

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
May 2, 1995

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy today to present petitions on behalf of the people from the Shaunavon, Webb, Gull Lake area of south-west Saskatchewan. 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'm happy to table these today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present today. The prayer reads:

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

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

These petitions come from the Wawota, Kenosee, Maryfield, Prince Albert, Crystal Springs, Spruce Home areas of the province, Mr. Speaker, and even one from Cranbrook, B.C. (British Columbia). I so present.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of residents of the province who are gravely concerned about the potential implications of proposed federal gun control legislation. The prayer of the petition reads, and I quote:

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

provincial basis.

Mr. Speaker, interestingly enough people think that all of those who are opposed to this are from rural Saskatchewan, but the signatures here, the majority are from Regina.

I so submit, Mr. Speaker.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received:

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

And of citizens petitioning the Assembly to oppose changes to federal legislation regarding firearm ownership.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Estimates

Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Kowalsky, Chair of the Standing Committee on Estimates, presents the fourth report of the said committee, which reflects estimates for the Provincial Auditor, estimates for the Legislative Assembly. The report is hereby tabled.

Mr. Kowalsky: — I move, seconded by the member from Moosomin:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Estimates be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mrs. Bergman: — I give notice that I shall on day 64 ask the government the following question:

Regarding SaskTel: (1) what was the cost of sending of Clay Gegner, Trisha Shearer, Edward Splett, and Patti Kindred to the effective executive program at Waskesiu in 1992; (2) what was the cost of sending Hank Pulles and Rick Tabin to the effective executive program at Waskesiu in 1993; (3) what are the names of all SaskTel employees who participated in the effective executive program at Waskesiu in 1994; (4) what are all costs associated with these employees attending this seminar; (5) what are the names of all employees who have enrolled in this seminar for the current year?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Carlson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today seated in your gallery is 35 grade 8 students from St. Henry's. They're down on a tour of the legislature today. They're accompanied with their teacher, Garth Gleisinger, and bus driver Al Schatz.

I'll be meeting with this group later on this afternoon for drinks and questions, and I'd like all members of the Assembly to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to the House a person who is visiting here — his name is Brian Aubichon — in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Aubichon worked with me in northern teacher education program. He was also in the SUNTEP (Saskatchewan urban native teacher education program) program in Saskatoon as a coordinator, and he's been working now in the Yukon for a few years in teacher education.

So I'd like to have the members give him a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with my colleague in welcoming Brian back. Brian was a constituent of mine when I first got elected, and I haven't seen him since he left. So it's good to see you back here. And I know that members will again give you a nice, warm welcome, Brian.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Contact Lake Gold Mine Job Program

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is more evidence that the Saskatchewan government's employment strategies for the North are having a significant impact.

Recently the member for Cumberland signed an agreement with Cameco Corporation for the Contact Lake gold mine, which outlines a training program that will help put Northerners in available jobs. This agreement will help develop a fully skilled and competitive workforce in the North. This program will be implemented through the multi-party training plan to train mill operators, underground miners, and electrical and mechanical apprentices.

The multi-party training plan is a five-year agreement signed last fall by Cameco, COGEMA Resources, the Cigar Lake Mining Corporation, Prince Albert Grand Council, and the three levels of government. Its purpose is to train Northerners in new jobs in northern mines.

When the mine at Contact Lake was officially opened in February, 66 of the 100 production workers were Northerners. In the next six years, Cameco expects to pay more than \$20 million in salaries to the northern workers and contractors.

With the help of these companies and a commitment by government, more and more Northerners are receiving training and meaningful jobs in the North — Saskatchewan's North.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Grant for Weyburn Alternative Education Program

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was my pleasure to present a cheque for \$12,000 to the Weyburn School Division as part of the community partnership for alternative education program. This funding is a prevention and support grant from Saskatchewan's action plan for children.

The \$12,000 will be used to support the establishment of an alternate education program for youth in Weyburn and area. Under the prevention and support grants for '94-95, \$1.4 million was available to community organizations for projects that enhance or support the well-being of children and families.

The community partnership for alternative education is one of 10 projects being funded by Education, Training and Employment. The organization is a partnership involving government agencies at three levels: volunteer organizations, industries, and local businesses who are committed to serving the needs of the community.

These projects provide alternative education programs, in a setting other than a school, for adolescents under the age of 18 who require more support services than the traditional school system can provide. These students are at risk for drop-out, poor attendance, low achievement, and problem behaviour.

Congratulations to the Weyburn School Division and all of the other local groups and organizations who are involved in this worthwhile project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rural Child Care Facilities

Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week there was discussion in the Assembly on farm safety. Too many farm workers are killed or injured on the job each year and one accident is one too many. What we didn't mention is the safety of farm children, and we should not forget that tragically they are also victims of farm accidents.

Because of this sad fact and because of this government's general concern for the well-being of all children, I'm happy to recognize an innovative new program designed to enhance rural child care, information, and skills.

Last week it was announced that child care resource facilities will be established in 35 rural service centres around the province. The first one will be in Fort Qu'Appelle, with the others to follow by late fall, including one in Indian Head, in my riding.

The departments of Agriculture and Social Services will

combine to make information on child care available. This initiative has come about after extensive consultation with rural groups and with the National Coalition for Rural Child Care.

The 35 locations will be equipped with brochures, fact sheets, videos, and information on child care and child safety. As well, the service centres will be able to provide special classes and training where requested.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a forward-looking program designed to protect and enhance the lives of rural children. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Adult Education

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to talk about adult education. I've been talking this over with several people in my constituency and this is what some of them have to say.

Adult education and salvation are a waste of time. This is from Lorraine Hatfield:

For myself, adult education is a salvation, only there are some days I just don't seem to be with it. My brain wanders. On those days it seems like a waste of time, but deep down I know that it isn't.

I guess for some people adult education is or has saved their lives. It has saved them from having to go to the food bank or collecting that welfare cheque in order to just survive. Adult education has given them the courage to at least look for work and hopefully find work so they're not having to return to the degrading ways of survival.

For some adults it is a waste of time. They just don't have the incentive to work hard and better themselves or their families. Most of them have been glued into the welfare system for generations and have no desire to achieve any real goal. These are people who wait impatiently for that hard-working postal employee to deliver their welfare cheque every month.

My daughter's friends and family are all proud of me, as I am, for having the courage, incentive, and motivation to return to school. I know the end result will mean better employment. School ultimately is my family's salvation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Wynyard Mayor Wins YWCA Women of Distinction Award

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday the member from Regina Wascana Plains announced the winners of the Regina YWCA Women of Distinction

Awards. And she said, quite correctly, that in 90 seconds she could not do justice to their accomplishments but only give their names.

I want to take a moment to comment briefly on one of the winners. Each deserve special praise, but Her Worship Sharon Armstrong of Wynyard is of particular interest to me and my constituency.

She is currently serving her fourth term as mayor. That means that four times she has asked the opinion of the voters of Wynyard and four times they have given their approval. I envy that success rate.

She has maintained her respect in the community by leading by example, by facilitating and guiding rather than by ordering. She urges her citizens to take responsibility for the town's betterment and she asks that they bring forward solutions as well as complaints.

And, Mr. Speaker, the senior, the student, and the big-time business person, will tell you that she treats everyone with the same consideration and the same respect. She learned her people skills and her love for her town and her province and country in the 30 years she spent in a classroom before becoming mayor.

I think the YWCA was wise in selecting the category of contribution to a rural community, and its first honouree in this category was most deserving. Congratulations to Her Worship, Mayor Sharon Armstrong of Wynyard.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Adult Basic Education Program

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to take a moment this afternoon to recognize the efforts of a very worthwhile program. And it's not only a program that's available in our area but it's available across the province, and I'm talking about the adult basic education program.

Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of attending an adult basic education graduation on Friday evening in the community of Moosomin. And certainly when you see the effort that has been put forward and you observe the students as they seem to be so full of . . . and feeling so proud of their achievement, I think it's certainly worthwhile when people are looking at avenues with which they can better their lives. And the fact that the adult basic education program is available I think is something that certainly needs to be commended. And I want to extend a hearty thank you to the Southeast Regional College network for the work and their efforts in continuing this program as well as to the board and to the leadership of Mr. Bill Haussecker from Maryfield. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Talk Mail

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I had the opportunity of standing in for the minister responsible for SaskTel, the Deputy Premier. At Michael A. Riffel High School there was a news conference where we kicked off SaskTel's new Talk Mail. This technological advance pushes Saskatchewan further into the front lines of technology. Talk Mail, Mr. Speaker, will be available to literally every Saskatchewan telephone user by the end of 1995 when the digitization of SaskTel is complete. Used in sending and in receiving, Talk Mail is controlled specifically by each individual.

As I participated in the news conference this morning, the excitement of the announcement kept growing stronger and stronger. Schools have an immediate, cost-effective way of communicating to their target group of households. Saskatchewan Wheat Pool was also a part in the pilot project, and the Pool has very high praise for this technological advance. Community groups will be natural users of this new product.

Incidentally the SaskTel team leader is none other than a David Claypool, a former classmate of mine and also a product of the village of Beechy. It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, some do the work, and some take the credit. And I thank David and his team for that.

I'm delighted Saskatchewan people and businesses can participate in using Talk Mail. Congratulations to the announcement participants: from SaskTel, Louise Robitaille; from Michael A. Riffel, vice-president, Ben Grebinski; from Sask Pool, David Anderson; and from Octel, Sheila Flynn.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Provincial Taxes

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again we are pleased to bring forward some questions on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan under the "Mr. Premier, I want to know" initiative.

This question comes from Enoch Aorrestad from Debden, Saskatchewan. Mr. Premier, we are very happy that our deficit has been eliminated but we hope that you would also reduce our tax burden. As a small business owner and operator, I find it very tempting to set up shop in Alberta. The 9 per cent E & H (education and health) tax is very high. In Alberta, it is zero. There's a big difference in the bottom line. How do you propose to continue to cut costs and taxes?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I thank you very much for that question. Actually this morning I did a little bit of adding, and what I have figured out is that since we became government in 1991 we have provided the people of this province with \$220 million in tax cuts.

First of all, we eliminated the PST (provincial sales tax) on children's clothing, books, and other things that the Tories had put the education and health tax on. Then we provided a

number of targeted tax cuts to business to ensure that jobs were created.

And in our most recent budget, we provided \$150 income tax cut to individuals, \$300 per family, and we have committed that as our finances improve, there will be further tax reductions.

But what the member has to know is that, thus far, we have reduced taxes to the tune of \$220 million each and every year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Damage Deposits

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, comes from B.M. Boardman from Saskatoon. And, Mr. Speaker, this question is representative of questions that we are receiving, literally dozens of questions, along this same line from concerned landlords across the province. And certainly my Martensville office has had its fair share.

Mr. Boardman wants to know, Mr. Premier, and he says: I want to know why your government will not increase damage deposits for landlords and demand responsibility from those few bad tenants that are making renting such a chore for the many good ones.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Minister of Social Services, and I had a meeting with the landlords' association last fall in which we went into this issue very extensively. And at the end of that meeting, we agreed on a process whereby we would involve the landlords and the tenant groups and the Department of Justice and Social Services in a study of the situation to try and agree upon the factual background against which a decision had been made.

We're still waiting for that report. We understand it's in the final stages and we should get it any time, but we haven't yet got it. When we get it, we've got to sit down with it and very quickly make a decision about this question of a damage deposit because it certainly is of interest to a lot of people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Provincial Sales Tax

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, my question comes from Debbie Demitor from Frobisher. Debbie writes: Mr. Premier, I want to know, once our budget is balanced, are you going to reduce our sales tax? We keep waiting for things to improve but every budget more of our pay cheques are eaten up. It's at the point where a person is afraid of a raise because they might move you into a higher tax bracket. Are you going to reduce the sales tax, the gasoline tax, and push for the GST (goods and services tax) to be lowered?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I thank him for that question.

As I've stated, I have added up the tax reductions that this government has already made since 1991 — \$220 million in tax cuts. In this budget we chose to reduce the income tax for one simple — rather than the sales tax — for one simple reason: there is a greater benefit to the pocketbook of the average family by that tax cut.

Now what I'm saying to the members opposite is this government is committed to reducing taxes as the tax cuts become affordable. We're not committed to lavish promises the way they are to reduce this tax, this tax; the deficit goes up, as when they were in power, and taxes go up.

We have committed to reduce taxes. We've delivered on that commitment. We've said as our finances improve there will be further tax cuts. We will deliver on that commitment as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Gaming Expansion

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this question comes from Dan Kitiak from Calder and it's addressed to the Premier. Mr. Premier, I want to know what T.C. Douglas would tell you about all the gambling machines you have placed in Saskatchewan, plus casinos coming. Do you have to legally rob the people to govern Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as it would relate to the gaming program of the Government of Saskatchewan and the policy of the Government of Saskatchewan, you well know that there has been a great deal of debate in the Assembly when it comes to the announcement of the Regina casino for example. There is a great deal of support in the business community and the community at large for the casino in Regina.

