal Liberal Finance minister, and the other Liberals in Ottawa, to follow our example and our lead, not to go down the deficit reduction road that we have seen in some other provinces like the Tories in Alberta. I say that the federal deficit can be reduced without massive lay-offs of people. I say that the deficit can be reduced without huge increases in tuition fees and abandoning of facilities or reducing kindergartens. We gain nothing by reducing the quality of our social programs in this country, including education, health, and social services.

I'd say to Mr. Martin and his other federal Liberals that Saskatchewan's experience shows that deficit reduction can be achieved without compromising our basic principles. We see protecting the most vulnerable and managing of our resources in a fair and compassionate manner as fundamental principles. That is the Saskatchewan way; that is the way of our pioneers and our ancestors, and that is the way of this NDP government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — We in this province have the innovation to face the future with confidence. You know, Mr. Speaker, in 1986 when I first came to this House as a member of the opposition, we were often embarrassed by the kind of governing that had gone on in this province. It was embarrassing.

We knew and we often said, like our pioneers and our ancestors had said to us, a penny saved is a penny earned. Every penny counts. And this government has watched every penny of public spending to get to that magic day of last Thursday when we went from being the basket case of Canada, where we had the highest per capita deficit in all of Canada, to be the first government in all of Canada to balance our budget.

And, Mr. Speaker, we did it two years early. We did it two years early. Because not only have we balanced 1994-95, we are predicting that we will balance our budgets into the future.

Now there we have the spectacle of the federal Liberals, not unlike the Liberals in this legislature who, when it comes to times before elections, they tend to electioneer on the left. But when it comes to after the election and after they've been elected, they govern from the right — they govern from the right.

(1545)

And who do they propose to cut from in this deficit reduction exercise in Ottawa? They're going to cut health spending, they're going to cut education spending, and they're going to cut social services — the very programs that make this country Canada, the very programs that make us different than the Americans south of us.

What did we do? Obviously health and education are big budget items. Obviously social services are big items. But we took a look at every solitary budget item and we made funding reductions. We didn't target the most vulnerable, we didn't target the poorest, we didn't target the unemployed, we didn't target aboriginal people, we didn't target visible minorities, we didn't target the arts community — we touched everybody in a fair and compassionate way.

And I say to our federal Liberals who govern from the right after they've electioneered on the left, that there is a message from the young people in this country. And that message is, that while Mr. Martin received a public education and Mr. Axworthy received a public education and Mr. Chrétien received a public education, don't force the young people of this country to be stuck with the biggest debt, in the form of student loans, by creating huge inequities in Canada by socking it to the provinces when it comes to health, education, and social service spending.

Mr. Speaker, the federal deficit has to be reduced. The money markets are showing us that. The bond agencies and the credit rating agencies are telling us that. But don't do it at the expense of the most needy individuals through reduced federal cash transfers to the province. Look at everything.

My question for the federal Liberals — and I haven't heard anything from the provincial Liberals — is why on earth would we even consider transferring the national debt to people like students, people who can least afford it?

That's what our Premier means when he talks about fairness for

individuals, not just governments, when evaluating the federal proposals. Education and training, Mr. Speaker, are essential components of our province's government-wide plan for social and economic renewal — our *Partnership for Renewal* plan — a plan that's working.

Our role in education involves the human side of this renewal. With JobStart, Future Skills, and related help for our schools with the problems that come from our society, we have implemented a comprehensive plan which clearly links jobs and training and fosters hope in our youth and their parents and their grandparents.

We're encouraging greater involvement by employers to training people for jobs that exist now. We're building on both of our traditions of excellence in education and the optimism that our economic recovery has spawned. We're ensuring that individuals gain not only employment but training — training recognized in ways that provide transferability to other jobs and further education and training.

If Saskatchewan is going to prosper in the new knowledge- and information-based economic environment, Saskatchewan citizens must have access to post-secondary education based on what's in their head and not what's in their wallets or where they happen to live.

Mr. Speaker, this historic budget places a priority on linking education and training to employability. JobStart, Future Skills, the multi-party training plan for northern Saskatchewan, and the comprehensive set of initiatives under the labour force development strategy — these initiatives highlight this year's budget. We're offering both hope and real jobs for our Saskatchewan young people. We have important new initiatives in distance education, as well as a more effective student loan plan. It's important to recognize that budget planning took place in the context of our government's priorities. We have taken an integrated approach; we've adopted a coordinated plan that is working and it has brought us out of an abyss of debt.

We're going to continue to build on the excellence of our education and training system in the province. Mr. Speaker, change has created the need for our citizens to continually upgrade and acquire new skills and knowledge. And this extends to all learners, from post-secondary students, apprentices and workers in training programs, to adults in basic education or upgrading programs, or newcomers who are learning English as a second language.

I want to reinforce what I said earlier about our ongoing educational priorities that also have the force of budget dollars behind them. In particular, special education, notably integrated schooling services, approximately 300,000 will again be available to fund school- and community-based programs for children and youth at risk.

This is a crucial part of our dedication to those who are most vulnerable, through the unique action plan for children, an approach that Saskatchewan has pioneered. Growing numbers of young people are coming to school unable to learn because of complex problems that form barriers to learning. These

barriers place them at risk of failure in school and then failure in their later lives.

Our schools are a natural and often convenient location to provide an expanded range of services to these children and their families. And through the action plan for children we're providing those children with the health, mental health, justice, recreation, education, and social services that they require. And we're doing this, Mr. Speaker, in an integrated and responsive way.

Mr. Speaker, we're putting forward an exciting vision for a better future for our Saskatchewan children and our families. We're helping teachers and school boards cope with the challenges that children with special needs and problems present. We are building hope for children who may have little else.

