

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from the community of Lampman. I so present.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present today:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

These petitions come from my constituency, Mr. Speaker, the town of Lampman.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present to this Assembly. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find out all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

And this petition is signed by individuals from the Arcola, Manor, Kisbey, and Carlyle area.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

The communities involved, Mr. Speaker, are Wawota, Kisbey,

Estevan, and Arcola.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition, and I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that you Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

And these come from the good people in Redvers, Alida, Carievale, Gainsborough.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake's fiasco.

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from Bienfait, Estevan, and Arcola.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present today:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The people that have signed this petition are from Oxbow, Arcola, and Kisbey.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I as well have a petition this afternoon to present on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan. The petition is surrounding the whole Jack Messer, Channel Lake situation, and I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

The petitioners come from the areas of Arcola, Carlyle, and Kenossee Lake, Mr. Speaker, and I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present a petition also on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

And the signatures on this petition are primarily from the Coronach area. Mr. Speaker, I so present.

**Mr. Hillson:** — Mr. Speaker, I also present petitions concerning the Plains Health Centre.

Your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains hospital by enacting legislation to prevent its closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

Your petitioners come from Glenbain, Estevan, and Bienfait. I so present.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also bring forward petitions regarding the Plains hospital. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains hospital by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

The people who have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the Swift Current, Stuart Valley, Success areas. I so present.

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present petitions on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens concerned about the closure, or imminent closure, of the Plains hospital. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

I so present.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to present a petition. The prayers reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Gravelbourg, they are from Woodrow, they are from

Hodgeville, and they are from all throughout the land. And I so present.

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today too to present a petition on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains hospital may be continued.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks out at Coronach and Bengough.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy today to present the following petition:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reach necessary agreements with other levels of government to fund the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway in Saskatchewan so that work can begin in 1998, and to set out a time frame for the ultimate completion of the project with or without federal assistance.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these all come from the community of Fox Valley in my constituency, and I'm happy to present them today.

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Clerk:** — According to order, four petitions regarding the Public Accounts Committee presented on March 25 have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to demand the chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee call a meeting to enquire into Channel Lake; of citizens petitioning the Assembly regarding the funding of the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway; and petitions regarding cancelling of severance payments to Jack Messer and an independent inquiry into Channel Lake.

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 19 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: how many farmers in Saskatchewan are presently ruled not eligible to participate in the Canada-Saskatchewan crop insurance program; how many of these farmers are ruled ineligible as a result of negotiated settlements resulting from the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) wind-up; does the statute of limitations now apply on outstanding GRIP accounts; how

many farmers have not settled the repayment in the GRIP program as required by Crop Insurance; and how many farmers are eligible to carry crop insurance?

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce two gentlemen to you and to the members of the House, seated in your gallery — two individuals from the constituency of Wood River. I'd liked to introduce Yogi Huyghebaert and Murray Cheesman. Yogi of course is a candidate for the leadership of the Saskatchewan Party. Please welcome these two gentlemen.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, while I obviously respect the great contribution that Mr. Huyghebaert has performed for Canadians in the military and the like, I'm not going to introduce him. I think he even must be getting tired of being introduced so many times in the House.

Rather, Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to introduce two others who have travelled some distance to be here with you today in your gallery. And I'd ask them to stand as I introduce them.

Marion Schultz has travelled from Saskatoon, which isn't all that far but still fairly far — welcome, Ms. Schultz — with her niece, Maria Bettina Bonuccelli, who has travelled really indeed a long distance, from Argentina. Maria is in Saskatchewan to learn English at the University of Saskatchewan. She's a graduate of political science, and she's here today to observe our Assembly and the government in action.

I must say that I visited Argentina with the Prime Minister's Team Canada trip a few months ago, a few weeks ago now. It's a very beautiful country, a growing economy, and a warm, generous, gracious people.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to extend warm greetings to Ms. Schultz, and in particular, to Ms. Bonuccelli and wish her well in her studies. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with other members here today in welcoming Yogi and Murray to the House. It's great to have them here to watch the proceedings and view the caucus that he would like to be part of for the short time that they are going to be here with us, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I just want to follow up on the introduction of the Premier of Ms. Schultz and Ms. Bonuccelli. I had the pleasure of spending a half an hour with them just before the House convened today. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that she already has a great command of the English language, so the improvement that will take place at the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) is not going to be that

marked.