And that certainly is indicated by the fact that the members in opposition have not raised any questions about the Regina casino in the last 50 days. And that would . . .

An Hon. Member: — Three hours in Finance.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — No, in question period. In question period.

And the fact that Dan would write in and ask the question at least shows some leadership, that he's not playing politics like the rest of you. Because if it is such a big issue, why have you not been asking questions here in question period?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Firearms Legislation

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this question comes from David E. Kelbert from Chitek Lake: Mr. Premier, I want to know if your party is prepared to fight the new federal gun law proposal on the basis that it is an

infringement on our civil rights to own property, which is a provincial, not federal, jurisdiction? If not, what property do you own, Mr. Premier, that you are willing to have banned and confiscated?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Well I think that the member from Maple Creek will help us answer this question when he writes to the gentleman from Chitek Lake and tells him that this government, in cooperation with both opposition parties, have been fighting this gun law, fighting it with everything at our disposal, and really taking a national leadership role with respect to the question of fighting it.

I've also said publicly and say again that when this law is passed, our lawyers will be taking a long, careful look at it to see whether it does infringe, whether it departs from the criminal law and the federal government's exclusive powers with respect to law and actually infringes on the civil rights of people and therefore becomes a matter within provincial jurisdiction.

We don't know what the answer to that is now, Mr. Speaker, but we intend to research it, as does the Government of Alberta, I believe, when we know what it is that parliament finally passes if, heaven forbid, they pass anything.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MLA Pension Plan

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is to the Premier or his designate.

Mr. Premier, if there's one word I hear time and time again when people talk about your government it's that it's unfair. It's unfair that you got elected by promising lower taxes and then you raise taxes; it's unfair that you attack health care and close 52 rural hospitals; it's unfair that you tore up 60,000 GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contracts with the farmers who are counting on that money. And it's especially unfair that after all the hardship you've inflicted on every Saskatchewan family that you and a handful of the front bench NDP (New Democratic Party) cronies are standing in line to collect a million dollar pension when you retire.

Mr. Premier, do you think your MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) pension is fair?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. The member raises three important issues. One, the policy as it would relate to taxes, and I'm pleased to say that following nine years of devastation and a \$15 billion deficit, even at that, we were able to balance the books and lower the taxes, as my colleague the Minister of Finance has indicated, by \$200 million.

As it would relate to health care, quite honestly, if you believe that the public of Saskatchewan would trust the Conservatives again with medicare, you've got another thought coming. Or if

you would trust the Liberals, given what happened under Ross Thatcher in this province and under Chrétien at the present time; health care, I want to say, is much better protected under a New Democratic government than any other of the opposition parties.

As it would relate to pensions, I want to say we have already said that this deal, dealing with the old pensions/new pensions, will be dealt with by the Assembly, by the Board of Internal Economy before the election. And we've said that clearly.

Now I just want to make one final comment. I noticed today in the *Leader-Post* an ad where that member, the Leader of the Conservative Party, has a wonderful picture and is out on the campaign trail. But I want to say that we should read the fine print because at the bottom of the ad you'll find in very, very small print, "Progressive Conservative Party . . ." And I want to say to the public: be sure you read the fine print before you vote for those boys over there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, the people of Saskatchewan have read the fine print with regard to your pension. They've read the fine print with regard to your pension, and they've found the Premier's pension will be in the magnitude of \$122,000 if he's elected for one more term. They've read the fine print about you on the front bench who have that kind of pension waiting in line for them, Mr. Minister.

That's why later today, Mr. Minister, I'll be introducing legislation to make it fair to the people of Saskatchewan by capping it at 50 per cent of the highest salary you have earned while in office. That'll still be \$44,000 a year for the Premier of this province. That's more than most people are making working in this province, Mr. Premier, but it's considerably less than the \$120,000 he'd be getting under the pension scheme that he operates under today.

Mr. Minister, will you agree to cap your pension, at the very least . . . of 50 per cent of your current salary, 50 per cent of your current salary which, I think, the people of Saskatchewan would feel is fair. Or do you still believe it is fair to expect taxpayers to provide the Premier of this province with \$120,000 pension after his career is over?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I say again to the members opposite, who continue to dwell in their imagination of pensions worth \$120,000 . . . and I know the Liberal leader the other day was using that number, \$123,000. It's interesting, as we said in the past, that her pension . . . the Leader of the Liberal Party, if she were in the position of Leader of the Opposition for the next 25 years, as the Leader of the NDP has been working for the people of the province for 25 or 30 years, her pension will be in excess of a million dollars. That's a fact.

But when the members opposite now try to make an issue of pensions, I ask the Conservatives legitimately, where were you

for nine years when this pension plan was in place, as Eric Berntson took the old pension plan and went on to the Senate. Where do you get off today when you're at 5 or 10 per cent in the polls now, on the Road to Damascus, desperate, now try to say, if only, if only we had to do it over again we would have dealt with this and that and the other thing.

Look, you're not legitimate on this. You're not telling the truth when you say the Premier has \$123,000 pension, any more than the Leader of the Liberal Party was honest when she said the 123,000.

I ask the member from Greystone, come clean, tell us what your pension would be if in fact you had spent the same amount of time. It would be in excess of a million dollars, and you know it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, most people in Saskatchewan don't belong to any kind of a pension plan. Most people have to buy RRSPs (registered retirement savings plan) if they plan to save for their retirement.

Why should MLAs, Mr. Minister, get special treatment compared to the people we represent? I think the MLA pension plan should be eliminated entirely following the next election. And that's exactly what the legislation we'll be presenting this afternoon will do.

Mr. Minister, will you show that you people are willing to make sacrifices, starting at the top? Will you support the legislation we'll be introducing this afternoon, capping your million dollar pensions, and cancelling MLA pensions entirely after the next election?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to say to the member opposite that it's very clear that desperate politicians make desperate promises, and really that's what we're seeing from the member opposite.

But I want to say the reality is something quite different when it comes to members of the opposition. Earlier this session we brought in a Bill that dealt with part-time workers in this province that allows for pensions for a group of people who up to this point have not had pensions. And what did every one of you do, Liberal and Conservative? You voted against giving part-time workers pensions. That's what the member for Greystone voted against. That's what you, sir, voted against.

And I say to you, that even Gary Broker, who I believe is a candidate for the Liberal Party, at the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) annual meeting, said that teachers under the old plan, or people under the old pension plan, including MLAs, should be allowed to carry on in those pension plans, if that was the deal. That's the Liberal Party.

Now which side is the Liberal Party on? Does Gary Broker speak for the Liberal Party, or does the member from

Greystone? Let's get it straight. Let's have some honesty in politics, not this old-style Liberal politics from the 1960s.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

District Health Board Costs

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we learned that the health board deficits in 1993-94 were \$15 million and that this government apparently continues to condone and indeed approve health board deficits. The minister attributes these deficits to start-up costs.

Well, Mr. Speaker, last month in Yorkton, start-up costs and a million dollar deficit required closing 28 beds and laying off 10 more support staff. In Regina, start-up costs and a \$6.5 million deficit required 137 bed closures and 109 more people without jobs.

The minister talks about start-up problems, but the bold fact is ongoing bed closures and lay-offs. Yet somehow the province has managed to spend more on health care.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. How many more bed closures will there be, and how many more health care workers will have to lose their jobs, before your government realizes that this is a situation out of control?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, when I am called upon to respond to the Leader of the Third Party in this House, I need to spend some of the time correcting the things that she will say in a preamble to a question.

She says in the preamble to the question, we're spending more on health care today than we were in 1991. If she would just care to consult the budget books and compare, she will find in fact we are spending less today than we were spending in 1991. And she knows full well that had we not made change in health care spending across Saskatchewan, the budget today would not be \$1.5 billion; it would be 1.9 to \$2 billion, or \$400 million more.

And this, Mr. Speaker, from the political leader in this House who goes around the province saying you've got to cut the size of government; you've got to cut the size of spending.

Now she asks about the future of quality of care in our province. We have, Mr. Speaker, through the process of renewal and reform, restructured, so that we're confident we can deliver quality health care to all of the people of Saskatchewan.

If she wants to be of some assistance in this, she may want to talk to her federal cousins in Ottawa who are planning to cut federal funding to health care across Canada by significant amounts, thereby threatening the very foundation of medicare in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One major problem with the health system is administrative costs. Money is going to administration rather than health programs and front-line workers. Health boards used to be volunteer boards, Mr. Speaker. Now board members receive as much as \$300 and chairpersons as much as \$525 just for attending meetings.

Now assuming that boards meet an average of once per week, that means the taxpayers pay some \$3.3 million a year in board meeting per diems alone, and that doesn't include the millions that must go for board member travel; \$3.3 million would pay for 125 licensed practical nurses each year.

My question, Mr. Minister: governing is about choices. What kind of a choice is it where volunteer boards are replaced by multimillion dollar boards instead of using that money to take care of the sick in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, again for the benefit of members and those who may follow the proceedings of the legislature, the Liberal leader misleads the people of the province in this House.

Mr. Speaker, she talks about the question of boards under the previous structure, as if there were no costs attached to these boards. She talks as if they were volunteer boards without costs. Mr. Speaker, we've had a number of districts do very careful analysis of board costs prior and board costs since the restructuring and change.

Mr. Speaker, I can report today to the House that the Prairie West District, for instance, prior to the restructuring and change to the district model, were spending \$95,000 on an annual basis in board per diems and expenses. Today that cost is \$62,000. Mr. Speaker, the South Central District Board were spending \$97,000 prior to the change. Now under the district board, their costs are \$72,000.

Now, Mr. Speaker, she talks about choices, and I do find it interesting, I do find it interesting that when we see the advertisements from the Tories, they're trying to hide the fact that they're Progressive Conservative, trying to hide the fact. I think this Liberal is trying to hide the fact that she's a Liberal now. Does she stand in the tradition of the Liberals of Saskatchewan, in the tradition of kicking down the doors of the legislature to stop medicare? Is that the tradition she stands in, Mr. Speaker? Perhaps she could answer that question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The problem, Mr. Speaker, with this NDP government is they don't realize that more administration doesn't mean better health care. Other provinces have undergone health care reform as well, and they too have set up district health boards, Mr. Speaker. Somehow this government thinks that the taxpayers of Saskatchewan can afford to pay more for their board members than the taxpayers in neighbouring provinces.

To the Health minister: why is it that Saskatchewan health board per diems are set at a higher rate than elsewhere, Mr. Minister, and why do you continually set these rates at levels that the taxpayers of our province can't afford?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I have shared with the member today, from two districts, a comparison of actual costs in terms of board expenses. She will persist in making her claim that there . . . that expenses are growing, but the people of Saskatchewan will judge on the basis, I think, Mr. Speaker, of credibility.

Now the people of Manitoba recently judged on the issue of credibility. Here's something from the *Winnipeg Free Press*, Mr. Speaker, a headline which reads, "Grit policies . . . (Grit meaning Liberal) Grit policies medicare's death knell."

Now that's the kind of interpretation that's being given to the policies of the Liberal Party by a Liberal newspaper. And we notice, we do notice, Mr. Speaker, on the question of credibility, when it came to choosing in Manitoba, the Liberals came dead last.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have yet to see an announcement from this government where administration positions will be cut in order to maintain front-line health services to the people of Saskatchewan.

My question, Mr. Minister: what makes you think that the people of this province would rather have high-priced administration instead of hospital beds and nurses?

I've been from one end of Saskatchewan to the other, Mr. Minister, and this is precisely what the people of Saskatchewan are talking about.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Third Party would take some counsel from other than her own political staff, she would know that across Saskatchewan administrative costs and the delivery of health care have been coming down and coming down dramatically, Mr. Speaker. And that is indeed an accomplishment of the integration of services and the reforming of our health care delivery system.

Now the question that's being asked. She talked earlier today about choices, and indeed the people of Saskatchewan do have choices in the leadership for their government. And they recall, they recall the position of the Liberal Party when we fought the battle for medicare in Saskatchewan. They recall that position. They recall the party that fought medicare; now they're back in charge in Ottawa and we see the outcome. Do we want them in charge in Saskatchewan? I think not, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Provincial Sales Tax

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the Finance minister's had the opportunity to clear her calendar yet, because the 40 towns and villages and groups of people all down the west side of this province, Mr. Speaker, are growing more frustrated by the day.

And I can see why they're frustrated when they talk to this NDP government, who have consistently raised the PST, even though communities all up and down the west side have said it simply hurts their development, it hurts their population, it hurts their ability to do business and make a living.

And all the minister could say to them yesterday is, well I've got a busy schedule and I'm booked and I don't go where I'm not invited. Well, Mr. Speaker, and to the minister: Madam Minister, you're the Finance minister that has imposed the taxes; you're the minister that has consistently said that those people on the west side of the province should be treated unfairly.