The ongoing voluntary school division amalgamation process is proceeding well. Public consultations in communities and with grass roots people is working. It's cooperation in action, a principle that we all should learn to live by. The Saskatchewan approach may be seen in contrast to the severe cuts in school divisions elsewhere, like Alberta which is Conservative, and Nova Scotia which is Liberal.

I find it interesting as well that the recent Ontario royal commission report on learning states that slashing the number of school divisions has very little to do with genuine educational reform. There has been no deliberate sacrificing of the quality of the education in our province in the name of budget restraints here.

Mr. Speaker, as well we're along the road to developing an integrated, comprehensive post-secondary system that provides education to all Saskatchewan adults. We serve more than 113,000 full- and part time students every year.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we've introduced changes to the legislation governing private vocational schools that will enhance consumer and student protection, and build public confidence in this part of our education and training system.

For many rural residents, changes to the regional college system will allow colleges greater flexibility in programs and bring them more directly into the economic and social renewal of our province. Support for local communities is another abiding principle of our administration.

Mr. Speaker, this budget provides more than \$11.7 million in funding to our aboriginal partners in education — the Dumont Technical Institute, Gabriel Dumont Institute, NORTEP (northern teacher education program), NORPAC (Northern Professional Access College), SUNTEP (Saskatchewan urban native teacher education program), the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, northern training program, and non-status Indian and Metis programs.

Working with Indian and Metis citizens more effectively is an ongoing priority of our government. We will own our future, Mr. Speaker, by building on our excellence and challenging our

young people. We are creating an environment where education and training have the capacity to evolve and change and adapt.

With this budget, Mr. Speaker, we're seeking to ensure that our young people have access to the education and training that they so desperately need to benefit from the province's economic recovery. The job creation and training initiatives that I've described today are an integral part of our *Partnership for Renewal*, our *Agriculture 2000*, and our balanced budget plan.

Mr. Speaker, we're investing in our province's future. This budget passes the toughest economic tests. Even more important, this budget passes the stern tests of principle that our Premier has so often described. We are building equity where there was inequality, opportunity where there was oppression, and hope where there was fear. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — As this is my first opportunity to address the Assembly this session, I'd like to welcome you back, Mr. Speaker, and all members of the Assembly back for this session. I know it's going to be very productive, as it always is.

I want to first of all start off by congratulating the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan for giving us leadership and direction in the last difficult years that we've had; difficult years that we've had to put back together. Not difficult years that we've put on ourselves, but sort of a government that's been trying to put back the province to the stature of what it once was. And I want to commend the Premier for giving the leadership and direction in that area.

I also want to commend the Finance minister for the budget that she delivered last Thursday. It was a balanced budget and the first balanced budget in Saskatchewan in the last . . . since 1982, and the first balanced budget in Canada in a long time.

Mr. Speaker, last year when I was speaking on the budget, I sent a challenge out to the federal government. And I challenged the federal government to come out with a plan — a plan that would move our country, move our federal government, into a situation that we in Saskatchewan find ourselves in now.

Last year when I was addressing the Assembly, I had no idea as how close we were going to be in the province of Saskatchewan to balancing our budget. I thought it might be another year and a half or two away, but it come a lot quicker. But if you take action, and the quicker you take action, the quicker you're going to realize your goal.

And I challenged the federal government to come out with a plan that would not attack the basis of our society, to balance the budget on them sectors; to come out with a plan like the province of Saskatchewan come out with a plan. And it shows today, because we're in a surplus situation the year we're in now of \$119 million; a projected surplus in the coming year of '95-96 of \$25 million; and three more consecutive surpluses in '96-97, '97-98, and '98-99.

And now, Mr. Speaker, we're taking the initiative and we're

going into a debt plan. We're talking about how much we think we can reduce the total debt of our province by, over the next four or five years. So we're way ahead of the federal government already. They haven't even started, although I believe they're going to start when they come down with their budget maybe on February 28, if they have the determination to do it.

And I think the people want a plan. That's what I heard during the last provincial election and the last few years. They want to know where they're going. They don't want to have a government going off one direction one day and off in another direction the other day. They want steady, steady, sure progress. And that's what this government has delivered, and that's what we need on a national basis: something that's steady, slow but sure, in the right direction. And we would achieve a better-off country if that was the case.

I want to spend a few minutes on health care. I believe we had to change the system in order to save it.

Mr. Speaker, last summer I had the opportunity to spend a few days with some relatives of mine who live in the United States. My cousin's wife works in a medical clinic in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. And she was telling me, she said, don't let anybody tell that down in the United States here that the doctors just say, okay, we'll treat you with this or we'll treat you with that. Before the doctor starts treatment, they have to get the okay from the insurance company that insures that person. If you have a flood in your basement in your house, you don't throw everything out and send the bill to the insurance company. You have an adjuster. So the American system is very, very tied to the treatment that you're going to receive by what the insurance companies say.

And if we were going to allow our system to continue on like it had, we would've entered into a two-tier system. We would've had insurance companies having to cover people and paying thousands of dollars possibly in premiums a year.

(1600)

So I believe we had to change it to save it. The changes are positive.

We've heard lots of fearmongering about people not having access to the system. And I want to say that, on the day the House opened, in the morning I was here for the proroguing of the session. And I was just in the cafeteria, going to have a bite to eat before the session opened, and I got a phone call that my mother had a stroke. So I went home. And my mother's house where she lives on a farm, where she's lived all her married life . . . and it will be 59 years.

And she's 10 miles from the hospital. It took the ambulance 15 minutes to get there — 15 minutes, Mr. Speaker. Not an hour and a half, not three and a half hours — 15 minutes. She was in constant observation for two days, and the third morning she was sitting up in her chair. She was getting terrific care, excellent care, and moved out of intensive care and has been walking for the last week and is now booked in for

rehabilitation into the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, this morning I had a meeting with the rest of my family members and the doctor and the nurses on that ward and the social worker, talking about informing the family about what my mother might be going through in the future ahead. And I think that's the type of thing we're talking about — more consultative process for the family members and the patient and a more healthier system.

