

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Clerk: — I wish to inform the Assembly that His Honour the Lieutenant Governor's private secretary has informed me that His Honour will be opening the first session of the twenty-third legislature at 10 a.m. today, the 29th day of February 1996.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber at 10:01 a.m.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I am commanded by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor to inform you that he does not see fit to declare the causes of the summoning of the present legislature until later today when the Legislative Assembly shall have elected a Speaker according to law.

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 10:02 a.m.

Clerk: — Members of the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to the rules of this Assembly, it is my duty to call upon you to elect a member to preside over your deliberations as Speaker.

Pursuant to the rules specified under rule 26(1), the following members have declared their intention to stand as candidates for election to the office of Speaker.

The candidates are Mr. Glenn Hagel, the hon. member for Moose Jaw North.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Clerk: — Mr. Harry Van Mulligen, the hon. member for Regina Victoria.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Clerk: — In preparation for the vote, the Sergeant-at-Arms will now bring in the ballot box and the pages will distribute the list of candidates to all members and post the list in the polling booths.

The ballot box will then be inspected and the sealed ballots opened. And then I will announce the beginning of the voting procedure.

Members of the Assembly, I will now ask those members who wish to cast their ballot to proceed to the registration table behind the bar on your respective side of the House to receive your ballot paper, and there you will also sign a registration sheet. And then would you proceed to the polling booth following this path.

May I remind all members to please print the name of your candidate on the ballot paper. Please print. Thank you.

The members proceeded to cast ballots.

Clerk: — Order, please. Order, please. May I ask the House to come to order, please.

If there are any members who have not voted and wish to do so, will you please vote now.

All members having voted, the House will recess to the call of the bells while the Clerks at the Table count the ballots. The bells will ring for three minutes to recall members to the Chamber when the results of the first ballot are ready to be announced.

Thank you very much.

The Assembly recessed for a period of time.

Clerk: — Hon. members, before announcing the result of the ballot, I would like to invite you to acknowledge the contributions of the two candidates to this historical occasion, the first election of Speaker by secret ballot vote.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Clerk: — Members of the Legislative Assembly, it is my duty to inform you that you have elected Mr. Glenn Hagel, the hon. member for Moose Jaw North, as your Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members of the Legislative Assembly, I wish to express my grateful thanks and humble acknowledgement of the high honour the Assembly has been pleased to confer upon me. And while I leave the floor of this Assembly to take the Speaker's chair, I feel that I also leave all political partisan feelings in order that I may discharge with impartiality to all and to the best of my ability, the various and important duties pertaining to the high office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan. I feel honoured and humble.

And I would like to speak first of all to the hon. member from Regina Victoria, Harry Van Mulligen. I want to say thank you to you for your candidacy for this important office and to commend you on the way that you conducted your search for the office. You took the high road consistently as befitting the office and as befitting your reputation in this House and beyond. I think you bring honour to this office when someone of your calibre and your integrity seeks it, and I will always, always welcome your advice. And I join all of our colleagues, all of your colleagues here in the Assembly, in saying thank you for your commitment and your candidacy.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I've thought for some time, particularly recently, how do you describe this role. And I have to admit that the description that's come to my mind most frequently in recent times is this. You take the 58 most partisan political people in the entire province of Saskatchewan and you stick them in a room together, face to face. You select one and say you'll never be able to speak and we'll call you the Speaker. And then you throw him into a black robe and a funny hat and toss him into the middle and ask him to get everybody's respect

and keep order in the place. And I must admit it feels to be a bit of a challenge.

Hon. members, 10 years ago when I made my first speech in this Assembly, as 15 of you will in the next few days, I spoke about my grandmother who believed to the core of her being that government is a noble institution, and to serve in this Assembly, to be called to serve in this Assembly, is an honourable calling. And when I spoke 10 years ago I committed myself to serve my own constituents in a way that would make grandma feel proud.