Madam Minister, have you cleared your calendar to go and meet with the representatives of most of the communities on the west side of this province, or, Madam Minister, are you simply afraid because you won't like what you hear?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite. As I said yesterday, I was not invited. After question period, I was faxed a request from the group to have representation. And I have already responded within hours, saying there will be some — I regret that I can't go because I have other commitments — there will be government representation there.

What I'd also like to point out to the members opposite is, I have met with these groups. I have been in St. Walburg talking about this issue; I have been in Meadow Lake talking about this issue; I've been in Swift Current several times, including the last couple of weeks, to talk about this issue. So the government will be represented there.

And I'm sure one of the things that will be pointed out at that meeting, is this government has already delivered \$221 million in tax cuts and we're promising, as our finances improve, there will be more as they become affordable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 64 — An Act to amend and repeal The Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Act, 1979

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move An Act to amend and repeal The Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Act, 1979, be now introduced and read the first time.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I would move that questions 68 and 69 be converted to motions for return (debatable).

The Speaker: — Questions 68, 69, motions for return debate.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 2 — Job Creation Efforts

Ms. Stanger: — Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in my place and support the job creation efforts of business and cooperatives in this province. And at the end of my remarks I'll move a motion that states:

That this Assembly endorse the job creation efforts of businesses and cooperatives in Saskatchewan which have served to increase confidence in the provincial economy, demonstrate that *Partnership for Renewal* is working, and prove that Saskatchewan is a good place to do business.

(1415)

Saskatchewan business people have largely approved of the 1995-96 provincial budget with its tax breaks and balanced revenue and spending, according to prominent business leaders.

The business tax breaks in the 1995-96 budget have encouraged business to invest in Saskatchewan. I list these breaks for the Assembly. Reduced income tax rate on capital purchases used in manufacturing and processing . . . non-refundable tax credits can be earned at a rate of 9 per cent on qualifying capital purchases effective immediately. Reduced aviation fuel tax, that this tax was reduced to 3.5 cents per litre from 7 cents per litre.

Previous tax breaks — and these were introduced in other budgets, Mr. Speaker — reduce small-business income tax rate. On January 1, 1995, the rate dropped to 8 per cent. This represents a 20 per cent reduction in the rate over the past four years. Elimination of provincial sales tax on direct agents for manufacturing and processing — this was introduced in the 1994 budget, elimination of provincial sales tax on toll-free phone service, which greatly assisted many people using this service.

As Robert Hawkins from the Del-Air Systems Ltd., a Humboldt farm equipment company, said, and I quote:

If you create wealth, jobs follow. With this budget and its tax incentives, the government is creating the climate for these things to happen.

The new budget plan shows balanced accounts — surpluses in fact — for the current fiscal year and for the next three years. Hawkins said that this makes the Saskatchewan balanced

budget program, the first in Canada, much stronger than that in Alberta, where a deficit is planned to reoccur as soon as next year. And I might say here, Mr. Speaker, that whatever any government does in this line, they must sustain it. It is all fine and good to make promises, but you must be able to plan in a way that your economic climate can be sustained.

The Minister of Economic Development said, and I quote:

This psychological benefit creates an environment that is conducive to investment. That has been one of the three pillars of our *Partnership for Renewal* strategy, and it has resulted in snowball investment and business expansions recently.

One of the things that I noticed when I listened to a speech made by the president of Elan oil, he said, I have something to say to governments across western Canada. What we would like you to do are only two things. We would like you to create a climate that is sustainable for business, a very stable financial climate. And he said, I have to say Saskatchewan has done that. And the other thing that I want to say to Saskatchewan and Alberta governments — because he was speaking in the border city at that time — is that he said we want decent regulations.

So if you listen to business, small business or big business, they tell you two things: you must create a stable economic and financial climate, and the other thing is decent regulations. And he says, I say thank you to the Saskatchewan government. And he said to the Alberta counterparts, why don't you follow? This was said six months ago. I listened very carefully because I realized at that time — it was before budget time — that for business to flourish, you have to have a stable economic atmosphere.

This new business growth that we've had in Saskatchewan reflects the incentives for private sector job creation. In a Canadian Federation of Independent Business survey . . . and you notice I'm using quotes from non-Saskatchewan government sources:

Saskatchewan businesses reported that government tax policy stability and deficit eliminations are two of the most important conditions. (Here again, much like the president of Elan oil) They were considering hiring more employees in 1995 because this stability exists.

In fact with the introduction of these latest business tax incentives, Saskatchewan has become one of the most competitive manufacturing and processing locations in the country, according to a Department of Finance model that uses StatsCanada data to measure effective tax rates after tax net income.

The NDP has kept its promises to balance the budget in its first term in office. It's safe to say that we can count on the NDP to keep its promises on creating jobs for Saskatchewan people. One thing I notice that . . . a concern of mine has been since I've been elected is youth employment. And I'm happy to announce to the legislature that steadily, slowly and steadily, youth employment has increased by 1,000 jobs in 1994, 1,000 jobs in

1995, and 1,000 jobs in 1996.

It's safe to say that we can count on the NDP to keep its promise on creating jobs for Saskatchewan people. Our government is already off to a very good start. In the first 44 days of the spring '95 legislative session, 33 new economic development projects were announced by MLAs and cabinet ministers. Mr. Speaker, here are a few examples of these projects. An additional 20 million in funding this year for health care will create 460 jobs, primarily for nurses, home care aids, therapists, and councillors. Yes, this creates jobs, helps the economy to keep growing, and this creates an atmosphere for business to expand.

The Partnership '95 summer employment program and the Public Service Commission will provide up to 24,000 summer employment opportunities for students this year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — Again it gets youth working, and it is a partnership with business. Now the hon. member from Regina North West says, how does this help? My heavens, I thought at least she knew something about figures in business.

My whole family was in small business. When you have people working, they're paying taxes. This creates a stable economy for people. That's how it helps, and that's how it all links together. If you'd like to sit down after I finish my speech, I'll get through it for you.

Saskatchewan Energy, 128 million expenditure on the new gas reserve development will create 400 new jobs. And 118 million government expenditure in the education system for capital projects will generate about 374 full-time jobs over the next two years. I think what the member doesn't realize is that all of these are partnered with the private sector. That is why this is so important.

That's why *Partnership for Renewal* is working. It's where you have government facilitating business and the expansions of jobs in the private sector. This is not congratulating the government; it's . . . well it's congratulating the government for having the good sense to build partnerships for renewal which work very well.

A 9 million investment in a multi-tenant biofermentation plant lab and office facility at Innovation Place in Saskatoon — again, a partnership with private business will create 100 full-time jobs during the planning and construction phases and an additional 75 long-termed jobs once the project is completed.

Here's another one, private business — the new Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce call centre which will open in Regina in 1996 will create 500 new jobs. Congratulations to CIBC (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce) for recognizing that Saskatchewan is a good place to do business. The establishment of the Canadian Cancer Society's new call centre in Regina will create another 20 full-time jobs. Congratulations to the Canadian Cancer Society for realizing that Saskatchewan is a good place to do business.

A new 53.6 million canola crushing plant to be built east of Saskatoon — congratulations to Cargill for recognizing that Saskatchewan is a good place to do business. It will create 50 full-time jobs at the plant and another hundred jobs for truckers who haul canola to the site.

A 10.5 million multi-party training agreement signed by the provincial government, the federal government, aboriginal people and mining industry will create 500 new mining related jobs for Northerners by 1998 — again, a partnership. It's not only congratulating the Saskatchewan government; this is a partnership including the Saskatchewan government, the federal government, private industry and the aboriginal community — 500 new mining jobs. Thank you to all these people for recognizing that Saskatchewan is a good place to do business.

And Saskatchewan 1995 highway construction program will provide an estimated 1,500 seasonal jobs. And of course with the expansion of business, our infrastructure will need some work, and highways is one of the things that I'm interested in.

An Hon. Member: — Get some federal money.

Ms. Stanger: — And yes, we will need partnerships with our federal government. And that's only logical because the federal government has a commitment to Confederation to provide some of those linkages across this country. That is why this country has been different because federal and provincial governments have been committed to treating people the same from coast to coast. We hope, only hope, this present federal government continues that, Madam from Regina North West.

In my own constituency, royalty revamping has created many jobs because oil companies are drilling. Service companies are busy, and oil land sales are up. The restructuring of two projects in the north-west that were in jeopardy, the Bi-Provincial upgrader and the Millar Western pulp mill project, have produced stability and jobs in the north-west. In fact Millar Western and CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) have just announced an expansion, and this will mean jobs and a better economy in Meadow Lake and surrounding area.

In my constituency, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and the Alberta Wheat Pool have partnered in the first such partnership interprovincially ever with wheat pools. And, Mr. Speaker, they have built a huge, high throughput elevator, and it will service people in Saskatchewan and Alberta. They have also just recently opened a livestock division outside of Lloydminster, and this will service us well too.

I think that what I have found in speaking to constituents, especially this spring, it is that we had to have an atmosphere of confidence and stability in our society. People will not spend money, people will not invest money, if they don't have this confidence.

I have to congratulate not only businesses — small businesses, large businesses, and the cooperators — to congratulate the Minister of Finance because we have had the first upgrading in

Saskatchewan of our credit rating of any province in five years. This again gives confidence to people that are investing money in our economy.

I'm very proud at this time to move this motion, Mr. Speaker, and I would like people in the Assembly to support it because I believe it. And here is the motion:

That this Assembly endorse the job creation efforts of businesses and cooperatives in Saskatchewan which have served to increase confidence in the provincial economy, demonstrate the *Partnership for Renewal* is working, and prove that Saskatchewan is a good place to do business.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1430)

The Speaker: — Did the member indicate a seconder to her motion?

Ms. Stanger: — Sorry, it's seconded by the MLA from Kinistino.

Mr. Roy: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to enter into this debate on this motion, and I want to say at the outset that I strongly support the motion put forward by the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster. And I must say she did an admirable job in expressing the strong sense of confidence and growth there is in the province of Saskatchewan today.

Mr. Speaker, I come from a riding and a constituency that has a number of strong industries that have not only expanded, but have been there for a number of years. And certainly we're seeing a level of economic activity and confidence and growth in the economy that we have not seen for some time or enjoyed for some time in Saskatchewan.

And what I think we want to do here today in this motion is try to illustrate exactly why there is that sense of confidence in our economy today. As the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster outlined, one of the first tasks we set out after forming government was of course to put in place a plan, an economic development plan for not only our first mandate, first four years, but for the future of Saskatchewan.

And of course what we entered into, Mr. Speaker, was a consultation period and discussion with the stakeholders in the economy, that being, namely, the private and public sector, as well as the cooperative sector, and all of the other stakeholders that have an active interest in the economy. And we entered into this broad, consultative process because we wanted to get their input, their insights, and their future suggestions and direction on an economic development strategy for the province and for the 21st century.

And, Mr. Speaker, these partners in the economy responded, and they responded by telling us exactly what they felt we should put in this economic development blueprint. And we

took their suggestions very seriously, and we of course incorporated all of that in our *Partnership for Renewal* strategy paper.

And I believe that what you're seeing today, what the people are feeling and experiencing out in the economy, is directly related to the confidence that has flowed from this strategy paper. Business people in Saskatchewan now for the first time in a long time have their own particular business Bible which they point to, and that is the *Partnership for Renewal*.

They say, it's ours. Yes, there might be sometimes some glitches in it, but they of course take ownership of it. And they work with government and with their partners in the economy to solve some of the problems.

But they have taken ownership of it, and irrespective of which government is in place, they're saying this has to be the strategy for the future and it's going to continue to guide the Saskatchewan economy.

That's good news for Saskatchewan business people, that's good news for the province of Saskatchewan, and it demonstrates that this policy is working for Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan economy.

One of the first guiding principles of course of our new economic strategy was to get all of our partners working together. And of course, because we had went through this consultative process, they knew what were the strengths and the weaknesses in the provincial economy. And of course, that has been embodied in the strategy paper.

One of the most important principles and one of the most important factors that drives the economy is, of course, the whole question of the provincial finances and the level of taxation. And our partners of course said right at the outset that this provincial government had to have the courage and the foresight to be able to tackle the massive debt load in this province that had been left by our predecessors, and also to address the taxation issue in this province in a responsible, reasonable, sustainable fashion.

And of course this government set on that course. And what we are seeing now after three and a half years, this government has balanced the budget, has a surplus budget, and now is starting to address the issues of taxation, as we heard earlier.

We have seen a reduction of taxation in this province of something like \$200-and-some million. That's good news for Saskatchewan businesses because they see tangible proof that this government is doing something about fighting deficits, eliminating deficits, and eventually over a short to medium term, addressing the taxation issue.

So I honestly believe that part of the . . . that the major catalyst behind the economic activity and the confidence in our economy, number one, has been the *Partnership for Renewal* document that we have put together, Mr. Speaker. It has outlined clearly the direction, the future direction, for the provincial economy. And I think businesses have subscribed to

it. And that's good for the economy because it gives them direction.