In fact they said any time we want we can even take my mother out for a few hours, to go home even for a while. That's the type of thing we're talking about — more of a rehabilitation, more of a wellness concept.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the last little while we've seen some of the media outlets I think have been sort of acting a little bit like they're pro-Liberal. They're talking about the Liberals got no baggage. Well, Mr. Speaker, anybody who can remember the Ross Thatcher government in this province of 1964 to 1967 — no, 1971, sorry — seven lean, long years.

Or the federal government under Pierre Trudeau, anybody that remembers that. Or if they can't remember that, if they just look and find some articles and read some history back in that period of time, they will find out about governments that are not acting in an accountable manner in communicating with the people and trying to do their best, but acting, I believe, in an irresponsible way, as the governments of Liberal governments of the past.

And when the third party, the Liberal Party today, are talking about three areas. They want us to spend more money in areas, they want us to cut more taxes, and they want to pay our debt down quicker. Well, Mr. Speaker, that just doesn't add up. I mean you can't spend more money, you can't cut more taxes, and you're not going to pay the debt down faster by doing that.

It has to be planned, it has to be sustainable, and it has to be workable. And if it's rational and it's been well thought out and it's planned, it'll work. But you just can't cut; you can't spend more to achieve a higher surplus. It doesn't add up. And when the election is called, Mr. Speaker, when the election is called, the voters are going to have to check out the credibility of the Liberal Party. Because that is going to be key, is their credibility.

I want to spend a few minutes now on jobs. I think that jobs is one of the most important issues facing this province today. It has been for a long time.

And if we take on the responsibility of jobs and jobs creation like we did with balancing the budget and setting out a balanced budget plan and a debt reduction plan, we will be successful. I think I was a bit concerned when we talked about . . . initially three years ago about a debt reduction plan or a deficit reduction plan. I was concerned we wouldn't be able to achieve it. I was a bit worried. And when I was talking about it I knew we were going to have to have some good luck. And I'll admit we've had some luck, but we've made some of our own luck and some luck has come our way. But I never denied that we were

not going to have to have some good luck.

But when we achieved that . . . and I think that was a bigger task than job creation, was to get the deficit under control. And now that that's been achieved, I think it's going to be much easier to have a job creation program that will meet the needs of the workforce in this province; so that there's qualified people to fill the jobs that are required.

So there has to be training; there has to be opportunities for training; there has to be opportunities for people who wish to move off of social services, who want to, to be able to achieve that. Because our young people are the future of our province, and if they feel they haven't got a future, then there is no future because they are our future.

So we have to go into the job market and do the best that we can to find as many jobs and to promote as many jobs and job training programs as we possibly can. Because like I said earlier, if our youth has no future, there is no future.

I guess our family has been a little bit more — I don't know what the word is — but a bit more fortunate, I guess, than some others as far as finding jobs. I got nieces and nephews who have never had too much of a problem finding a job. But I don't think that applies to everybody. I think you have to have, you know, the opportunity, the family support, confidence building, because it's not easy out there. It's not easy to get a job.

And I think that's where the government can fill a role and that's what we have to do — that's what we have to do. We have to instil confidence in the people, especially our young people, confidence in our businesses, so that they feel confident to hire and train people. And then we can move forward.

I want close now, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I'm very proud to be part of this government and the times that we've gone through. I think that we wouldn't have been able to achieve had we not been as close a group as we are as a caucus. I think we're really a close group. And when we're as close like that, virtually nothing can destroy you. And I think that's what's made us so successful.

And I just want to say that from now on that the future is going to be brighter. We're going to do a good job — we're going to do even a better job. And I'm very proud to be part of this, like I said before. And I will be supporting the budget.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm also pleased to be able to rise here in the House to comment on this year's budget address.

I want to comment . . . commend, I should say, the Minister of Finance for an inspiring speech, and I'd like to give all of the credit for the content of this speech where it so properly belongs, and that's to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

When I first became a member of this government, Saskatchewan was on the brink of financial disaster. A province of under a million people, we had a projected deficit of \$842 million. The province had had 10 years of deficit budgets, and as a result, the debt had ballooned to nearly \$15 billion. The credit rating agencies had dropped our rating so that it was costing us more to borrow. And as a matter of fact, it had risen to our third highest expenditure, Mr. Speaker, behind even health care . . . just behind, I should say, health care and education.

Fewer investors were ready to take a chance on Saskatchewan. The national media were calling Saskatchewan a financial basket case and predicting bankruptcy. We were teetering on the brink of insolvency, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell you that for a brand-new government and for a new member like myself, the task of dealing with this crisis sometimes seemed overwhelming. But with the support of the people of this great province, we pulled our belts in a notch and buckled down to the hard work of rebuilding.

We cut government expenditures. Ministers' salaries were cut by 5 per cent and MLAs' (Member of the Legislative Assembly) salaries continued to be frozen, as they still are today and they have been for many years. We cut MLAs' communications allowances by 25 per cent. Unlike the past, Mr. Speaker, all office equipment is now turned back to the province.

We have changed the rules so that elected officials can no longer take their office equipment home with them when they are defeated.

The number of government departments have been reduced and the departments themselves have also been downsized. Saskatchewan trade offices around the world were closed; spending on advertising, travel, and supplies were reduced. Total operating expenditures have been cut by \$300 million since 1991.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we've cut government spending by hundreds of millions of dollars. By 1998, Mr. Speaker, we still will not have as high an operating budget as the previous government did in 1991, and that takes into account inflation as well.

In partnerships with communities, we re-crafted and streamlined health, education, and social programming so that it better met the needs of individuals while becoming more financially accountable to taxpayers. None of this was easy on anyone, Mr. Speaker, but we pulled together as a province for the betterment of all. And it worked, Mr. Speaker.