My hon. colleagues, what I say to you today is that I pledge to you that as I carry out the duties of the office of Speaker and serve you in this Assembly, I pledge that I will do that in a way that will make grandma feel proud.

I think we all know that these are times in which there is cynicism. Saskatchewan doesn't have the market on cynicism; it's not just in Canada or North America. But there is cynicism about our institution and about ourselves, and to some degree even, unfortunately, about parliamentary democracy.

It is my intention in carrying out the responsibilities of this office that I will work hard to reduce that cynicism and to increase the trust and the respect that the people of Saskatchewan have for our institution and for all of us collectively. And it is my intention to play a more prominent role.

I think the Speaker has not only the opportunity but therefore the responsibility to play a more prominent, proactive role as a liaison between the Legislative Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan.

I think we all understand as well that the respect that people have for us and our institution is influenced by the way we conduct our affairs in this Assembly.

It seems to me that as we come to this Assembly as representatives of those who sent us, that it is always appropriate for us to come with reasoned debate; it is always appropriate for us to come with the humour in our hearts; and it is also always appropriate that we come to this Assembly with passion in our hearts.

It is extremely important that the fears and the anxieties and the hopes and the dreams and the aspirations of Saskatchewan people be reflected in this room. Heaven help us, heaven help us if it should ever be that the people of Saskatchewan lose trust and feel their passions are not reflected here.

I think all of us, or most of us, perhaps all of us in this room today, through good luck, nothing more complicated than good luck, happen to have been born into the most wonderful system of democracy in the world — one in which we choose to solve our differences and to solve problems, to resolve differences, by shooting words and not bullets.

Reasoned debate will always be acceptable; humour will always be acceptable; passionate debate will always be acceptable. But there is one thing that will never be acceptable, and that is if we

attack one another personally in this Chamber.

If we wish to heighten the respect for the institution and for ourselves collectively, then it begins with the way we conduct our affairs. And I ask all of you — and I know from talking with all of you over the weeks just gone by, that there is a collective political will here to heighten the trust and the respect for the institution, and I pledge to work with you to achieve that — we must always remember that no matter how passionate our debate, most importantly we must never ever lose respect for the institution and respect for one another.

It is my hope that when my term of office ends, that you will judge me to have been fair and to have been consistent and to have been accessible to you in the proceedings . . . regarding the concerns in the proceedings of this House.

My hon. colleagues, I conclude by saying to you again that I commit myself to do the very best I can to carry out the duties of this important office and to be your servant in this Assembly; and most importantly ultimately, therefore, in service of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, hon. members, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the government members of the Legislative Assembly, it is my distinct pleasure and desirable duty to congratulate you, sir, on the election and elevation to this very important high office as Speaker of the Assembly.

As has been pointed out by our distinguished Clerk of the Table, we had a very difficult choice to make this morning between two very competent individuals who have served this Assembly with distinction. They're not the only ones. I'm sure the new members will prove their capacity to serve in the public interest as the elected Speaker and the member from Regina who was unsuccessful. But these two people indeed have a track record of proven commitment to public service and it was a tough choice to make, very tough choice for all of us to make.

I think at the end of the day, although, Mr. Speaker, this is your morning and your day in a sense — and I again repeat my congratulations — the way I see it, the big victor in all of this is this great institution and the democratic process.

When it was my pleasure to assume office as Premier of the government in 1991, I thought that I carried with it the prerogative and the prerequisite of appointing the Speaker. That's the way it happened in the good old days when I first entered the Legislative Assembly. And when all of a sudden through the supplications of some hon. members on the opposite side and on this side, we instituted the reform of election and today's culmination of it, a true election, a contested election, and a tough decision to make, I have concluded that the old ways of doing were wrong and inappropriate.