Secondly, this government has addressed the problem of the finances. And that has given the impetus for businesses not only to expand, but it also has started attracting outside businesses to look to this province as one of the most favourable places to invest. And not surprising, Mr. Speaker, not surprising that we're seeing announcements like the Cargills, announcements like Hitachis, announcements like Flexi-coil.

And I might add that the president of Flexi-coil himself said, Mr. Speaker, one of the main reasons that Flexi-coil is expanding, is staying in Saskatchewan and is expanding, is because of the direction this government has taken on economic development policy; but more importantly, because they have had the courage to tackle the deficit and debt situation and also set a plan — a plan, Mr. Speaker, for the finances.

And that is good news for Saskatchewan, that's good news for businesses in Saskatchewan, and ultimately will lead to more economic activity for Saskatchewan and will obviously expand the economy and create more wealth and more jobs in Saskatchewan. And here, that is because of this government's courage and their vision for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I talked about the partnerships. And of course one of the important thing in the document is building on partnerships. And we talk a lot about cooperation and partnerships, and that is an important element of Saskatchewan; it has been.

If you look at, historically in this province, how have we come to the point where we are as a province, how have we been able to create this unique partnership in the province where the private and the public and the cooperative sectors all working in harmony together, how have we done that? Well that is because we have created the kind of partnerships that have been necessary to foster growth and wealth and jobs. And now we're doing that in 1995. We're doing it in the *Partnership for Renewal* and we're doing it in our communities and in the economy.

On that, I want to talk a bit about some of the partnerships, and certainly one of those elements within the *Partnership for Renewal* is the whole concept of regional economic development authorities . . .

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

Ms. Stanger: — Sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I'd like to introduce a guest that is seated in our gallery.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Stanger: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the Assembly, Chief Wallace Fox from the Onion Lake Indian Reserve. And he is here in Regina attending meetings, and I'd like all of you to welcome him to the

Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 2 — Job Creation Efforts (continued)

Mr. Roy: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to welcome our guest here today, and I'm sure he's encouraged by all the good news in the economy.

Mr. Speaker, I was talking about regional economic development authorities. And I just want to briefly touch on the REDAs (regional economic development authority) because they are a very important element of the *Partnership for Renewal* and I think they're going to play an integral role in the future development of our provincial economy and future development of regions in this province.

And the concept of regional development and moving towards a more regional form of governance is something that I think is taking hold, not only as far as economic development, but other aspects of governance as well. But on the economic development side, Mr. Speaker, I think this is an important, important element of *Partnership for Renewal* and building the provincial economy for the future and the 21st century.

One of the things we've seen in the last number of years, and in particular with the former government, was that there wasn't an overall strategy. And in particular you would see sometimes a lot of communities competing against one another, firms competing against one another, to attract businesses from one part of the province to the other. There was various initiatives, various tools used to try to form competitiveness amongst the different regions.

In our particular strategy, we focus more on a regional basis. We've allowed these particular regions to identify themselves, to identify the strengths, to identify the links that certainly comprise a region. And once they have done that, Mr. Speaker, once they have went through that process, they went through an evaluation process where they looked at themselves and said, what are the strengths of any particular regions, what are the weaknesses. And of course it allowed them then at that point to say, okay, we have to focus in on the strengths and work from these strengths, try to enhance the positive aspects of our region.

And I just firmly believe that this is going to be one of the guiding, guiding principles as we head into the 21st century. Because the days, the days of interprovincial competition for projects, and we're seeing it happening now, the days of interregional competitiveness for particular economic development projects — those days are gone, Mr. Speaker.

What we have to focus in now is, we have to look at regions and we have to form the partnerships; we have to form the alliances; we have to look at the strengths and we have to build on those strengths; and we have to tailor economic development

that suits a particular region. There's no point trying to attract a business, trying to attract a venture, that is not compatible to a particular province or to a particular region.

We are doing ourselves, as a provincial government, or as taxpayers, we're doing ourselves a disservice if we would have continued on that particular path. And that's why I firmly believe in the regional economic development concept because it does put the onus on the regions, it does put the onus on the particular economic stakeholders, to look at themselves and work in a more cooperative fashion. And that is something that will be very, very important as we head into the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, I was commenting briefly about how far we have come as a province — a province with certainly a sparse population, a province that is far from its markets. We've always had to transport all of our commodities a long way, and as well, when we bring in the products that we use to produce and manufacture, certainly this has always contributed . . . and been a major hurdle for Saskatchewan.

But Saskatchewan people have always learned and adapted and certainly subscribed to some important values and some important principles. And some of those were certainly cooperation. And as I talked about, it's going to be even more important, as we head into the 21st century, that we hang on to those values and principles that have made Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan economy what it is today.

I want to talk briefly about some of the good news that is happening in the provincial economy, and I cited a few examples of some of the major economic development projects that have been announced in recent weeks. And again, all because, I believe, of the healthy economic climate that this government has created in Saskatchewan.

I think it is in large part because of the favourable tax environment that these businesses have cited in Saskatchewan, because of the plan that this government has had, and because of the future direction that this government is taking. These businesses are looking at Saskatchewan and they're expanding and relocating here.

(1445)

And in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, we have many, many of these particular businesses and enterprises that are flourishing, that are growing, and that have a positive, positive outlook for the future, not only of their businesses but of the Saskatchewan economy.

And I talked a bit . . . and recently Robert Hawkins, the president of Del-Air Systems in Humboldt. Mr. Hawkins has cited in his statements that part of the reason for the good growth they have had in their particular industry — a large part — has been because of the favourable climate, the tax climate, that this government has created.

He goes on to say that he is a firm believer in the regional economic development authorities. He believes that that is the best direction to go for their particular region and the province.

And I think Mr. Hawkins and Del-Air Systems are again an example of the Saskatchewan spirit of ingenuity, hard work, determination, and all of these elements coming together to create a very successful enterprise.

In my riding as well, of course we have another industry that is world recognized now, Bourgault Industries of St. Brieux, and I've talked numerous times about this particular industry. But the reason I keep bringing them up, Mr. Speaker, because I'm so proud of these kind of firms and the kind of opportunities that they have created, not only for their company but for the people of St. Brieux and for their employees.

And in speaking with the president and the administration of Bourgault Industries, I asked them what exactly they felt was the contributing factor and the catalyst behind their good economic growth and the growth in their firm, but as well their positive outlook for the future and their future expansion plans. And they were very straightforward and very happy to illustrate some of the reasons for their strong growth and some of the success that the company has enjoyed in the last number of years.

And again one of the main reasons, one of the main contributing reasons of course, is the Saskatchewan ingenuity, the Saskatchewan ingenuity that Saskatchewan business people and people like the Bourgaults have had for years.

The second major factor and reason for their continued growth was certainly the positive economic climate, and in particular the financial management. They cited the financial management of this government as being one of the best they have seen in a long time.

And they like the kind of plan that this government has set out, not only on the economic development side — and I might add that Bourgault Industries and Gerry Bourgault, the president of Bourgault, were active players in the development of our *Partnership for Renewal*. So they know full well what the direction and the plan is, not only for the next number of years but for the 21st century.

Mr. Bourgault said that he likes the plan, the financial plan of this government in particular, because it fosters stability, it fosters the ingenuity and the willingness to invest, to expand. And he believes that that is directly related to the finances and the financial management that this government has put into place.

And it's incredible, when you think about Bourgault Industries and the potential that this particular firm and this particular technology has . . . The members might be interested to note, and certainly I was very surprised, that Mr. Bourgault indicated to me that their technology, as well as Flexi-coil and some of the other air seeder technology in Saskatchewan, is some of the most advanced technology worldwide. In fact they believe, Bourgault Industries believe, that they are anywhere from seven to ten years ahead of any of their competitors worldwide — seven to ten years ahead, Mr. Speaker, of any of their competitors.

And at present day, there's only about 7 to 10 per cent of the air seeder market that's been tapped by any of their competitors. So imagine the tremendous potential that Bourgault Industries, that Flexi-coil Industries and other air seeder technology companies, are sitting on. They have the world markets in front of them. They have access to most of these markets. They're working on some better distribution and marketing, and we're working with them. Saskatchewan government is working with marketing and promotion to try to expand and develop these markets.

But imagine the opportunities; 7 to 10 per cent of air seeders have only been tapped for awhile, air seeder markets. And here in Saskatchewan, in little Saskatchewan, we have been able to create some of the finest technology anywhere in the world.

And now because of the plan, Mr. Speaker, because of the Saskatchewan government's plan, the Saskatchewan NDP government's plan, about an economic development strategy, *Partnership for Renewal* . . . but more importantly on the fiscal side, because of that financial plan, these particular companies, these particular enterprises, are going to be able to grow and prosper and create wealth and jobs, not only today and tomorrow, but for the 21st century.

And that's good news for Saskatchewan, and that's good news for the economy. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that the future looks very bright in this particular industry. And I'm proud to see this kind of success story coming out of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we've also looked . . . I want to talk briefly about some of the successes in northern Saskatchewan. And of course, when we talk about northern Saskatchewan, we talk about, in large part, communities that have had in the past a very difficult time having adequate employment, and certainly we see the ramifications and the extensions of that. And this government has always applied itself right from the very outset to try to address some of the difficult situations that Northerners face when it comes to employment and to creating a better standard of living for themselves.

This government has committed itself, and in *Partnership for Renewal* we are committing ourselves, to trying to address and trying to correct some of the disparities in the distribution of wealth. And we are proud of some of the initiatives. And I want to talk briefly about some of the strategies that we have put in place to try to address that.

Most everybody knows that northern Saskatchewan of course is renowned for its beauty and its touristic attractions. And, Mr. Speaker, we are continuing on that route to try to expand this very important industry for Saskatchewan. We established a Tourism Authority that is going to . . . again, building on the principles and the values of cooperation and partnership, the Tourism Authority is going to look at the province, is going to look at regions, and is going to try to coordinate and better direct the future tourism initiatives and the direction for these particular regions.

And already we are seeing the benefits of that, Mr. Speaker — a more coordinated approach to tourism. We're seeing inquiries to

the department on tourism. The numbers are phenomenal, and they're continuing to come in.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing as well in other parts of the province, not only in northern Saskatchewan, but in the southern part of the province with the latest find of the *Tyrannosaurus rex* . . . Again, looking at it from a regional basis, looking at the strength of that region, and using that to certainly assist all of these communities.

But in northern Saskatchewan we've certainly done what I feel is a great job in trying to attract more tourists to the North. The Tourism Authority of course is going to do more to . . . do a better job of coordinating. But we're seeing . . . We put into the North a charter a number of years ago to try to address the problem of some of our tourists who come from out of country.

And certainly the charter, the Denver charter which charters tourists from the United States into northern Saskatchewan, has been a major boon for the northern region. And the outfitters, the tourist camps who certainly are in the northern part of the province, have thoroughly been pleased with the results that they have had. It gives them, the tourists, an opportunity for a better link from the United States, central United States, other parts, gives them a direct link into northern Saskatchewan. And this certainly is an important initiative for Northerners and for the tourism industries.

As well, the North of course is renowned for its mineral wealth. And we are continuing in that vein, Mr. Speaker, to develop, to enhance the North as far as the minerals and the development of the northern mines. And lately of course, we had the announcement by COGEMA Resources of the McClean Lake project.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important development for the North, again building on the strengths of the North, but very importantly we addressed in that particular project, we ensured — as I said before, as I said at the outset of my comments — we ensured that Northerners would be involved in these particular projects. And I'm proud to say that this project demonstrates that commitment — the commitment of northern involvement in future economic development in northern Saskatchewan.

We see in this particular project that there is going to be an employment equity program for Northerners. And that is good news for northern Saskatchewan. It's good news for Northerners who have problems accessing and acquiring suitable employment.

It also, Mr. Speaker . . . we have been able to come together as partners in northern Saskatchewan, get northern communities involved in the future development and the direction of the North, not only as it pertains to mines and minerals, but as far as tourism and the fishing. Mr. Speaker, we're involving Northerners and they feel good about this, they feel included, and they feel that they are a part of the direction of the North, as they well should be.

And they should benefit from the rewards of any future wealth

creation in the North, and this government is making sure that that is happening. And I'm proud to say that I'm part of a government that is doing that for Northerners.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Mr. Speaker, I want to speak as well about the forestry industry, which is a very important component of our provincial economy. It certainly contributes significantly to the provincial economy, creates thousands and thousands of jobs, contributes mightily to the development of our communities.

And recently we had a major announcement and again, again testimony to the fact that the *Partnership for Renewal* document and strategy and the direction this government . . . testimony that it is working, positive proof that this strategy is the right strategy and that it's working.

Mr. Speaker, I'm of course talking about the recent announcement of the Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation, which includes MacMillan Bloedel and the Saskatchewan government entering into a joint venture to expand the opportunities on the north-east part of the province using one of Saskatchewan's very important natural resources, the forestry industry.