Our Finance minister has just told this House that not only will the budget be balanced this year and next, but she has also introduced a plan which sets out balanced budgets for five years to come, Mr. Speaker. Cynics will say those are just projections. I say, Mr. Speaker, look at our record — look at our record, Mr. Speaker.

Our Minister of Finance also reported that this year Saskatchewan will have a surplus of \$119 million. Mr. Speaker,

you will know that I come from a large family. I have 20 nieces and nephews, Mr. Speaker, all of them under the age of 11. That means, Mr. Speaker, that not one of them has seen in this province a surplus budget from any government here in Saskatchewan. That is absolutely incredible.

And Saskatchewan will continue to have a surplus. They will meet many, many . . . they will have to endure many, many hurdles as time goes by.

But the thing that I find most amazing, Mr. Speaker, about the budget is that for the first time in more than a decade, Saskatchewan has made a payment against its debt. That's right. In 1994-1995 we will reduce total debt by \$540 million. At a rate of 10 per cent, that's already a savings of nearly \$54 million just on interest alone, and by 1999 we will have reduced the total debt by \$1.5 billion.

Over a hundred million dollars in interest costs will be saved. This can be put back into health care, into education, social services and other tax relief. This is what socialism is all about, Mr. Speaker: being financially prudent so that we can again begin to do the things that this government really wants to do.

This, I believe, is something we should all be extremely proud of. As I said, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that I can overemphasize this. Every dollar that we put against that debt means more of the money that we pay out in interest costs becomes available for program enhancements and tax reductions. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to say that once again Saskatchewan people and their government have rounded the corner and are well on the road to financial stability.

But in this budget, we haven't just put money out to pay down our debts. Although financial management is very important, we believe that this must be balanced against the need to protect most . . . protect, I should say, the most vulnerable through program enhancements and to assist families and small businesses through tax reductions. In fact, Mr. Speaker, now that we have control of the deficit, we have decided to focus our efforts. We're going to pay one-third on debt reduction, one-third on program enhancements, and another third on tax reductions.

(1615)

I'm very pleased that the deficit surtax has been eliminated for low income earners and reduced for all provincial residents. To accomplish this, an annual reduction against the surtax of up to \$150 will be provided to each taxpayer. Up to \$300 will be provided to dual income households. The effect of this reduction is that 6,000 low income residents, Mr. Speaker, will no longer pay any income tax. With this initiative, we are continuing our efforts to protect the most vulnerable, reducing tax pressures on Saskatchewan residents while continuing the attack on our debt.

A 9 per cent investment tax credit, which applies to capital purchases in support of manufacturing and processing activity in Saskatchewan, has already come into effect. This will give

companies incentives to expand their manufacturing and processing activities in Saskatchewan and create even more jobs.

On July 1st, 1995, the corporation income tax rate for manufacturing and processing firms will be reduced. This reduction will be tied to a company's presence in Saskatchewan. The tax reduction will encourage company growth and expansion and will result in increased job creation. I believe that this is very important to scrutinize this even closer.

What this incentive does is encourages companies to, firstly, come to Saskatchewan and stay here, and for existing companies in Saskatchewan to expand and build on the resources that we have.

This is different than some crazy tax break that sees companies come in one day and, after they've reaped the benefits, leave the next day or, even worse yet, at night. This is a rather unique initiative because it supports Saskatchewan businesses and Saskatchewan employees.

The reforestation project is an important initiative for the residents in my constituency of Meadow Lake. This project is targeted at the youth. More than 200 jobs will be created in the North with the planting of over 2 million seedlings. And more importantly . . . And most importantly, I should say, Mr. Speaker, again I want to re-emphasize, this is targeted at our northern youth.

With Mistik Management and NorSask based out of Meadow Lake, this project will have very positive implications for our constituency and for the constituencies of Athabasca and Cumberland House. And with Meadow Lake receiving the designation as the Forestry Capital of Canada for 1995, the timing of this announcement couldn't be better.

Now to the member from Morse — and I hope the member from Maple Creek will pass this on for me — I wanted to say that I will give credit where credit is due. The last government did initiate a number of projects in this province for which we are now seeing positive economic development. One of those projects was the Millar Western project in Meadow Lake. Not everything that they did was a complete disaster, Mr. Speaker. But then isn't that what a good new government does? — takes what was provided by previous administrations and continues to work with the communities.

As well, the work that this government is doing with the federal government, aboriginal people, and mining industry, will secure 500 new, mining-related northern jobs by 1998. This also is very good news for the people of the Meadow Lake constituency.

This government has introduced another program targeted specifically at youth and that's the JobStart program. It will provide training and employment opportunities for youth entering the workforce.

In the area of health care this government has increased its spending on home care services. With the increase in this

budget, home care services will have seen a 90 per cent increase since 1991. This is very important because it supports the needs of individuals in their own homes and communities, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to see, Mr. Speaker, that the Department of Education, in cooperation with New Careers Corporation, has introduced a new program, called building bridges to independence, which will assist unemployed, single parents to move back into the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, what this budget shows is that through the work done by the people of Saskatchewan this province is seeing an economic turnaround. In 1992 we have had a negative economic growth rate in this province. Now we are seeing one of the best growth rates in our entire country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sonntag: — Drilling activity and oil production were up substantially in 1994 over 1993, and retail sales were up nearly 10 per cent in 1994 over the previous year. At 7.3 per cent, Saskatchewan continues to have the lowest unemployment rate in the country and there has been a dramatic decline in the number of people leaving our province. In fact, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's population has been increasing since 1992. This is a strong sign of confidence in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I want to digress just a bit here and talk about what is being reported locally. You know, Mr. Speaker, that I get mildly irritated when I hear Regina and Saskatchewan media saying that elected people are out of touch with what's going on in Saskatchewan; they spend too much time here in the marble palace. I say maybe, just maybe, Mr. Speaker, some of the media need to spend a bit more time out in rural Saskatchewan. Maybe they're out of touch. Why don't they travel to rural Saskatchewan and hear what is really being said.