This really does give you, sir, a high level of independence, the

respect of the Assembly, because you have received the democratic vote of the members of the Assembly. And the winner, the victor, is democracy in this Assembly, and I think we should all be very proud of that.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, sir, and as members of the House will know, you have a number of important functions to fulfil. There are of course the ceremonial functions, because you represent all of us on many occasions both at home and abroad and nationally. There is of course the day-to-day problems of maintaining the rules and the orders. Enjoy the unanimity, sir, if I may say so with respect, today. Because from here on in I'm sure it will be difficult, as you understand, making sure that there is honest debate and fair debate. It's a very, very difficult task.

I think it's the Book of Luke that tells us upon whomsoever much is given, of him much is also required or expected, roughly translated. The good Book of Luke says that. Well you've been given a tremendous responsibility and opportunity.

In addition to knowing the rule book, you probably need to know the good Book in order to make sure that your functions are performed the way that I think that you can perform them.

Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that you'll do the job. Again on behalf of all of us on this side, I congratulate you. I know that you'll perform your duties with integrity, fairness, and compassion — the very values which have guided your career in this Legislative Assembly to date.

Again, congratulations. May your wisdom and principles guide us in the important service to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hon. members, ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed an honour that my first act in this House as Leader of the Official Opposition is to congratulate you on your election as Speaker of this Assembly. And I echo what the Premier had to say, probably for the last time in this legislature.

On behalf of all of my colleagues on the official opposition benches, Mr. Speaker, I want to wish you nothing but good luck in your new role. And yours, sir, is a daunting task — a task that must be approached with wisdom, fairness, and dedication.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that you possess all these qualities, and I wish you nothing but well wishes in this coming session of the Legislative Assembly.

I'm told there are times that not everyone in this House will agree with your rulings. There are times, I am told, those who have come before — before me and before us — that we may bitterly disagree with the rulings of the Chair.

But, Mr. Speaker, at no time will members from this opposition bench show you as Speaker, anything less than the full order of respect you so deserve in taking on this very important role.

Once again, sir, my congratulations on behalf of the official opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, hon. members, ladies and gentlemen, on this historic occasion I too on behalf of the Conservative opposition would like to congratulate you in your election as Speaker of this Assembly.

We too would also offer our thanks to the hon. member for Regina Victoria, Mr. Harry Van Mulligen, for the service of putting his name forward. We appreciate that and certainly feel that he has served this province in a very good and exemplary fashion over the last number of years. And we thank him for his dedication to this Assembly.

The Speaker has always had a very important role in parliamentary democracies, as you know, Mr. Speaker. Always democratic; always consistent; always fair; always reasonable; always unbiased. Never to miss a member on their feet at any given time. Never to miss the spoken work.

Mr. Speaker, the role of Speaker reminds me a little bit of a hockey game. After the game is over, if the referee has done a good job, no one remembers who the referee was. However, Mr. Speaker, if the ref hasn't done a very good job, it isn't very long before you start hearing the catcalls — kill the ref; kill the ref.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when your term is over, we sincerely hope that we can put you in the first category, that is, not remembering who you are.

Thank you very kindly, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations, Glenn. Congratulations and best wishes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — One may have sensed a slight deterioration in the atmosphere here already and we haven't started.

Before moving adjournment, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add my congratulations to those of the others. I want to congratulate both you and the member from Regina Victoria on the way you conducted yourself. I think this whole process has brought honour to this Assembly and I think there's no doubt but that this institution emerges a stronger and better institution for the election that just took place.

With that, I'd like to move this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The motion is not in order. We might as well start right now. And I simply declare that the House will now recess until 2 p.m. this day when His Honour the Lieutenant Governor will present the Speech from the Throne.

The Assembly recessed until 2 p.m.

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber at 2:02 p.m.

The Speaker: — May it please Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly has elected me as their Speaker, although I am but little able to fulfil the important duties thus assigned to me.