And what is really nice to see about this particular arrangement, this joint venture, is that we have brought in a large . . . one of the largest forestry companies in the world, MacMillan Bloedel, and the Government of Saskatchewan in a partnership, and again proves that cooperation, cooperation between the private and the public sector, is working and is alive in Saskatchewan in 1995.

(1500)

This is proof of that. But what's even more special and even more gratifying about this particular arrangement is that the two partners will enter into an arrangement that will create hundreds of jobs and obviously will create enormous spin-offs for the communities and for the province, but as well the two partners have set up a sustainable management of hardwood and softwood forests in the north-east part of the province.

And that is good news for the provincial economy. It's good news for the province, the north-east part of the province. It's certainly going to be used as an example of what the private, the public, and the cooperative sector, can do as far as the management of a very important resource — a resource that we have to protect and we have to ensure is used in the best possible fashion. And a resource that is going to be there for the future, of not only our children, but our children's children.

I want to just briefly describe this particular working arrangement because I think it is a model of cooperation in 1995 and a model of what this government has created in this province.

The SaskFor Products Limited Partnership is 50 per cent equally owned, of course, by Crown Investments Corporation and MacMillan Bloedel. The new company includes, of course, the former Sask Forest Products Corporation mill in Carrot

River and the plywood plant as well in Hudson Bay and the MacMillan Bloedel oriented strand board plant in Hudson Bay.

And I also want to say that this particular venture builds on new technology because what . . . the product we are using is a form of the new technology in particular in the strand board industry. And of course again it's an example of what the technology and research does for the provincial economy.

The construction of the new mill, this new mill at Hudson Bay, will create 150, 150 direct jobs and 100 more seasonal spin-offs within the forestry industry. Imagine the economic spin-offs for the communities like Hudson Bay and the Carrot Rivers and all of those communities in that region. Those are the direct spin-offs. True, these 150 new jobs . . . but the countless — hundreds — spin-off jobs.

But imagine what this particular merger and this particular partnership will create for the provincial economy. It's unbelievable, Mr. Speaker, and it is good news for those people. I'm very pleased for them and I'm sure it's going to be a very successful venture that will prove that our plan is working.

Mr. Speaker, I want to comment a bit about the importance of education in the economy, the provincial economy. And I noted — and I'm sure all our partners were part of it — they told us very, very clearly in the development of the *Partnership for Renewal* document, that we had to look at incorporating and getting education to play more of an important role in the provincial economy.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is what we are doing. We have looked at our educational system. We have taken some very bold steps forward to address and to answer to some of the concerns and some of the suggestions that our partners have made. And what you'll find of course in this year's budget is that we have future programs like Future Skills, programs like JobStart; proof again that this government is responding to what our partners have told us, but responding again to the needs of Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan young people.

These are programs that are going to give our young people the skills and the talent necessary to enter into the job market, secure suitable employment, and look forward to the future with a positive aspect. And, Mr. Speaker, these are certainly . . . these programs are an important initiative and will bring certainly benefits.

The reason we've done this and the reason we've taken these bold steps and these programs is of course we recognize that the future skills, the future skills of our young people are so important. They are the most important thing we have and we should ensure that we train and give these young people the opportunity as much as possible to be able to secure for themselves a very important employment.

And we recognize now and we see — and it's been highlighted time and time again — that 30 years ago or 40 years ago an individual may have had one or two career changes in his or her lifetime. Well what do we see now in 1995 and beyond into the 21st century? We see that individuals and employees will

probably have to have four or five career changes in their lifetime. And what we have said is that that offers us a major challenge as a government and as an economy to ensure that our education system addresses some of the problems that this could create for these individuals.

And I firmly believe that programs like Future Skills and JobStart are a step in the right direction in trying to prepare our young people for the numerous challenges and numerous career changes that they might have to make in their lifetime. And what it does as well is it recommits this government to putting the emphasis where it should be — on young people, on education, on economic development — so that they will be able to have the proper employment and be able to contribute to the provincial economy and be full partners and be able to accept the challenges, but also the rewards of their employment in the economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Mr. Speaker, we're seeing the signs of the growth and the confidence all over the economy at every level. And right across our province we're now seeing, where a number of years ago people, young people in particular, were leaving this province for opportunities in other areas of Canada, well I could tell you, Mr. Speaker, that that trend has now been stopped. And why has it been stopped and why is it going the other way, Mr. Speaker? It's because of the climate for growth that this government has created. We are now seeing the population growing in Saskatchewan — not large, but it is growing, Mr. Speaker.

And that's good news for Saskatchewan because it tells me that the opportunities, the jobs, for Saskatchewan people and people who have left the province, the jobs are now starting to be created and they want to come back here because they believe, first of all, that there is employment in this province. And number two, this is one of the best places to live and to raise a family anywhere in Canada.

I want to speak as well about agriculture because agriculture is a very important component of the provincial economy. It contributes again enormously to the growth and to the welfare of our communities and to the development of the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen last year a phenomenal growth in the revenues of the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan. We've seen as well the other elements of the agricultural industry — the manufacturing, the value added. And that is good news for Saskatchewan.

On the issue of the primary producers, 1994 was a very good year. They had a good crop, good commodity prices, and certainly they enjoyed one of the best years.

1995, Mr. Speaker, will prove to be a bit more of a challenge. Some of the challenges facing prairie farmers — of course the elimination of the transportation subsidy which will cause great difficulty for prairie producers, for our farm communities. But, Mr. Speaker, we are still going to continue to try to urge the federal government to look at trying to soften the impact of this

massive cut-back to the prairie agricultural industry.

Mr. Speaker, while the primary producers were enjoying a great year in 1994, they also enjoyed the great year on the hog production side, on the livestock side. We've seen a phenomenal growth rate in the number of livestock cash receipts, which is good news. We're also seeing an expansion on the hog side of some of the products — the products of the pork industry which are certainly finding new markets.

And again there on the *Partnership for Renewal* we have said that we're going to work with the livestock industry to expand, to identify new markets, to promote the products, the Saskatchewan products. And our partners are happy to see the progress that we're making in that particular direction.

We have also introduced the agricultural innovation fund which will identify future possible developments, projects, on the value added side of farm commodities.

And in Saskatoon we have what I called the centre, the critical mass of technology in Canada, in particular the technology on the ag biotech side. For any of the members who haven't had an opportunity to visit this particular centre, Innovation Place in Saskatoon, should take some time to set up a meeting and go and visit. It is truly a remarkable centre for ag biotech excellence in Canada. And we now have 30 per cent of all the ag biotech research in Canada, and our sights are for a lot higher in the 21st century.

What I want to say about ag biotech and describe briefly some of the advantages — and this is again building on some of the strengths, the natural strengths that Saskatchewan has — is of course taking the resources that we have, adding value to it, and trying to apply some of that Saskatchewan ingenuity to be able to create more wealth and more opportunities for Saskatchewan.

And what we have done basically in Saskatoon is we have amassed, as I said, the critical mass of intelligence when it comes to ag biotechnology. And that is very important. We have put together a very important cadre of researchers and technicians and people who have put a lot of time and energy into looking at these research . . . these particular commodities and adding value to it.

And one of the them — we always cite certainly an example — is the canola industry. And the canola industry and most who are familiar with canola, not 25 years canola was only used for one end product . . . the end product was only used for one thing and that was as a form of motor oil. It of course had an enzyme in the particular oil that was unfavourable for human consumption.

The researchers at that time and governments at that time put a lot of money and effort into ensuring that we would look at canola for other uses. And we did that. And now we are seeing some of the benefits of that particular money that was invested.

Canola prices, as you well know, and they have soared in the last number of years and they're going to continue to be strong.

Why? Because there is that demand for canola. And the reason for that, of course, is because of the research and development that we have ploughed into this particular industry. And we are starting now to reap the benefits of that.

(1515)

Recently of course, Cargill announced a major crushing plant, a state-of-the-art crushing plant right outside of Saskatoon in Blucher. And what was the reason for Cargill locating near Saskatoon? Number one is they decided, of course, that this is a major canola belt and they want to be in the canola growing region. That was one of the important

But the second important factor motivating and being the catalyst for Cargill relocating in . . . or locating in Saskatoon was, number one, they felt that this economic development strategy that had been placed by the government was a good and sound policy, and it gave them stability and the belief that this government had a handle on economic development and the finances.

The third reason was, of course, the 9 per cent tax credit that this government announced in its recent budget. This is the kind of favourable tax environment that the Cargills and other firms are looking to when they relocate or they establish or they expand in Saskatchewan.

Another important reason for Cargill locating in Saskatoon was because of the high level — that critical mass — of technology that I talked about at Innovation Place. Cargill realized that they want to build some synergies with Innovation Place.

And I tell you that is because of what we have built in Saskatoon and what this government is placing as the important elements of the future of technological development. We're placing the emphasis on that. And the Cargills are realizing it and building those synergies, not only for today, but for the 21st century. And that is good news for the Saskatchewan economy and that is good news for Saskatchewan people.

Now of course Cargill has identified all of these important reasons for their move to Saskatoon, and this is going to create enormous benefits to the province. I think all of us are aware that it's going to create something like 130 full-time jobs as well as something like 250 jobs in the construction stage. These are again real, tangible proof of the *Partnership for Renewal* working and working in a positive fashion for Saskatchewan.

I just want to identify another project, and again citing the importance of adding value to Saskatchewan resources and the importance of positioning ourselves for the future in that particular sector.

One of the companies that's located at Innovation Place is called Canamino; and Canamino of course started to look at the possibility of oats. And oats of course has always been grown here for years and years; it was used mostly in the past for livestock feed. There was some that was sent to export, but only in niche markets; it was not a high volume. But it is certainly a hardy crop in Saskatchewan, a crop that has been very

important to the agricultural economy.

But of course the price of oats in recent years has been quite low, and one tonne of raw oats in Saskatchewan today is worth about \$80 a tonne. Not a lot, and certainly when you calculate with the changes, the damage from the elimination of the transportation subsidy, it's all even more important that we look at adding value to these particular crops. Well on the oats side, Canamino has started experimenting and started researching and looking at opportunities to add value to raw oats. Now what they came up with was very interesting.

They started looking at some of the components of oats to be used in the cosmetics industry. And so they started to reach out to some of the larger cosmetic companies in the world to see if again, again building on cooperation, see if they couldn't attract some of these large companies to build synergies to assist them in research. And they did that, and some of the largest cosmetic companies are now in with Canamino, assisting Canamino.

What has come out of that particular research and that technology now is that Canamino is adding value to oats, is transforming oats into cosmetics. And what we are seeing now is that \$80 a tonne raw oats — the value of raw oats today — is now transformed into \$9,000 a tonne when it becomes processed for cosmetics.

Imagine that, Mr. Speaker, \$80 a tonne transformed into \$9,000 a tonne. That is the kind of success stories and that is the kind of benefits that can come out, can flow out, of ag biotech. And that is why this government, through the agricultural innovation fund and other initiatives, is supporting this kind of development. We are putting our money where our mouth is when it comes to research and development, not like the federal government that has chopped — has chopped — massive cuts to research and development. And I tell you, that is going to be harmful to Canada, harmful to Saskatchewan.

This government has taken a different approach. We are putting the emphasis where it should be, and that is ag biotech, that is research and development, and we're going to continue.

So that is another success story, and certainly the agricultural industry is benefiting, the provincial economy is benefiting, and everybody is going to be winning out of this particular situation.

I just want to comment briefly on some of the other success stories and some of the reasons that this government is very proud about the climate that we have created. We look in Regina; of course because of our technology, our technological leadership on the telecommunications side, recently we were able to get CIBC call centre located in Regina. And again there when you ask CIBC, when you look at what propelled them to come to Saskatchewan and choose Saskatchewan over other competing provinces, it is very clear, Mr. Speaker, what those factors were.

Number one, the telecommunication leadership and the advancements we have made in that particular sector, that was very important. They cited that and they said that it was one of the important reasons.

But secondly, they also cited, they also cited the stable financial outlook of the Saskatchewan economy and what this government has done to stabilize the provincial finances and set and put a plan in place. That was very important for them and for good reason.

Mr. Speaker, if you're a business and you're looking to expand or you're looking to move to another province, what are you going to look for? Well number one, you're going to look for the ingredients that comprise your particular business venture. You're going to want to locate as close as you can to that.

But number two, if you're a business — and having been in business I know this, Mr. Speaker — you look for how the government is approaching the finances and how they are approaching economic development. And I could tell you, this government wins hands down when it comes to attracting the CIBCs precisely for that reason — because we have a plan.

We have a plan on economic development. It is a plan for 1995 and beyond in the 21st century. We have a plan for the finances of this province, not only for 1995 but the future into the 21st century.