She is a very interested, very intelligent, young woman and was anxious to learn about political life in Saskatchewan. I, of course, was able to brief her on it in my usual non-partisan manner and I do appreciate the members welcoming her here today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce three business people who are seated today in the west gallery. First of all, I want to introduce Terry Kuzma, who is the woodlands manager of Carriere Lumber from Prince George, B.C. (British Columbia). Carriere Lumber have been very active in our northern forests, salvaging the wood after the big fire, over the last three winters.

With him is Mark Hislop, owner, manager, and CEO (chief executive officer) of a small business in Prince Albert — CLIO communications. And with them is another business person, the owner of a Buns Master, Don Cody, who is also better known in the city of Prince Albert as our mayor, and who is probably even better known to the legislators here as a former MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for Kinistino. And I welcome them all here to the legislature today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### Strength of the Saskatchewan Economy

**Mr. Kasperski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the budget which the opposition refuses to debate is about jobs. I have risen here today to give the Assembly yet another example of the strength of Saskatchewan's economy.

Robert Cameron of New Brunswick and Richard Dunbar of Nova Scotia have recently come to Saskatoon after being named the final selections from over 100 applicants to work at the Hitachi plant. Cameron and Dunbar are both skilled steel workers. Joe Vidal, general manager of Hitachi, explained that there is a shortage of skilled workers in the booming industrial sector of the province right now.

He predicts this will be somewhat alleviated as the Alberta oil industry slows down and workers from Alberta migrate to Saskatchewan to find employment. Dunbar and Cameron are both excited by the prospect of having stable, well-paying jobs, Mr. Speaker. This shouldn't be difficult as, in its nearly 10 years of operation, Hitachi of Saskatoon has never laid off a worker.

I also heard on the radio this morning, Mr. Speaker, that the telephone company in Manitoba is laying off more of its staff as it cuts costs. The union that represents the workers say some may find employment here in Saskatchewan with SaskTel.

Mr. Speaker, people are moving to this province from across the country in order to find stable, well-paying jobs. That's why workers from across the country are coming to Saskatchewan, because we have low unemployment and a good quality of life.

No wonder, Mr. Speaker, the opposition does not want to debate the budget.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Public Accounts Meeting Scheduled

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, the official opposition has been calling for a public inquiry into the NDP's (New Democratic Party) mismanagement of Channel Lake. Although our call for a public inquiry is supported by the vast majority of Saskatchewan people, it has been resisted at every turn by the NDP and their puppets in the Liberal opposition.

Yesterday the NDP played another procedural game to avoid a full public inquiry. It is now clear that the NDP has no interest in getting to the bottom of this matter through a public inquiry so we have to go to the second best option, the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I'm tabling letters calling for a Public Accounts Committee to be convened this Monday, March 30, at 9 a.m. On March 18 the Premier made the following commitment to this House. He said: subpoena anybody that you think is relevant at Public Accounts. We have given our assurance they will be honoured. We say the people will be allowed to be questioned. Documents, as appropriate and where available, will be there.

In response to the Premier's commitment, I have taken the liberty of attaching a list of over 60 witnesses and hundreds of documents that we would like to call before the committee. The list includes the Premier and the Deputy Premier. We are calling for the investigation to have a broad mandate.

In addition to Channel Lake, it should consider the termination and subsequent severance to Jack Messer, and we are also calling for all evidence gathered to be turned over to the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) for criminal investigations, and to an independent lawyer to determine where the lawsuits are warranted.

I look forward to seeing all of my committee colleagues on Monday morning.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Children's Television Series to be Made in Saskatchewan

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tuesday evening the Minister of Municipal Government and the Minister of Post-Secondary Education, the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, and I, attended the filming of the "Maximum Dimension" and the reception to honour that filming, sir. This educational series heightens the viewers' interest in science and math through the extraordinary talent of Max Maven, and he's joined by an emerging Saskatchewan actor, Chris Ross.