If, in the performance of those duties, I should at any time fall into error I pray that the fault may be imputed to me and not to the Assembly, whose servant I am, and who, through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duty to their Queen and country, humbly claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they may have freedom of speech in their debates, access to your person at all seasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from you the most favourable consideration.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, I am commanded by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor to declare to you that he freely confides in the duty and attachment of the Assembly to Her Majesty's person and government, and, not doubting that their proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temper and prudence, he grants, and upon all occasions will recognize and allow, their constitutional privileges.

I am commanded also to assure you that the Assembly shall have ready access to His Honour upon all seasonable occasions and that their proceedings, as well as your words and actions, will constantly receive from him the most favourable construction.

2:06 p.m.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor was then pleased to open the session with the following speech as tabled:

Mr. Speaker,

Members of the Legislative Assembly:

A RENEWED MANDATE

Welcome to the 1st Session of the 23rd Legislature. It is a particular pleasure to welcome those of you who are sitting as elected Members for the first time.

Election to public office is one of society's most honourable callings. The people of our province have placed a tremendous trust in each of you. I know you will do your utmost to maintain that trust.

My government accepts a renewed mandate from the people of Saskatchewan with enthusiasm.

Our province has restored its financial health.

Our economy is strong and growing.

Saskatchewan today is the best place in the world in which to live and raise a family.

The 21st century holds the promise of even greater things to come. Now is the time to prepare for that new century; to seize the moment with the plans, policies and reforms required to build a better and more prosperous future for all.

During my government's public consultation, **Preparing for the New Century — Making Choices for Today and Tomorrow**, people made clear their determination to work together to build that better future.

The people of our province have urged this Assembly to tackle a number of important challenges. My ministers agree. In the coming months, my government will:

- focus on jobs and growth, with the same determination it used to balance the budget;
- propose wide-ranging reforms to our education and training programs;
- put forward a fundamental redesign of social assistance;
- move to the next stage of health renewal, with proposals to improve the way health services are provided to people; and,
- restructure government at every level to reduce the cost of administration; freeing up money for the vital public services our citizens want.

JOB CREATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

My government's first priority is jobs and growth.

Saskatchewan people achieved a billion-dollar turn-around in the public finances of our province, by working together on a balanced budget plan and sticking to it.

Similarly, we can achieve the goal of a diversified, export-oriented, full employment economy, by working together to craft a long-term plan, and advancing it one step at a time.

My government recently released its new economic development strategy - **Partnership for Growth**. It flows from consultations with business, working people, co-operatives and communities across the province.

Partnership for Growth commits my government to continue to improve the climate for job creation and economic development.

My ministers will present this Assembly with a four-year financial plan that will ensure balanced budgets, and further reduction in public debt over the life of this legislature. Prudent management of public finances will help maintain consumer and business confidence.

My government will also deliver on its commitment to reduce

the regulatory and administrative burden on business. It will present a plan to review all government regulations; a plan which will reduce the regulatory burden by at least twenty-five per cent over the next ten years.

Trade is a key component of my government's economic development strategy. One third of Saskatchewan jobs are export-related, and we export more than half of what we produce.

My ministers will establish the **Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership** – STEP – an industry-government partnership to provide local business with:

- research about new market opportunities;
- techniques for developing new markets;
- information on existing and potential markets; and,
- export financing.

My government will continue its strong commitment to community-based economic development, co-operative enterprise and small business.

Saskatchewan's network of more than a dozen **Regional Economic Development Authorities** will double over the next four years. These community-based organizations will become the focal point for economic development in their regions, as they deliver more support programs for business.

My ministers are determined to foster growth in our vibrant co-operative sector by supporting new co-operatives, promoting strategic alliances among existing co-operatives, and supporting their diversification through full and equal access to government programs and services.

My government is also determined to encourage the rapid expansion of Saskatchewan's small business sector – our number one source of new jobs. During this session, you will be presented with proposals which will continue to target incentives for local businesses that create new jobs and opportunities.

Saskatchewan's public companies, our crown corporations, have played an important role in the growth of our economy. My government is committed to a strong and dynamic role for crown corporations in a prosperous, mixed economy.