And that is why businesses are coming to Saskatchewan. That is why indigenous businesses that are here and have been here for a long time are staying here, are expanding, and are talking positively about the future of Saskatchewan; about the future of their particular industry. And let me tell you, that's good news for all of us in this province.

So I just want to finish off by saying that this government's plan is working. All of our hard-working members of the Legislative Assembly, our hard-working members here, have gone out and have talked about the plan, the economic development plan, the *Partnership for Renewal*. They've talked about putting the finances in order. They have talked about preparing Saskatchewan for the 21st century and they're talking about . . . with a positive . . . with an optimism, with confidence.

And, Mr. Speaker, businesses are responding. Saskatchewan people are responding. They feel the enthusiasm, they feel the confidence, and I believe that the future looks very bright for Saskatchewan. I believe that this is going to be a province that is going to own the 21st century, Mr. Speaker. We are doing it for Saskatchewan people, doing it the Saskatchewan way. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Assembly that I'll be much briefer than the member from Kinistino was in his remarks. I guess sometimes, Mr. Speaker, you have to speak at great length in order to cover up your tracks, and obviously that's what the member from Kinistino was doing today in the Assembly. He was speaking at great lengths to try and convince us, and the people watching, that actually something had taken place, during the last three and a half years, of some significance.

The one thing that I always find amusing, Mr. Speaker, in listening to these lengthy renditions from New Democrats about how wonderful the economy in our province is, is that they leave out the luck factor.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, when you aren't blessed with high interest rates, when you have grain prices and other farm commodities reaching levels that they haven't seen in 20 years, when you see livestock prices at a peak that we haven't seen in 20 years, when you see oil and gas, Mr. Speaker, contributing not a hundred million but \$200 million alone in land sales, and when you see world economies, Mr. Speaker, moving ahead because of free trade, which New Democrats almost universally opposed a few years ago, then there is a certain luck factor that I never hear any of these people talk about — never anybody talks about at all. It's as if all of these things happened because we in this province unfortunately elected a bunch of New Democrats in 1991.

And I guess what we should talk about in here, Mr. Speaker, in debating this motion, is fairness. We should apply the fairness test to what the New Democrats have done and to the results, Mr. Speaker, that we see. You should apply fairness in talking about the New Democrats' promises of '91. Things such as, they would eliminate the PST, that they could make do with 4.5 billion, that they would protect and open hospitals, not close them.

When you put all of those promises, which they said were fair promises in 1991, and you stack them up against what has actually happened, Mr. Speaker, where we've seen the PST go from 7 per cent to 8 per cent to 9 per cent, when you've seen 52 rural hospitals closed, when you see union-only tendering — something which was unheard of 10 years ago — where you would ask taxpayers now to have the family of Crown corporations pay 10, 15, 20 per cent more on any particular tendering project, and you say then, does that meet the fairness quotient? And the average taxpayer is going to tell you, no.

So I know why the member from Kinistino had to speak longer than the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, because there's a lot of tracks to cover and there's a lot of convincing to be done. And if I were a New Democrat and I was in a rural constituency today, I'll tell you, I'd be out there talking and talking and talking because you're going to have to cover a lot of tracks, Mr. Speaker.

If I were a New Democrat in the North or the east side of this province today and I look at what's going on out there — some people going into their third crop with no crop, and this is the government that took away their GRIP program, which used their GRIP program to balance the provincial budget last year, which gave \$317 million of their GRIP program to the federal Liberals — I'd be out there talking on every corner of every town. Because the tracks that they've got to cover, Mr. Speaker, are long and deep. There's a lot to be covered up.

And how are they going to justify when those farmers out there this year — a good many of them may miss a third crop, Mr. Speaker . . . and all the luck in the world, with rising grain prices and rising oil-seed prices and rising livestock prices, Mr.

Speaker, aren't going to help a lot of those people out.

And when you pile on taxation after taxation after taxation, if you're a person in rural Saskatchewan today and you go through the fees that have been increased in your operation, then, Mr. Speaker, I say to you, it doesn't meet the fairness quotient.

And the *Partnership for Progress* is fine for the Economic Development minister — the guy that can somehow hornswoggle the Finance minister and Treasury Board into giving him in excess of \$20 million to build himself a casino in downtown Regina that he gets to build out of the cash flow of the liquor and gaming corporation, Mr. Speaker.

(1530)

And he gets to go and he gets to play with Hitachi, and he gets to play with all of those big guys that he can give tax credits to and he can give breaks to. But what does the average person in this province — the average home-owner, the average businessman, the average farmer, the school teacher, the person that's paying the load, the taxes — say? Is that fair? Is it fair that those guys, those big people, the ones that the New Democrats used to stand in this House and castigate over and over and over again and they now do business with over and over again . . . I mean, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting; it's now up to 150 million a throw.

It's 150 for Mac-Blo; it's 150 for Crown Life. I mean the longer they go, the more it goes up. CIC, Mr. Speaker, has their little shell game going on and they say last year we lost \$13 million. After we've raised every utility rate in the province of Saskatchewan for the last three years, we've still lost \$13 million.

And yet along comes Mac-Blo — oh, no problem, we got 150 million bucks, we've got 150 million bucks. That's because the minister from Elphinstone likes to get on the plane and fly around the world.

And I say to you, we should apply the fairness test. It's like the Premier's pension, Mr. Speaker. I never heard anybody on the New Democrat side of the House, back when they were in opposition days, talking about the member from Riversdale and the other seven and their pensions because, well, that's mine, that's mine. And when taxpayers raise questions about a Premier's pension that'll be \$20,000 more than his salary, there's a whole bunch of indignation.

Where's the fairness, Mr. Speaker? Do I hear the member from Cut Knife-Lloyd or the member from Kinistino talking about \$120,000 pension for the Premier? No. But they'll stand up and talk for hours about this *Partnership for Progress*. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that is as hollow as the words it's spoken from. Because the average person is not part of the partnership; the average person, Mr. Speaker, pays — the average family of four. And the Finance minister doesn't doubt the figures. It's 4,500 bucks more since 1991 — \$4,500.

Well who grows? In this partnership, this taxation partnership, who grows? The province of Alberta grows. Swift Current

Chamber of Commerce says \$55 million came out of our community and went to Medicine Hat. Business men and women in communities all up and down the west side meet tomorrow in North Battleford because they've said, in this partnership of taxes, what happens? Our communities die; our businesses die; the business goes to Alberta. The Finance minister can't make time to talk to us and we keep on paying the 9 per cent.

That's a great partnership, isn't it, Mr. Speaker? I wonder why we never hear about those partners.

And then we have the partners that are called the family of Crown corporations. How do they fit into this, the *Partnership for Progress*? Does SaskTel, with \$88.6 million in profits last year? What kind of a partner are they? SaskPower, SaskEnergy, the Gaming Corporation — these are great partners to have, Mr. Speaker, if you're the New Democratic Party. But if you're the average home-owner in this province, what kind of a partner are they? They just pick your pocket, over and over and over again.

And then we see in the summary financial statements, Mr. Speaker . . . The auditor always tells us to look at the summary financial statements. And he says, because that's where you'll find the Crowns and the Consolidated Fund. And all of a sudden we look at their equity and there's \$1.2 billion, Mr. Speaker, sitting there. Now those partners are doing very well.

But the rest of the folks in the partnership — the ones that have to pay the bills in order so that Jack Messer and his ilk can sit in high places in Crown corporations and tax us through the back door — those aren't the kind of partners that I would have expected New Democrats to talk about, especially after I listened to them, Mr. Speaker, for many years when they were in opposition. That's not the kind of partnership they talked about while in opposition.

But, Mr. Speaker, the facts are that the average family in this province pays that much more. The facts are, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of rural Saskatchewan has substandard health care and indeed are second-class citizens.

And the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg has confirmed that over and over again, that rural people now in the *Partnership for Progress* don't count. They're not partners any more, Mr. Speaker; they are now second-class people.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are people on every border of this province that say, I don't fit the partnership any more because everybody shops some place else. My hardware store, my lumber yard, my car dealership, my appliance store — we're not part of the partnership any more because we can't make a living, and we can't do business.

But I never hear the New Democrats talk about those partnerships. It's as the member from Kinistino talked about — all of the friends of the Economic Development minister and how wonderful they're doing. And that partnership obviously is working very well because that minister can hand the money out.

He's got access to the growth fund. I don't hear the New Democrats talking about the growth fund. There was about \$35 million in it when we left power. I wonder what's in it today. The immigrant investor growth fund — that's where he gets a lot of the money, Mr. Speaker, to parcel out to these people.

I don't hear New Democrats talk about it. Is the second tranche full? Is the third tranche full? Are we on to a new program? No, they don't talk about that, Mr. Speaker, because the Minister of Economic Development's busy handing that out. Is that part of the *Partnership for Renewal*? I don't know; they never talk about it. Instead I hear long speeches. They try and cover up the promises, the broken promises of '91, in long speeches about all of their powerful friends now.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the simple fact is that the average household in this province wants to be a partner. And if we're balancing budgets on the backs of those people, Mr. Speaker, then they should be the ones to get the first benefit — no one else. It should be the men and women who run the small businesses that make our communities go that should be the first beneficiary. They should be the ones that have a downsizing in government. They should be the ones that see the PST lowered. They should see leadership from their government officials so that obscene pensions aren't even an issue, that the size of cabinet isn't even an issue, that the amount of hacks that you have running around this building are not an issue — but they are, Mr. Speaker.

Here we are in the dying days of an administration and a former federal MP (Member of Parliament), lawyer from Moose Jaw, is hired by this administration with a few short weeks to go at a salary in excess of \$44,000. Now why should a former MP, a man who had access to a good-sized pension plan in Ottawa, lots of benefits, a lawyer, have to come into this building as an MA (ministerial assistant), as an MA to a minister, as an MA to a minister just to give him a little bit of padding — because he's a good New Democrat — just before the election? A little bit of salary, a little bit of coin in his pocket.

Is he part of the partnership, Mr. Speaker? Is that the partnership that the member from Kinistino was talking about? You've got to drag Rod Laporte in here and give him a little bit of the taxpayers' coin just before an election. Former MP can't look after himself?

That is why, Mr. Speaker, people don't believe they're part of this partnership. They don't believe they're part of the partnership. And that's why a motion like this, Mr. Speaker, this close to an election, rings so hollow. It rings hollow.

And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that they'll have to speak a lot longer, a lot longer and in a lot more places, to cover up what has actually happened to the taxpayers of this province.

And I think it would be appropriate, Mr. Speaker, I think it would really be appropriate, moved by myself, the member from Thunder Creek:

That all the words following the word "have" be deleted and replaced with the following:

"... struggle to survive in the face of the provincial government's onerous taxation policies and expensive and divisive labour policies."

That we should move this amendment to the motion, Mr. Speaker, and that will be seconded by the member from Morse. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I find the amendment in order, and the discussion will continue on the motion and the amendment.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting the amendment to the main motion, and I will point out some of the reasons why I believe that we need to amend this motion.

As has been often noted in previous debates, it is appalling that this government would try to boast of its accomplishments in job creation when even the revised Statistics Canada figures show that the government is off of its job projections by 10,000. It's off of its projections that it has forecast for itself by 10,000 jobs.

Through the last three years of budgets and of throne speeches, we have seen the number of expected job projections with this amount of possible jobs created. And what do we have, Mr. Speaker? I would just like to repeat that one figure, the new, clarified figure, just so we all know once and for all that we are reading off the same page.

Statistics Canada has shown that job growth in Saskatchewan is limited to 2,000 jobs. Keeping in mind that even this modest accomplishment still leaves the province with a deficit of a thousand jobs compared to 1991, the government claims that it has created over 12,000 jobs in the past year. I suppose that all I can say in parliamentary language is that there is a gulf between this figure and the real facts.

In spite of the government's attempts to paper over the problem with misleading statistics and by exaggerating the importance of its 2,000 low-wage jobs, it is clear to everyone that there is still an employment crisis in this province. This problem arose in spite of the fact that economic growth in Saskatchewan outstripped other province. This is quite an accomplishment on the part of the government — a near jobless recovery.

For the ordinary person in Saskatchewan, this is like an eggless omelette. It is quite clear to everyone but the members opposite what the cause of this crisis is. As Professor Eric Howe of the University of Saskatchewan observed in the *Leader-Post* on February 1, he said and I quote:

"The NDP is getting us out of our provincial budget deficit through higher taxes, and higher utility rates," . . .
"The effect of both of those things is to weaken job growth."

(1545)

Of course the government, far from being ashamed of this, is proud of it. They love to tell anyone who will listen how they

balanced the budget without the deep government spending cuts that Ralph Klein undertook. They love to portray the Klein government in Alberta as hard-hearted and uncaring, especially to them and their thoughtful preservation of the state of over-government in this province.