People in rural Saskatchewan know about tough times and the job that had to be done. They understand because that's what their life has been all about. They don't make 60 or 70 or 80 or even 100,000, I don't know, writing newspaper columns. They work hard and they appreciate it when a government works hard for them.

Here's what the *Meadow Lake Progress* said for last Sunday. Their headline was: Balanced budget benefits. And it goes on to talk about all the benefits that the budget has brought. And the *Northern Pride*, our other weekly newspaper, their headline was that: The provincial government focusing on job creation. Good, positive reporting, Mr. Speaker. They criticize when they should and they compliment when they should. My hat goes off to both of our local papers.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be a part of a government that has been able to work so well in partnership with Saskatchewan residents to deal with our financial problems.

Before I close I want to speak briefly about agriculture. I'm very pleased to hear the Minister of Agriculture announce the new agri-food innovation fund. Our government is going to

contribute \$27 million to this program over the next two years.

The agri-food innovation fund will help create new opportunities for investment and commercialization. Opportunities will be developed through an industry partnership in diversification areas such as specialized crops, specialized livestock, horticulture, and agricultural processing. The fund will also strengthen the infrastructure and activities in traditional crops and livestock sectors. Farmers in Saskatchewan will see the benefits of this fund through higher crop yields, better animal products, and new opportunities for their farms. Mr. Speaker, the agri-food innovation fund helps fulfil the commitment made to provide direct funding for development and diversification as part of the government's agricultural strategy, *Agriculture 2000*.

But our work, Mr. Speaker, is far from over. I believe this budget marks the turning point in Saskatchewan's history. With our deficit crisis behind us and our debt firmly in hand, we now need to focus our attention on building a new Saskatchewan with a bright opportunity filled . . . with a bright, opportunity-filled future for the year 2000.

I look forward to working with the people of this great province as we meet this challenge head on. I look forward to the dawning of this bright new day. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I've been listening with a great deal of interest as the government members have been droning on and on about how good things are going throughout the province now, and they seem to be taking a great deal of the credit for it. But I think in the next 30 or so odd minutes we'll challenge some of the good feelings and in fact why some of this good news is coming about.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, this is an election budget in fact, same as the throne speech, where there's nothing controversial. They're trying to come up with as much good news as possible. But in fact I think what's going to come clear is that what good news there is in this budget is not because of anything good that they have done for the province but in fact it was done all on the backs of people, especially people that were very much in need of services, and in rural Saskatchewan in particular.

And I think these are the people that are going to remember this government and this budget, in fact this term of office, more than anyone, Mr. Speaker. And the people that I think will remember most of course are going to be the nurses, the doctors, the people who relied on any form of health care, health services, in rural Saskatchewan — those communities, those 52 communities, that lost their hospitals, all forms of health care.

And in fact even with all the news that's coming out of late of 20.3 million in home care, really if you take a look at what these communities have in health care, the reason — as the Minister of Health has been talking about — that they've alleviated fears . . . in fact what's happened is that the people

are more or less giving up on the government to actually address the problems and try and change what they have done, and that has devastated health care in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Other people that are going to remember this government when it comes time to receiving or not receiving credit for balancing the budget will be the elderly. I know in the Shaunavon constituency, the constituency I represent, there's been a series of meetings called for, held by the seniors of the community of Shaunavon in regards to the care for the elderly in the communities.

An Hon. Member: — You bet, they need a new home down there.

Mr. McPherson: — Absolutely, there's a need for a new nursing home in Shaunavon. This government to date has pretty much neglected all their responsibilities in this community and many other communities in, in fact, care for the elderly. Those people, I think, that are in need of this care, they're going to remember full well, if there's any good news to come out of this budget, who is going to deserve this.

Also farmers — now these are the farmers that, since the government of the day took away their programs through retroactive legislation, passed legislation to state that the programs and legislation never been in place, giving them a certain amount of protection . . . well the farmers are too going to remember exactly who it was, in fact, that it was . . . to create so much pain as they had in rural Saskatchewan. But in fact it was the farmers, and we'll discuss this a little later on, that many of the farm leaders are given the credit to for actually balancing the books of the province of this year.

And in fact others, not just the farmers that had to deal with retroactive legislation, but judges and civil servants and all the people who that government, the NDP government, broke the contracts with, Mr. Speaker, contracts that meant so much to the lives of those people.

Also the rural communities that gave up so many things such as their buses. STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) services were cut right back; well to nothing in a great many communities but to almost nothing in many or several others. Or utility offices — we see in many of the communities that I represent, where they've lost their SaskEnergy offices or their SaskPower offices — pulled those jobs out of there. And now in fact they don't have the service, let alone just the jobs. We're not talking about whether or not they just have the jobs in town, but they don't have the services. You're now asking people to give up what I guess was once quite a good service provided by our health care professionals, SaskPower, SaskEnergy. And now they're talking about waiting two or three hours for some of these services.

In fact we've got many, many stories, many letters, where people have had to wait an hour to an hour and a half for health care services. And now the Minister of Health is trying to brag about the successes of the government of the day?

I notice they don't do it in rural Saskatchewan. Whenever they're going to do any bragging about their health care agenda, they do it right here in the safety of Regina, because it wouldn't be accepted, wouldn't be tolerated, that talk from the Minister of Health out in the rural communities that they've devastated.

And I guess a lot of the other people that are going to have to sit back and decide whether you deserve or you don't deserve credit will be the taxpayers, because you've raised I think it's over a billion and half dollars more in tax revenue.

Now I'm not sure just how many . . . it's hundreds of different fees and taxes that you've played with, little bits all along. And, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter what service that we're looking at today, but especially utilities, that these members raised until they're exorbitant rates.