My ministers have therefore launched a comprehensive review of the crown sector, to ensure that public enterprise will continue to play a positive role in a new, deregulated global marketplace.

Agriculture remains the foundation of Saskatchewan's export economy, and a source of optimism for the future. In recent years, farm incomes have risen steadily as our producers have diversified.

My government, in partnership with the federal government, will support this positive trend by making more than

two-hundred million dollars available over the next four years through the **Agri-Food Innovation, Agriculture Development and Agri-Food Equity** funds, which encourage research, development and diversification in agriculture. This represents a huge investment in the future of agriculture.

New products and new markets have already prompted the dramatic expansion of agricultural biotechnology in our province. Saskatchewan has become a centre of excellence for this industry. This June, Saskatchewan will make that point to a global audience when we host the International Agriculture Biotechnology Conference in Saskatoon.

We must remain alert to the importance of managing the risks in agriculture. The farm safety net now in place is only a step towards a long-term national package. My government will work to achieve a strong national safety net, and will fight to maintain national standards and appropriate levels of funding.

Crop insurance will always be a cornerstone of the agricultural safety net. My government will submit *The Crop Insurance Amendment Act* for your consideration, to provide more flexibility in this important program.

My ministers understand that major pressures continue to concern agriculture. Deregulation of rail transportation, the increasing influence of international trade agreements, and the debate over marketing institutions are all serious issues. My government is committed to protecting the policies and institutions that serve best the interests of our producers, while working with the industry to adapt to change.

The forestry and mining industries are key engines of growth, both in today's economy and in the economy we are building for the new century.

My government will propose a new framework for development of our forestry industry. *The Forest Resources Management Act* will clarify, update and strengthen the rules by which we develop and conserve forest resources.

My ministers remain committed to carefully-regulated growth in our northern mining industry, and determined that jobs and business opportunities will flow to northern residents from that development.

The award-winning **Multi-Party Training Plan** has made major strides in increasing the participation of northerners in the mining workforce. Last year, nearly 50 per cent of mine site employees were northerners. That compares to less than 40 per cent five years ago.

My government will also work with First Nations and Metis to continue to promote and foster greater self-sufficiency, and new economic opportunities.

My ministers believe that promoting consumer confidence in our domestic market can make an important contribution to economic development. That is why my government will present for your consideration a new *Consumer Protection Act* and *The Direct Sellers Amendment Act*.

The Consumer Protection Act updates and codifies a number of laws governing the marketplace, balances consumer and business interests and promotes protection for vulnerable consumers. *The Direct Sellers Amendment Act* will improve consumer protection and benefit business through the interprovincial harmonization of certain rules governing this industry.

WORKING TOWARDS FULL EMPLOYABILITY

Ensuring that Saskatchewan people are fully employable is one of the best ways our province can promote job creation and economic development.

For many years the federal government has been the senior partner in delivering workforce training in Saskatchewan. The federal government has announced that it is largely withdrawing from this area.

To respond to this challenge, and to work on a made-in-Saskatchewan workforce training strategy, my government has organized a new Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Department.

It will be the task of this department to assess the programs and institutions devoted to workforce training, and to craft a coherent and effective network, focused on student needs. My government will work closely with business, labour, students and educators to improve the links between industry and training.

Our post-secondary educational institutions are central to both our economy and our society. To ensure they can continue to make their contribution in the years ahead, my government will encourage colleges and universities to share more information and resources, and to reduce the cost of administration by reducing duplication and overlap.

In support of this work, you will be presented with several bills related to training and education.

The Education Amendment Act will clarify and improve certain rules governing the teaching profession. *The University of Regina Amendment Act* and *The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Amendment Act* will modernize certain outdated provisions governing these institutions.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS THAT WORK

Saskatchewan has one of the lowest dependency rates in Canada. That is, fewer of our fellow citizens rely on social programs to meet basic needs than in most other provinces.