And yet for all the government's propaganda on this subject, Ralph Klein's government created 36,000 new jobs last year. I would suggest to the Premier and the Minister of Finance that it is more humane fiscal policy to reduce the burden of government on the taxpayer and thereby create 36,000 jobs than it is to kill job growth and to throw tens of thousands of people onto the welfare rolls by pushing taxes and utilities through the roof.

It has been the frequent charge of this government that the Tories in Saskatchewan and Alberta adopt policies only out of ideological zeal without regard for practicalities. In looking at the job creation issue, we can easily see that this is a case of the pot calling the porridge black. It is bad enough that they are so ideologically wed to the idea of big government that they will not suffer their bureaucratic empire to be diminished in any way.

On top of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, however, they are still caught up in their socialist ideas of labour reform. Last year they refused even to consider that perhaps during an unemployment crisis it was not the best time to introduce radical new labour reforms that are bound to have a chilling effect on job creation. It took months of grass roots protest from small and medium business owners for the government to back off on the most radical aspects of this Bill.

But even after backing off so far that they've alienated their labour friends, they still can't get the full support of the business community. As Joyce Reynolds of the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association said in the *Star-Phoenix* on February 4:

We are still very concerned that the legislation will ultimately harm more than it will help.

This is the kind of comment that business people have been making from the beginning and which the former minister of Labour has sneered at continually, in fact making very rude comments about them. You really have to wonder why this legislation exists. As the members well know, our caucus made efforts to correct this problem by introducing a Bill to rescind last year's damaging labour legislation.

After all, no one in labour likes this Bill. No one in business favours it. So just whose interest does this Bill serve, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and why not get rid of it? However, with their usual commitment to democracy, the government refused to even listen to debate on this Bill. As far as I can see, the only reason last year's labour legislation is still on the books is so that the former minister of Labour can say that he didn't back down on his ideological principles.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Hon. Associate Minister of Finance is no longer the minister of Labour, since he so bravely

switched portfolios on the day that the legislation was proclaimed. With that member gone from that portfolio, we had hoped that the government would become more reasonable on these issues. Perhaps they can begin to see that a government that creates 36,000 jobs is maybe doing something right, something that they should try to imitate.

Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that didn't happen. Apparently the Associate Minister of Finance is not the only one over there who has the blinders on about subjects like big government, taxation, job creation, and the economy.

As we have seen, the government has pushed ahead with its divisive labour policies through the announcement of the Crown tendering policy; and thereby, Mr. Deputy Speaker, excluding 80 per cent of construction workers from working for the government. This policy can only serve to throw still more citizens out of work. And for what? To buy the support of union leaders for the NDP. What a noble cause.

While the government is quick to pat themselves on the back for every small accomplishment in job creation, they are not so quick to remind the public that they inherited a legacy of solid economic development policies — policies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which gave the province the basis for a diversified economy.

The associate minister recently said the recent announcement of projects which are creating good jobs, high-paying jobs, is not a coincidence. Well indeed it is not a coincidence, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Let's just review some of the recent announcements to which he is referring.

An announcement regarding the Co-op and Bi-Provincial upgraders, Saskferco, the boom in the oil and gas sector, can be traced to policies set in place in the '80s. Cameco, the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan — we've all read about it in the paper. They just took over a company, a billion and a half dollars worth of assets. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they financed it from within themselves. That, Mr. Speaker, is confidence in the public and the public's confidence in this business. Millar Western. All profitable companies that have contributed to the tax base. Meadow Lake is fast becoming the forestry capital of Canada, again because of the policies laid out in the '80s.

Flexi-coil, we recently had some announcements regarding Flexi-coil. Why were they in a position to go forward and move forward into the international market? Because the former government put them into a position where they could easily do that.

Hitachi — Hitachi — and the minister responsible for Economic Development has serious problems with this. Talk about Hitachi — who brought it to Saskatchewan? Who brought it to Canada? Who brought it to North America? Was it this administration? No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was not.

Cargill, those bad and evil international multinational corporations — Cargill — evil. When we were talking about that in developing a Saskatchewan fertilizer company, the evil that Cargill would represent in this province was just

horrendous, Mr. Speaker, as demonstrated by the people who are now government and now who are now making deals to build a new canola-crushing plant just outside of Saskatoon.

And, Mr. Speaker, these people have another thing to consider. What about Crown Life? Crown Life came to Saskatchewan and they said, well that's not a good deal either. What about the federal government moving Farm Credit Corporation to Regina? Oh, that wasn't a good deal either. But when we have them here, what did this government just do for Crown Life? Added \$150 million to the debt of this province.

And the list goes on. And I could take a . . . put a common thread through here. These initiatives, Mr. Deputy Speaker, were all made by the Leader of the Conservative Party at the time, the member from Estevan. It seems as though the government has taken the idea of recycling a little too far. Instead of recycling newspapers, they are recycling news by reannouncing pre-1991 economic development achievements, since they clearly have none of their own.

Perhaps that last comment is not quite fair. Some of the government's business tax reduction initiatives have attracted some businesses to this province and they should get the credit for that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. However, once again I would like to point out a fallacy that the Associate Minister of Finance has recently uttered.

And this is what he said, I quote:

Underlying these tax reductions is a goal of producing not low productivity, low-wage jobs; what we are intent on producing in Saskatchewan is high productivity, high-wage jobs, and we're well on the road to accomplishing that goal.

And that's out of *Hansard*, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Well I was not aware that being a telemarketer for a phone centre was what was considered a high productivity, high-wage job. But once again it is better than a kick in the head.

Another area where the government likes to take the credit for job creation is the oil and gas sector, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And once again let me remind the members that the oil and gas industry was pretty much a closed book in this province until the Progressive Conservative government of the '80s said . . . and they had some sense to realize the potential it had for the wealth creation and job creation in this province.

As for this government's contribution to this industry, I refer to an interview with David Manning from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. In the *Leader-Post* he says this, and I quote:

Manning says Saskatchewan's tax climate is making the region less competitive for many oil and gas producers. We feel that is unwise, given the amount of unemployment and the fact that revenue from the oil and gas industry last year had a very significant impact on Saskatchewan's budget-balancing exercise.

And, as the member from Thunder Creek said, \$200 million in land sales alone.

The industry is not primarily concerned with the province's royalty regime which was revamped significantly a year or so ago, he said. We haven't addressed the royalty question as much as we have the array of taxes (Mr. Speaker) which are not dependent on production, such as corporate capital tax, utility rates, and property rates, he said.

There would appear, in our estimation, to be more taxation events being lowered onto this particular industry than to others, said Mr. Manning.

There you have it, Mr. Speaker. Even the people the government thinks are their friends won't back them up. To reiterate, Mr. Speaker, the government's legions of expensive political assistants have done their best to paint Ralph Klein as some sort of Canadian Darth Vader. While the Premier and the Finance minister may want to try to hide behind ideology and rhetoric, they can't hide from the hard facts.

We have heard time and again from economists that the government's high tax policy costs jobs. The government doesn't deny this, and even their best figures show that the province has lost a thousand jobs since 1991. In the meantime, the Klein Conservative government has created 80,000 jobs in that same period of time.

New business incorporations in Alberta jumped 21 per cent in 1994, with a consequent rise in revenue from corporate income tax. Alberta's GDP (gross domestic product) has been over 3 per cent for the last two years. Here the government talks about a dramatic turnaround, but unless you are a bureaucrat you are not likely to notice any difference.

The NDP have institutionalized almost unbelievable high levels of taxation. And I have a list of them here: 10 per cent rise in income tax, 20 per cent rise in telephone rates, 17 per cent rise in the price of gasoline, 27 per cent increase in natural gas rates. Most astonishingly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a 29 per cent rise in the provincial sales tax from the man who campaigned on doing away with this tax — do away with the PST.

The Associate Minister of Finance says the balanced budget has been accomplished through the efforts of the hard work of Saskatchewan people. He is more correct, Mr. Deputy Speaker, than he cares to admit. The people have borne the brunt of this government's fiscal policies. There is hardly an NDP politician or bureaucrat in this province who has had to suffer in the slightest in order to balance the budget.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this House has spent enough time hashing over this government's paper-thin job creation policy. I believe it is time that we move into more substantive matters. With a provincial delegation on firearms regulations heading to Ottawa shortly, we must settle once and for all the stand this province will take.

And therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move:

That this Assembly move immediately to debate on Bill No. 31.

(1600)

The Deputy Speaker: — I find the motion is not in order. The member is the seconder for a motion that is currently before us, and therefore he is not eligible to move another motion at this time. That doesn't preclude any other member from moving such a motion. But at this point the debate continues then on the amendment by the member for Thunder Creek and seconded by the member for Morse.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it's certainly appropriate that the Assembly do take the time to address issues that are fairly pertinent, or not fairly pertinent but are of major concern to people of the province of Saskatchewan in view of the fact that the present Justice minister and some of my colleagues have been invited to attend a meeting in Ottawa in discussion and debating the whole issue of gun debate.

And I think it would be only appropriate that the Assembly would take the time to address a motion of a very serious nature that would just strengthen the resolve of this committee. And therefore, with leave, I move:

That this Assembly now move to debate on Bill No. 31.

The division bells rang from 4:06 p.m. until 4:16 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Swenson	Neudorf	Martens
D'Autremont	Toth	Britton

— 6

Nays

Thompson	Wiens	Lingenfelter
Anguish	Atkinson	Johnson
Trew	Kowalsky	Cunningham
Upshall	Bradley	Lorje
Teichrob	Pringle	Cline
Murray	Draper	Sonntag
Flavel	Roy	Scott
Stanger	Knezacek	Carlson
Keeping		

— 25

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an unintended pleasure of mine to rise today to speak to this particular motion. I'm prompted to rise to my feet with a combination of some good news and unfortunately to try and refute some statements made. Frankly, I'm disappointed. I thought the member from Thunder Creek and the member from Morse had more personal integrity than to say some of the things that they did.

I want to talk a little bit about the big untruth that the member for Thunder Creek was busy talking about. He spoke of the

1991 election promise that New Democrats made and that we fulfilled.

We promised, with respect to the E&H, the education and health tax, that we would not see it tied in to the GST. We promised that. What it resulted in is many services are no longer taxed under the what would have been the harmonized PST that the former government had brought in place; the legislation was there to take effect January 1.

You will recall that the election was October 20, and before that January 1 came along, we repealed that particular Act. We did not bring in the harmonized PST. That move itself, I feel very, very strongly about it because I can remember a great deal of discussion that went on in the then opposition caucus — a tremendous amount of discussion. And I don't think I'm even telling secrets because I think it's fairly widely known that that issue, of to harmonize or not to harmonize the PST, was the big question that we all wrestled with.

We wrestled long and hard because frankly, at the time, the former government was so unpopular it wasn't a question of do we need to promise not to harmonize to win the election; it was a question of the fundamental principles on which the CCF-(Co-operative Commonwealth Federation)NDP have been started: the principles of fairness; the principles of standing up for regular people; the principle of looking out for our neighbours and treating everyone with the same respect that we'd like to be treated with ourselves. Those are some of the guiding principles that went into the debate. The discussion that we had was one of . . . look, if we say we will deharmonize this PST, then we best do it — true to our tradition of making promises pre-election, and then fulfilling those promises in the course of the next term of government.

I'm delighted, Mr. Speaker, to say that we won the argument to deharmonize the provincial sales tax. That move has saved hundreds of millions of dollars from the pockets of some of the middle-class and lower middle-class people because a PST unfortunately, if it covers all goods and all services, attacks people with the lower disposable income much harder than it will attack people with a higher disposable income.

The question of fairness that the member for Thunder Creek kept coming back to . . . I'm delighted to say that we want everybody in the universe, not just Saskatchewan — although we'd be satisfied if everyone in Saskatchewan judged us on the principle of fairness — judged us on what we said we would do and what we have set about to accomplish doing and the manner in which we've done it. The whole question of fairness for the people of Saskatchewan is one where the New Democratic government will stand up very, very well. And I anticipate that people, whether they share my particular views or not, are going to, in all likelihood, have an opportunity to pass their judgement in the finest democratic tradition of our country and our province. And frankly I look forward to it.

It strikes me as rather odd that members of the opposition have a complete lack of enthusiasm for calling an election. When I was in opposition, for at least a year and a half, every time we made a statement in the Legislative Assembly, every single

question we asked, every single comment we made, ended with: when are you going to get the courage up and call an election? I've yet to hear that from opposition members.

So there's very good reason why we're talking about this economic state of our province, very good reason, and there's very, very good reason why members on this side are proud.

Saskatchewan . . . as was pointed out in the opposition speeches, if you were listening, as was pointed out, Saskatchewan led all of Canada in economic growth in each of the last two years. Well how is it then we can be going to heck or to Hades in a hand basket on the one hand, and on the other hand we're leading the entire nation in economic development?

Well perhaps, perhaps it's because, as members are so fond to point out, perhaps it's because agriculture has blossomed, has done very, very well, and that's absolutely true. Agriculture is the biggest industry in our province; that's an inescapable fact. Agriculture is doing very well.