Also, I mean we have to give a lot of credit to the oil companies that the government of the day . . . I remember when they were in opposition and they had then their researcher, Craig Dotson, do a paper — I notice many of them smiling now, they recall the paper — the one where it was \$5.5 billion of debt was created by the oil companies. And the member from North Battleford, he remembers that full well, because him and I have talked about this; and he's sitting there laughing now.

(1630)

But the NDP opposition of the day remember full well that they were doing nothing but throwing blame on the shoulders of oil companies. And now we sit back and we take a look at who was actually pulling these people out of some of their problems. It's oil companies. In fact this year alone, when they budgeted \$20 million in revenue from the land leases, in fact they've done well over the 200 million, Mr. Speaker.

And in fact, a good portion of that money is from the south-west part of the province, where I'm from. And I've asked many of these ministers to consider, when so much of the revenue is coming from the south-west corner of the province, and in fact right in my constituency that I represent, or the member from Maple Creek, why it is that they can't take some of these funds and instead of funnelling everything into Regina and keeping all your bureaucracies heavy, and keeping political staff the way you do, why can't you spend some money out in these rural areas? Now these are the areas that you've closed the hospitals down in and closed the SaskPower offices and on and on and on. But why couldn't you have taken some of the monies and spent it on highway programs?

Well I think at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, there's going to be a lot of people who are going to sit back and say, well you know, I really don't want to give this group any credit. And it is nice to have the books of the province finally balanced, but why is it that everyone, Mr. Speaker, in the province has been asked to sacrifice — and sacrifice they did — while in fact what has happened is we take a look at the Premier's operation where they've actually had increases in salaries of \$188,000 in this year's budget?

Now there was no increase in staff, so what we're talking about

are huge salary increases to those people that are now there. Your political hacks is what they are. And I think the people of the province are going to deserve an answer.

The Leader of the Liberal Party asked these questions in question period today. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Premier couldn't even give an answer. He had to try and change it, throw some ridiculous arguments out, because he is afraid, he is afraid, Mr. Speaker, of answering to the people of the province why in fact he has created as much havoc as he has and kept all the political people around him, in fact giving them increases — as they did a year ago.

Many of the members will recall a little over a year ago when the ministerial assistants received a twelve and a half per cent pay increase. That was also done at a time when in fact you were closing hospitals and making sure that dental therapists weren't having work, and nurses; highway crews were being shut down.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that this raw type of politics that these members of the government like to play, I think that's going to come back and haunt them, and fairly soon in fact.

If they think they've come down with a great-news election budget, I say let's call it and take it to the people and see if you've actually fooled them or not. I don't think you have. That's not what we're hearing out in the rural areas, I'll tell you that.

Instead of me raining, of course, on the government's parade, I think what we should do is maybe take a look at some of their own budget . . . in their own budget document some of their own figures, Mr. Speaker. And I note in the Department of Agriculture and Food — let's look at their own budget document — in administration, salaries increased \$72,000.

We have agriculture assistance. Now this here is the part of the budget in Ag and Food, Mr. Speaker, where it talks about the spending on programs. The interim red meat production equalization program, they've actually cut that, eliminated it altogether, for a saving of \$4.7 million. Here's another one, grants for general agriculture interests, \$3.11 million.

Doesn't it make one wonder, Mr. Speaker, when you have the programs being eliminated . . . And in fact crop insurance was another line that was of a lot of concern here. Provincial share of crop premiums, just about \$8 million less, Mr. Speaker.

What that tells you is that there is a lot less participants in the crop insurance program than there were a year previous. And in fact the administration of that has actually went down 1.5 million, is just indicators that the program isn't working any longer, Mr. Speaker.

So then it comes back to the original argument. If the programs aren't there, if they're eliminating many of the programs, in fact cutting others back to bare bones, how then can you have increases in administration of this size?

Somebody has got to come clean here. This is a government that had an opportunity to really do something in this budget, in

fact pare down government. And that's what . . . it's not just the Liberal Party that's asking them to get their act together as far as reducing the size of government, it's the general public. It's what our constituents are telling us. It's what people all around the province are telling us.

If we look in Ag and Food, land and regulatory management, salaries up \$189,000. Staff, they needed another eight staff members in Department of Ag and Food to provide less programs. I'll just quickly go . . . policy and planning, salaries up \$144,000. In ag research, salaries up 31,000 but grants are down 400,000. So what they're actually doing is less, paying out less to the people that actually have hands on, can do something with the money. But they need more people to do it and they're going to pay them more besides.

If we go to Economic Development, I notice administration on page 39. We are spending \$93,000 more in general administration in Economic Development. Well the minister in charge is sitting here. Why in fact when he gets up to speak on the budget, why doesn't he explain to us why this is?

Diversification, salaries up \$312,000. Operating is down, which is telling me they're doing less and they're paying \$312,000 more. Well I'm telling you that's the savings in one of the hospitals that you've closed down. And you tell me where the people's priorities are? What they're telling us is that you had choices and you've made the wrong choices. I'm not so sure that you don't have time to perhaps bring in another budget or some corrections that would fix some of the problems, some of the devastation that you've created.

Policy and coordination in Economic Development, salaries are up \$32,000; operating is down — it's about \$20,000. There again, you're doing less, but you're paying out more.

Business investment programs, salaries up, \$170,000; operating, or the grants paid out — \$1.15 million less. So they're doing less again and they're getting \$170,000 more for doing it.

Education and Training — we're just going to quickly go through some of these sections, Mr. Speaker, — 16 more staff members. In Energy, administration rose by \$197,000. Staff, they have 16 more staff now in Energy and Mines than they had before. In mineral revenues, salaries up, 142,000.

I mean in every one of these subvotes that we look at — salaries in geology and mines, up 178,000; petroleum and natural gas, salaries up 132,000; resource, policy and economics, salaries up 60,000.