However, my ministers, like most Saskatchewan people, believe there is still room for improvement. Traditional income support programs do an inadequate job of helping employable recipients achieve independence and self-sufficiency, and they are not adequately addressing critical needs like child poverty.

Over the next two years, my government will work to redesign social assistance, replacing traditional welfare as we know it.

Proposals to achieve this goal have been outlined in a discussion paper entitled **Redesigning Social Assistance**.

Our current system is failing children. Child poverty is poverty in its most tragic form. Investing in children is critical to breaking the cycle of poverty and dependence. That is why a key element of my government's social assistance reform will be a new **Saskatchewan Child Benefit** and a **Working Income Supplement**.

These initiatives for low-income families with children will reduce child poverty, and make work pay for families receiving assistance. They will also provide these families with supplementary health coverage for children, so they will not have to turn to social assistance as a result of health-related expenses for their children.

My government's social assistance redesign will help more families to become independent of social assistance; will help youth to avoid becoming trapped in poverty; will allow people involved in training programs to more easily move off social assistance; and will ensure that only those who truly need assistance receive it.

To further assist children, my government will introduce *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act*. This act will substantially improve the ability of custodial parents to get help in collecting child support.

My government will launch a Task Force on Family-friendly Work to bring employers, employees and other stakeholders to a common table to discuss how work practices can be modernized to help parents better meet family and workplace responsibilities.

Our province's families have the right to live in safe communities. My government will propose reforms to the justice system designed to:

- make offenders, including young offenders, more accountable for the impact of their actions on their victims and their community;
- toughen the formal justice system where necessary to ensure that citizens are protected from chronic and violent offenders; and,
- find new and more effective ways of dealing with non-dangerous offenders.

Too many people have lost a family member or a friend in accidents caused by a drinking driver. My government will introduce *The Highway and Vehicle Statutes Amendment Act* to address this issue. The measures proposed will substantially toughen sanctions against drinking drivers; provide avenues for rehabilitation; and introduce new rules governing new drivers.

A SUSTAINABLE, EFFECTIVE HEALTH SYSTEM

Saskatchewan people are firmly committed to universal, accessible, publicly-funded health care. The health reforms of recent years, placing control of health in local hands and

focusing more on people's real needs, have gone a great distance towards making our health system sustainable for today and into the new century.

Our province must now move to the next stage of health renewal - improving the way the health system delivers services to people.

That means making better use of nurses, therapists and counsellors in delivering health services; considering alternative ways to reimburse family physicians; and ensuring all health practitioners work together as part of a coordinated team.

In this session, my government will introduce *The Pharmacy Act*, *The Optometry and Ophthalmic Dispensers Professions Amendment Act*, and *The Radiation Health and Safety Amendment Act*. This legislation will improve the framework governing a number of health professions.

For many years the federal government has been the senior partner in ensuring that health services are universal, accessible, and comprehensive across Canada - building on the Medicare model pioneered in this province.

The federal government has announced that it is changing the federal transfer payment system for health services. The new federal approach threatens to lead to a two-tier health care system.

My government will not permit federal policy to lead to such a system here in Saskatchewan. Therefore, you will be presented with *The Health Facilities Licensing Act*, which will permit our province to better manage the development of private sector health facilities, and prevent the development of a two-tier health system.

FRUGAL, EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Saskatchewan already has the leanest, most frugal provincial government in Canada. However, the people of our province have urged my ministers to do more. They expect this Assembly to continue to search for ways to shift limited financial resources, from administration and lower priority infrastructure, to the delivery of vital services for people.

At the provincial level, my government will propose measures in the budget which will leave citizens in no doubt of its determination to achieve greater frugality and efficiency, and to shift resources to where they can best serve people.

At the local level, we have a higher proportion of local government than any other province in Canada. Our province has 847 urban and rural governments and 119 school boards, all with elected and appointed officials and the authority to set and collect taxes.