But how does this stack up to 1992? I kind of remember the opposition saying that when we made some changes in the agricultural area — particularly I'm speaking of to GRIP — that that was going to be the final nail in the coffin for farmers, the final nail in the coffin.

Well I just remind all the members of the opposition, you can't have it both ways. We can't have driven, in 1992, the final nail into the coffin of all farmers and in 1994 have record income in agriculture. I mean we'll accept responsibility, but frankly we've had our share of good luck too. The big guy above is smiling at Saskatchewan, has blessed us with great crops. Commodity prices have been very good. We have helped work with farmers to move them into more value added product. And as a result of it, there's more jobs. There's more farm income.

So Mr. Speaker, you come back to the question of fairness. You come back to what works. We in Saskatchewan have a long history of knowing we have to go with what works in our province.

The member for Morse talked about the job situation. And that seems to me to be very directly tied to economic development. The member for Morse was making the case, as has the Leader of the Liberal Party, in the opening days of this legislature, 60-some days ago, made the argument that somehow or other we're hemorrhaging jobs. We're losing jobs.

And yet it flies in the face of what StatsCanada is reporting to us regularly. It flies in the face of things like there being 7,000 more jobs in February 1995 than there were in February 1994 — 7,000 more jobs, year over year. It flies in the face of the statistics with respect to young people, where we had . . . in 1992 we had 62,000 young people working; 1993, 63,000; 1994, 64,000. Modest gain, but it's a gain, it's a move in the proper direction.

Is it enough? Clearly it is not, clearly, not enough job growth. And that's why we've said we're going to be spending the next few years chasing job growth with the same diligence that we've

spent wrestling the Tory deficit. And we've wrestled that one pretty well to the ground.

As you know, we've delivered \$119 million surplus last year. And I know that the Tories will say, well you know, you've had all kinds of good luck. And that's absolutely true. New Democrats have had good luck.

But it seems to me that on every hockey team I ever played for, when we had the best luck was when we had the best team. We had the best luck when we worked harder than the other team. We had the best luck when we made our own luck.

And the people of Saskatchewan have done just that. The people of Saskatchewan have stuck with us, by and large, through some very trying times as our Saskatchewan went literally from the edge of a precipice over which, if we dropped over the edge of it . . . there was indeed some talk of the federal government having to step in, run the province for awhile. The speculation was, of course, that they would sell off some of our assets, thereby reducing the debt a little bit, hand it back to us, and say there you are — you run it.

Well we've stepped away from that precipice. We've stepped away from it in a very dramatic fashion, in such a dramatic fashion that Saskatchewan is in fact the first province in all of Canada to get a credit rating upgrade.

It's the first province to introduce a balanced budget. And it will be, at the end of this year, the first province to have two balanced, surplus budgets in a row. And at the end of next year, it'll be the only one to have three successive, balanced, surplus budgets. And we predict balanced, surplus budgets for the following two years out.

(1630)

We're committed to doing that. We're committed to the economic growth. We're committed to job creation. And we're now just getting through the worst of the having to clean up the former fiscal mess. We're through having to take care of the two upgraders that were hemorrhaging money. Both of them, frankly, were going to be millstones in perpetuity.

Both of them now have a reasonable expectation of making enough dollars to pay off the remaining debt and to maintain their equipment in a very good fashion. Both of them now will be contributing jobs and economic prosperity to Saskatchewan. Both of them, however, did take an influx of money, and there's no magic to an influx of money, Mr. Speaker.

As I am fond of saying to my constituents, you know there's no magic in this whole game. You elect an MLA from whatever party, whatever stripe you want, that MLA does not bring money out of their own pocket into the big pot. All MLAs that get elected are dealing from the public purse with respect to any monies that are spent by the province of Saskatchewan.

So there's no magic to it. The question is one of integrity. The question is one of the direction of the MLA, and the party, the government — who it is you think will best match your views.

That's what matters. Who's got the integrity, who's got the honesty, who deserves your trust? I think we stack up on all counts. I think we stack up very, very, very well.

And the question of Weyerhaeuser . . . I know the member for Thunder Creek brought up Weyerhaeuser. There's a well-known fact that the taxpayers of Saskatchewan had put in over \$150 million into Weyerhaeuser to build the fertilizer plant out at Belle Plaine. The bad news is we've got all that money tied up in it. The good news is, the fertilizer plant is running very, very well. And the other good news is that the fertilizer prices worldwide are very high, relatively speaking. Now that's good news for the Cargill fertilizer plant, of which taxpayers own 49 per cent. It's very good news that way.

But it's not such good news for farmers. And you ask any farmer that's buying a nitrogen-based fertilizer this year and if they want the choice between the prices of last fall or last spring versus the prices of fertilizer this spring, I absolutely guarantee they'd jump for the chance to buy fertilizer at last year's price.

But fertilizer being a commodity that is internationally traded, is selling . . . commanding a fairly high price right now. And that's good news for the fertilizer plant. The fertilizer plant will make money, as long as the fertilizer keeps selling.

But I want to contrast that \$150 million taxpayer money there for the creation of . . . name the number of jobs, but something less than 100 jobs at the fertilizer plant. We'll say 100 jobs. I don't want to get too hung up on that.

And I compare it to the Cargill crushing plant that is being . . . in the process of planning and will be built just outside of Saskatoon — the Cargill crushing plant that came to Saskatchewan in no small measure because of some changes we made to the provincial budget, introduced in the budget, this very budget that opposition members are stalling at every turn, seem to be determined not to have passed, this very budget that encourages the manufacture of product in Saskatchewan.

And it encourages the manufacture of Saskatchewan product, Mr. Speaker, by, when a manufacturer buys equipment or machinery to produce something in Saskatchewan, we do not charge that manufacturer the E&H (education and health) tax on that piece of equipment.

So we've got a crushing plant in Saskatoon worth roughly \$80 million, and for that we have to forgo in the neighbourhood of \$3 million in E&H tax. So worst-case scenario that you can make if you're trying to run up the costs to the provincial treasury for that crushing plant is \$3 million versus 149 million for a fertilizer plant by the former government.

I'll match a \$3 million . . . forgoing \$3 million worth of revenue to create over a hundred jobs to a direct grant of 150 million that the former government did to create the same magnitude of jobs, around a hundred jobs — 3 million versus 149 million by the former government.

Where do you think the big risk is? I don't think it's with \$3 million; 3 million is no real small peanuts, but it's certainly 50

times smaller than 150 million.

It was interesting, Mr. Speaker, to hear the members opposite speaking about oil. I was born in Saskatchewan and I've always known that there was oil here. We've always had a relatively active oil field. The oil patch goes up and down in its activity, but it's always been my experience that what caused the oil patch to go up and down the most was things like what the federal government does with respect to oil.

And the other thing that affects it is world price of oil. When we had in 1973-74 the OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil crisis, we saw a fair amount of activity in the Canadian oil patch, and certainly Saskatchewan was a beneficiary of that activity.

Was it a direct result of something that the provincial government did? By and large, no. By and large, it was the larger picture. Through the 1980s the oil industry in Alberta and in Saskatchewan enjoyed very, very prosperous years. In the main, by and large, because of things beyond the control of either of those two provincial governments, notwithstanding that all through the '80s we had the Alberta government, Conservative government, and the Saskatchewan Conservative government, falling all over themselves to see who could lower the oil royalties the fastest — falling all over themselves to collect as little revenue as they possibly could because they knew that if they gave up \$50 million, that would create two more jobs.

And I suppose it worked. I suppose it worked. It depends what measure you want to use. It seems to me that whatever success the former government had with its largess, with its spending a billion dollars a year more than it took in in revenue, I think that success is more than offset by the fact that this year we're going to spend taxpayers' money, \$850 million interest, on that debt that they ran up in nine and a half years — \$850 million.

I don't know how the member for Estevan or the member for Thunder Creek or the members . . . any of the members that were part of that former government, I honestly don't know how they can look themselves in the mirror and say yes, I'm proud of what we did; yes, I'm proud.

The third biggest provincial expenditure in my province is interest on the debt, and that's going to remain the third largest expenditure for a good long time into the future. Simply because we don't have the capacity to buy down the debt quickly enough to get that interest payment reduced quick enough.

Wouldn't it be wonderful, in a world of what-ifs . . . and I'm not going to dwell on that very long — but long enough to say that if we had at our disposal \$850 million a year, we could run a complete prescription drug plan, for example, to \$5 per person. We could run that plan on the \$850 million for five or six years, between five and six years, without doing anything to taxes. We could do astounding things. Anybody could.

Although you know, Mr. Speaker, I say anybody could do astounding things if they had that \$850 million a year. I'm not

so certain. Because I look at the record of the former government, elected in pretty good times — the oil industry was going gangbusters in Saskatchewan — they squandered it and more. They squandered the wealth of the province and they piled up this massive debt. This massive debt that the people of Saskatchewan are doing their very best, and we are all collectively, digging our way out from under it.

I am so pleased to be a part of the government that has focused on, first cleaning up the mess; first thing we had to do, clean up the mess. Second thing we had to do, get the fiscal situation under control. And I think we can argue that we've cleaned up the mess to a very large degree. There's always going to be some other little problem cropping up. As one of my friends and colleagues says, if it isn't one darned thing it's another darned thing coming at you all the time.

But I have noticed in the nearly four years that we've been in government, that in the first year it wasn't just one darned thing; it seemed like a whole avalanche of darned things coming at us from every direction. The second year that backed off a little bit. The third year it backed off a whole lot more, and finally we're to the stage where we are daring to dream about economic expansion. We're daring to dream about the future. We're daring to cause, for my province, for my constituents, for my relatives, for my friends, we're daring to cause that brighter future of the new day dawning.

We're daring in this year's budget, that the opposition refuses to pass, we're daring to, for the first time in some years, actually reduce income tax — a reduction, Mr. Speaker, of \$150 per taxpayer, \$150 per taxpayer per year. Is it enough of a reduction? No, absolutely not; it's not enough, but it's what we can afford.

And it fits with our plan, the Saskatchewan plan of taking all the future surpluses that we have on an annual basis and we will spend one-third on program enhancement and job creation, one-third on tax relief, and one-third direct to buying down that \$15 billion mortgage.

Through that, Mr. Speaker, we are going to be able to focus in a way like we've not seen before in Saskatchewan on economic development. We are going to be focusing on the future, the future for my children, for your children. I know that, Mr. Speaker, you have on occasion told stories of your son in here. But the future for all of our children — for all our children.

An Hon. Member: — That has nothing to do with economic development.

Mr. Trew: — And the member from Moosomin says, what's that got to do with economic development? Man, economic development is all about the future of our province and it's about the future for your children as well. Your kids didn't ask to be born into a Tory family; no kids ask to be born into any political family. The future of our province is all our children's, regardless of their political affiliation.

That's the future — that's what economic development's all about. That's what we've done in very meaningful ways. That's

why we've done some things with student summer jobs, no longer political appointees. As you would be very, very familiar with, that's how it used to be.

(1645)

Economic development, Mr. Member for Moosomin, is about the future of us all. What this government is about is about integrity for everyone. It's about opportunities throughout Saskatchewan. We've got jobs being created. We are saying the government promises to work as hard at creating jobs as it did to get the province's financial house in order.

And I want to tell you, I'm reading that out of one of our publications, our admittedly partisan publications. But I'm telling you, if we print it there we mean it, and we're going to go after jobs with the same diligence that we've gone after getting the financial house in order.

We have had the good fortune of seeing a bit of a turnaround — quite a turnaround — in agriculture. We're seeing the short line farm machinery sector expanding. In the past year there's been more than 2,000 additional jobs created in the manufacture primarily of short line agricultural equipment. That's 2,000 jobs — that's 2,000 jobs for Saskatchewan people.

We've got a service sector that's growing. We've got retail sales that grew at a rate of in excess of 9 per cent last year — retail sales growth that grew faster in Saskatchewan than any other province in Canada. And this is, to hear the member for Thunder Creek and the member for Morse, this is a province of doom and gloom?

Well I don't believe it — I don't believe it for a minute that this is a province of doom and gloom. Saskatchewan is the province of the future. We've got tremendous resources, starting with a super population that has got a history of willingness to work, a history of ability to learn very quickly, and an ability to make things work. Why? Because we've always had to rely on ourselves to a large extent right here in Saskatchewan.

As I am about to close, I just want to again say how pleased I am with the original motion from the member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster, the original motion commending the job of the government on economic development.

Needless to say I won't be supporting the amendment preferred by the opposition, those doomsayers, those naysayers, those people that are so deeply mired — not in the '80s, but mired in the 1930s — mired so far back that there's absolutely no hope for them. I'm obviously not going to be supporting that.

But I'm delighted to support this motion commending the Government of Saskatchewan on its economic development. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the debate be adjourned on this motion.

Debate adjourned.

May 2, 1995

The Assembly adjourned at 4:50 p.m.