Every page we turn to. Here's Environment and Resource Management, administration up \$119,000. In administration in Environment and Resource Management, salaries take up \$314,000 in this subvote; environmental assessment, salaries up 103,000, on and on and on. I don't know, to me it doesn't sound like this is reducing the size of government. In fact salaries, 2.106 million in operations.

In Exec Council — this is the interesting one — this is the one

where we talked about a little while ago where they actually kept the 88 staff members that don't have to have job descriptions, don't have to apply for their jobs and such because of course they're political. And I know there has been some comparisons made to staff in Alberta where the Premier's office is run by some 46 staff. But we have increases of \$188,000 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member from North Battleford can sit there and laugh, but I'm asking him if there's anyone in your constituency that needs care like they do in mine, where they need hospitals and they need highways. Otherwise I can see why he thinks it's funny to spend it on political hacks in the Premier's office.

Let's take another department. Here's the Department of Health. We have actually staff increases, by the looks of it. Now so much of the staff, I think, of the Department of Health, as was said in the throne speech, there's some 1,400 staff people that are being moved out into the health districts. However when we take a look at the salaries, everything seems to be going up. There wasn't a dramatic drop in the salaries for administration in the Department of Health that now is in place in Regina. We didn't drop that a lot, but there's been huge increases to the district health boards.

Now if you ask anyone, say out in Mankota or Climax or Lafleche or Rockglen or Coronach or Ponteix or Eastend or Gull Lake or Vanguard — I could go on and on and on — well what is it that you really needed in health care in rural Saskatchewan? Did you need more policy and planning people? I suspect they'll say no. But you know, if you could maybe keep a couple of hospital beds open and some nurses and, you know, because usually what they ask for is something very common sense.

If we look under district health services and support, Saskatchewan Cancer Foundation went down \$921,000. They reduced cancer research funds; at the same time district health board elections, \$975,000. So they took money out of the cancer research to fund health board elections which they should have had last fall.

That's what the opposition parties were asking for. Have them last fall in conjunction with the municipal elections so you wouldn't have these huge costs. But now that they've made that mistake — they weren't prepared to go out there and have 30 elections that they knew they would lose badly at — we're now spending almost \$1 million and they're taking it out of the cancer research fund to do it. I say, shame on you.

District support administration rose by \$1.5 million. It's a department I think that the Premier or the Health minister is going to have to revisit in this budget document because you've made some serious errors but I think that you have some time to fix this up.

Here's something of interest, Mr. Speaker. Highways and Transportation, we actually had a staff reduction of 70 people. On the surface it sounds good and you'll hear this all throughout their speeches, some of these good notes. But when we have to go right into the document line by line and have a look at where were the 70 jobs, I look at item no. 3, preservation and

maintenance. Well the salaries actually decreased in this area, \$2.437 million; capital operating dropped \$4.206 million. So what we're talking about in this section is that the people, the crews that are actually in the trucks that go out; they're in the graders and the tractors and they're either building highways or repairing highways or repairing bridges or whatever. They're keeping our highways safe for the motorists of the province. They're the ones who had to give up their jobs.

But let's see who didn't give up their jobs. In item no. 6, transportation policy and programs, now there's what we need. We don't need highway crews; we need more policy. Oh, if this isn't typical of what the government's doing. Salaries rose \$284,000. Well I'm telling any member over there, get into your vehicle and drive out in the rural areas and ask them, do you really think we need more people in policy for the Department of Highways or do we need more people fixing highways? It's so obvious to everyone but those few members.

Well let's take a look at a few other . . . Indian and Metis Affairs Secretariat, policy department rose \$206,000. But yet if you look at item no. 3, total for support for aboriginal organizations and issues, dropped \$125,000. So there again, there again . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I think that the noise level in the House is getting just a little too loud.

(1645)

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you for bringing them to order, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we take a look at what these people are providing, well there again in this department they're providing less but they're getting a lot more revenue to do it.

Department of Justice — we see staff went up by 71. That's quite a few more employees in the Department of Justice. But given, I guess, the record of the government and everything that's been transpiring, maybe it's necessary. Administration rose \$411,000; court services, salaries rose \$162,000; legal services, salaries rose by it looks like about 300,000 . . . on and on and on.

Department of Labour — we have the Labour minister in here now. Administration rose \$118,000. The planning and policy department rose \$133,000 — got more staff to do it.

I could go on and on. I think it's becoming quite clear. Municipal Government, we have 12 more staff members. Provincial Secretary, Protocol Office — now this is the office that takes care of all the parties for the heads of state — rose \$354,000. And we need 11 more staff members to take care of the Provincial Secretary. And everyone, Mr. Speaker, knows full well that it is a political office in this case. And what all those 11 members are doing, I question if they're not all involved in preparing for the upcoming election, Mr. Speaker.

On and on and on it goes. Social Services, administration up, goes up 361,000. I could go on and on.

But I think it's becoming quite clear what actually is happening is government is getting larger. In the departments where they

didn't get more staff they at least got large pay raises because you can't have salary increases continuously. You can't have salary increases continuously like it is in line after line after line of your budget document. You should be ashamed, is what you should be.

If you take a look at what some of the news columnists and community leaders, the auditors and others have to say about your budget, we wonder if they're going to give you credit.

Well here we have out of the *Star-Phoenix* and I quote:

The provincial government got its budget deficit under control largely because it threw yours and mine into disarray and because 1994 was a year of economic windfalls.

That's exactly what it was, Mr. Speaker. They taxed the taxpayers of this province, they taxed the taxpayers of this province. They taxed the taxpayers of this province about a billion and a half dollars more, and in fact the same oil companies that they rigorously attacked before the election are . . . That's where the revenues came from, Mr. Speaker. That and the fact that through retroactive legislation, they destroyed farm programs.