The new challenges these local governments face make locally-driven, effective restructuring essential. No one knows that better than the people who manage our municipalities, schools and other local services. They are already co-operating to strengthen local government, and to arrive at a sustainable level of service for the future.

At the request of urban, rural and northern municipalities, you will be asked to consider a number of bills allowing communities to modernize local taxation and assessments. These proposals - developed in close consultation with municipal governments and others - will give communities the tools they need to prepare for the future.

To improve medical, police and other emergency services, my government will introduce *The 911 Emergency Services Act*, and will work with municipalities, police and fire services, health providers, and others to get province-wide 911 service up and running as soon as possible.

At the federal level, the recent referendum in Quebec and the continued uncertainty about the future of our country may provide an opportunity to modernize and improve our federation as a whole. My government will work within its means to help shape that new federation.

A carefully balanced reform should be our goal - guaranteeing the legal and social rights of Canadian citizenship; reinforcing the federal government's ability to carry out its roles and responsibilities; and reinforcing the ability of all provinces to manage their own roles and responsibilities without wasteful overlap, duplication or jurisdictional conflict.

The people of Saskatchewan have many hopes and dreams they can only achieve in partnership with other Canadians. That is why Saskatchewan's commitment is to a strong, united Canada.

CONCLUSION

It has always been a matter of pride to the people of Saskatchewan that this province has one of the highest rates of voluntarism in Canada. Last year this Assembly established the **Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal**, and a few weeks ago it was my privilege to announce the first recipients. I look forward to presenting the Medal to these six outstanding citizens in this Chamber early in the session.

In conclusion, the agenda my government presents today sets a course for the new century, and outlines the first steps we can take to get there. It is an agenda of:

- jobs and growth;
- reform for our education and training programs;
- fundamental redesign of social assistance;
- improved health services; and,
- reduced government costs.

This agenda is consistent with the values and priorities of our citizens.

It is built on the strong foundation of the return to fiscal responsibility achieved during the term of the previous Legislature.

We have tough challenges to overcome as a province, but we

also enjoy the prospect of remarkable opportunities as we prepare, together, for the new century.

The Public Accounts for the last fiscal year, together with the estimates for the year beginning April 1st, 1996 will be submitted. I leave you now to the business of the session, with full confidence that you will favourably discharge your duties and responsibilities. May Divine Providence continue to bless our province and guide this Legislature in all its deliberations.

God save the Queen.

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 2:26 p.m.

Prayers

ANNOUNCEMENT

Notice from the Chief Electoral Officer

The Speaker: — I wish to inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the Chief Electoral Officer lists of the names of such members as have been returned to serve in the legislature.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Pro Forma Bill

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that a Bill respecting the administration of oaths of office be now introduced and read the first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill read a first time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Sergeant-at-Arms

The Speaker: — I would like to introduce to the Assembly our new Sergeant-at-Arms, Patrick Shaw.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Introduction of Pages

The Speaker: — I wish also to inform the Assembly that the pages have been chosen for this session and I'll ask them to stand as I introduce them to you: Jocelyn Arthur, Ken Dueck, Leanna Eaton, Mark Lloyd, and Leasa McDougall. Your pages for this session.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

TABLING THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

The Speaker: — I wish to inform the Assembly that in order to prevent mistakes I have obtained a copy of the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor which I now lay on the Table.

MOTIONS

Speech from the Throne

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier by leave of the Assembly:

That the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor be taken into consideration on Friday, March 1, 1996.

Motion agreed to.

Printing of *Votes and Proceedings* of the Assembly

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded again by the deputy Premier by leave of the Assembly:

That the *Votes and Proceedings* of this Assembly be printed after first having been perused by Mr. Speaker, that he do appoint the printing thereof, and that no person but such as he shall appoint do presume to print the same.

Motion agreed to.

Members to Compose Lists for Standing Committees

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly I move, seconded again by the Deputy Premier.