If we take a look at . . . Here's an article, or an editorial by D'Arce McMillan of the *Leader-Post*: Saskatchewan farm leaders like the NDP's balanced budget but think agriculture should be given the credit for helping making it all possible. They pointed to their gross revenue insurance plan which, partly because of crop prices, made it so that there was \$760 million more for this government to have some access to.

Here's another one, Mr. Speaker: Rural Saskatchewan shouldered its load on the way to a balanced provincial budget.

And roughly what the editorial is about is that it was the farmers. There's \$188 million that the farmers had to give up and do without so that they could do it. But it doesn't matter.

There's many more. The auditor's report saying, you know, he's not sure why it was you couldn't come clean with the people. You're still only showing them 60 per cent of the books.

You got some of the more known columnists in the province, some respected columnists. Here's Murray Mandryk of the *Leader-Post* in a comparison of Roy Romanow versus Ralph Klein. And, Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say that he's actually wishing he was an Albertan after taking a look at this budget.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think at the end of the day what we're going to be doing is letting the facts speak for themselves. The people of the province are going to find out from us what the truth is, what this budget is really doing to them; in fact, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan have made all the sacrifices. The government opposite, I've heard some of the members talk about the sacrifices that they have made as MLAs or they have made as cabinet ministers. That's an insult to even talk about those kind of cuts when you've decimated rural Saskatchewan the way you have.

But spending has increased 4 per cent this year, Mr. Speaker. That doesn't sound like a government who is really concerned about getting its act together. And by the end of this fiscal year, this NDP government will have taken in \$1.7 billion more from Saskatchewan people in taxes, revenues, and fees. In returning . . . I mean they're bragging about some of these tax breaks they did give, the one tax break they did give which amounts to \$17.4 million. That's quite a cry from the 1.7 billion in taxes and fees that they've been charging people, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan's overall tax rate remains the second highest in the country, trailing only to Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker. A family of four in Saskatchewan earning \$50,000 per year pays 15 per cent more provincial taxes than in Manitoba, 44 per cent more than in Alberta, and 36 per cent more than in B.C.

I don't know what you have to brag about. You're all feeling good. You're feeling pumped. I notice finally you can get up and give a speech, and you can see there's some camaraderie over there; there wasn't before. We feel good for you for that reason. But the taxpayers, the taxpayers of the province, they're not in sync with your good feelings because they're the ones that are still having to pay for the mess that you guys have created.

And I'll tell you there's going to be a few things that you will never be forgiven for. And it's for such things as taking money out of cancer research and putting it into health board elections. It's for closing 52 rural hospitals and decimating health care in rural Saskatchewan when, if you take a look at the provinces next door saving some \$240 million in health care cuts and didn't close one rural hospital, people are going to be asking the New Democrat government what it was that you people could have done that you didn't and instead took out your evil ways on rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'll close now because I think that really that's all that this budget deserves.

Ms. Lorje: — Before I begin my remarks about the budget, like other members in this House I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, both for the birth of your granddaughter and also for the excellent work you have been doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorje: — The excellent work you have been doing in trying to bring order into this den of chaos.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased and very proud to be able to stand here today and address a few remarks about Saskatchewan's first balanced budget in 12 years. I am so proud to be part of the team that has finally brought some financial order to the problems that we inherited when we took government in October of 1991.

Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks I have been out visiting constituents, and I have to tell you that almost uniformly they have been extremely positive in their comments about the balanced budget and the implications of that balanced budget to

the future of Saskatchewan.

They recognize that we have more than capably, with their hard work and sacrifices, solved the deficit challenge. They say to me now, and I hope you're going to get on with the job challenge. And I point out to them that there are extremely strong measures for economic development in this budget.

My constituents also tell me that they like the debt management plan. They appreciated it when we took government, that we sat down, reviewed our principles, and developed a solid plan for deficit reduction. They now say, well we're glad that the deficit is gone; are you going to be dealing with the debt? And I am very pleased to be able to point out to them in the budget plan, a solid debt management plan for the next four years.

I'm very proud that we've already paid off \$500 million on the runaway Tory debt. And I'm more than proud that we will by the year 1999, pay off \$1.2 billion of this unacceptable public debt that drains our resources and robs our future away from our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, as I go out visiting constituents, one of the things that I am most pleased about in this budget plan is the fact that it is a balanced plan and is not simply tax reductions or slash and burn. There are three solid parts to this plan.

We are dealing with services for Saskatchewan people, the services that they are asking for from their government — not frivolous frills, but the essential services that they are asking for. We are dealing with debt management in a solid and planned fashion; and we are dealing with tax reduction for individuals and for businesses.

As we developed this plan, Mr. Speaker, we did two things. First of all, we reviewed our principles — our New Democratic principles of compassion, community, economic justice, and social justice.

Once we did that, we developed a strategy based on those plans. Our strategy started at the top, was fair across all regions of the province, was achievable, is sustainable, and will encourage economic growth — both economic growth through direct business encouragement by things such as the lowering of the small-business tax rate to 8 per cent, the investment tax credit for manufacturing and processing of 9 per cent; to encourage new investment; and also the surtax reduction of \$150. Those things are smart things to do. They are things that will allow us to continue on track with a sustainable balanced budget in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to have been part of the government that brought financial sanity back to this province. And with that, I would say thank you for letting me address the House on this matter, and I look forward to continued balanced budgets by New Democratic governments in this province. Thank you.

I would like to at this time adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before I ask for the motion of adjournment, the member from Saskatoon Wildwood has put the Speaker in a very difficult situation in that she made an error in congratulating the Speaker. And I don't want to get in trouble with my wife or my daughter; it was a grandson, not a granddaughter. I was just going to make sure they knew I could still tell the difference.

Debate adjourned.

MOTIONS

Name Substitution on Committee

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave, I would move to change a member of a committee. I move, seconded by the member for Regina Churchill Downs:

That the name of Mr. McPherson be added to the list of members on the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.