That members Bradley, Lingenfelter, Shillington, Krawetz, Toth be constituted a special committee to prepare and report, with all convenient speed, lists of members to compose the standing committees of this Assembly, provided under Rule 94:

That the said standing committees be severally empowered to examine and inquire into all such matters and things as may be referred to them by this Assembly, and to report from time to time their observations thereon; with power to send for persons, papers and records, and to examine witnesses under oath.

That the said special committee consider the size of the standing committees and to report thereon with all convenient speed.

Motion agreed to.

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

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today pursuant to rule 46 to discuss a matter of urgent and pressing necessity.

The Speaker: — I'd ask the Leader of the Third Party to briefly explain why the matter is urgent and to advise the House of the contents of his motion.

MOTION UNDER RULE 46

Gross Revenue Insurance Program Overpayment Deadline

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would be my preference not to bring in an emergency motion with all of the guests present here today to partake in the throne speech activities. However, it is imperative that this issue be discussed

today because today is February 29, a very important deadline for 12,000 Saskatchewan farmers. Today is the day these producers must pay the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) bills they received from the provincial government. Tomorrow the government will start to charge interest on any bills which have not been paid.

Mr. Speaker, forcing producers to repay funds received through the GRIP program as a result of the provincial government retroactively changing 60,000 contracts is both unacceptable and unethical. The Premier and his cabinet colleagues promised on several occasions that farmers would not have to repay this money. In fact last year in the Assembly the Agriculture minister stated:

No we will not be collecting the \$115 million overpayment from farmers. If we do collect it, then we'll be legally obligated to mail it back to them.

Hansard, March 31, 1995.

Mr. Speaker, on June 3 the *Leader-Post* quotes the Agriculture minister as saying:

Farmers will never . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I will ask the Leader of the Third Party to proceed to advise the Assembly of the content of his motion.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the motion is such that farmers believe and we believe in the third party that this matter is of urgent necessity and should be discussed here today and I would move the motion, an emergency motion pursuant to rule 46, to discuss this matter.

Leave not granted.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I move this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — Before putting the question on the adjournment motion I have a few announcements to make.

I would like to first of all thank the Military Guard of Honour from 15 Wing Moose Jaw and the base band for participating in this afternoon's events.

I would like to thank all the guests and members of the public, including the grade 11 and 12 students from Imperial, Saskatchewan and the grade 10, 11, and 12 students from Charlebois School in Cumberland House who have joined us today.

I had opportunity to meet with the students earlier today and welcome very much the significance and the symbolism of

having some of the youth of our province here for this very important day.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I want to welcome the choir from Luther College in Regina. I will be calling on them to sing for us immediately following the adjournment.

Following the choir selections I would like to invite everyone to join their Honours, the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Third Party, and members of the Legislative Assembly at the Speaker's tea which will take place immediately following the Chamber ceremony. The tea will be in two locations — room 218 in the west wing and the Legislative Library in the east wing.

It has been moved by the Premier that this House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — I would now like to introduce the students of the Luther College Choir. The choir is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year. They have developed a reputation for being one of the finest high school choirs in all of Canada. The choir has received many honours and prizes over the years and indeed in the past six years, they have received top honours in the provincial finals of the Saskatchewan Music Festival three times.

The Luther College Choir has been under the direction of Dr. Carl Cherland for the last 20 years and I now invite them to perform under his direction. The choir will sing two selections for us this afternoon — "Arise, Shine For Your Light Has Come" and "Bridge Over Troubled Waters".

(The choir sang.)

The Speaker: — On behalf of all here present to the choir from Luther College and Dr. Cherland I want to thank you for those two very fine selections just wonderfully performed. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It will be your pleasure to be able to hear the choir a little later. They will be performing again in the rotunda following the departure from the Chamber. We hope you will stop and listen to them on your way to and during the tea.

The Assembly adjourned at 2:45 p.m.