Congratulations were given to Stephen Onda of Heartland Motion Pictures and Annabel Slaight of Owl/SDA Productions on their partnership to produce a quality children's series for television that can be enjoyed by both young and the young at

heart.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the progress of our film and video industry. It's very satisfying to see a Saskatchewan company team up with one of the country's leading film companies in this joint venture.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order. Order. I will ask the cooperation of the House. The Chair is unable to hear the hon. member from Wascana making the members' statement. And I would ask for the cooperation of the House to enable her to be heard.

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have confidence in the future of our film and video industry in Saskatchewan, identified as a strategic sector of our economy. That is why in our recent budget, which the members opposite are refusing to debate, we have introduced a film employment tax credit to assist industry development.

We already knew that the film and video industry was the fastest growing industry in Saskatchewan. The launching of the "Maximum Dimension" demonstrates how competitive Saskatchewan really is. With our new tax credit we'll be even more able to compete.

Congratulations to all involved in this fine program and production.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Photo Radar

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A little on the lighter side, I'd like to talk on the issue of photo radar. This government says they are hesitant about introducing it. Well quite frankly, people don't buy it.

The NDP said they were reluctant about VLTs (video lottery terminal). Now we have VLTs in every corner of the province. They said no bed closures, but every day we hear of more beds being shut. But of course the famous trust-me line of all was Conservative Prime Minister Robert Borden promising that income tax was only a temporary measure.

If safety is the issue, then let's deal with safety in high traffic areas. When governments get their hands on a revenue generator like photo radar, it will become nothing but a cash cow. That's the concern.

This government's political cousins in Ontario and B.C. hesitated and then introduced it and the people said no to it. The people of this province are tired of having governments dip into their pockets. Do we want to pay \$40,000 a year to police officers to sit in a car and take pictures? Do we want police officers taking pictures of speeders, or dealing with the rising rates in breaking and entering and car theft?

Does the government realize the bureaucracy that it will take to administer this? Photo radar will just mean bureaucrats, and that more tickets must be given to cost the administration costs. Mailing someone a picture of their speeding car and then asking them to pay for it is unacceptable and unenforceable. To

enforce a ticket it must be served on the owner of the vehicle, who now is on the hook for something they may not have done.

This government has proven it can't be trusted with tax dollars. Mr. Speaker, if they send out a photo radar ticket, then . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. The hon. member's time has expired.

#### Lakeland Citizens of the Year

**Mr. Langford:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bob and Gwen Hutchison have recently been named this year's Lakeland Citizen of the Year.

For 31 years Bob worked for the Saskatoon School Board and Gwen ran a coffee shop. Since their retirement in 1991, they have lived in Emma Lake, where they are now giving of their time. They are involved in the Lions Club and the Anglican Church. Bob and Gwen are so giving that they were even out volunteering when the announcement was made that they were named citizens of the year.

Mr. Speaker, it is because of people like Bob and Gwen that I am proud to serve as an MLA. I ask all members to help me extend congratulations to the Hutchisons, and people like them, for giving their spirit. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Call for Channel Lake Independent Public Inquiry

**Ms. Julé:** — Mr. Speaker, in the past two weeks, debate in the Legislative Assembly regarding the most effective and responsible way of disclosing all pertinent information surrounding the Channel Lake issue has been interesting, to say the least. Mr. Speaker, three ways of disclosure have been introduced and debated in this Assembly: the Public Accounts Committee, an independent public inquiry, the Crown Corporations Committee.

But what is important to remember is that we are accountable to disclose all information to the people of Saskatchewan as it is their money that has been mismanaged and wasted. It would be wonderful to use the vehicle of the Public Accounts or the Crown Corporations Committee if we could indeed trust that all legal documents would be open to scrutiny. However, there is no guarantee of that because the minister responsible has indicated that solicitor-client confidentiality must be protected.

Well this begs the question, Mr. Speaker, who is the client? The client is not SaskPower nor the Channel Lake board. We all need a reminder of that. The client is the people of Saskatchewan who are in fact and truth the owners and shareholders of SaskPower.

And if the Premier and the minister responsible and the government realize that very important fact, it follows that, on behalf of the citizens of this province, an independent public inquiry must take place in order to get at the truth of this matter and to give the people of Saskatchewan the respect due them. The people . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. The member's time has expired.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Public Accountability

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's prime minister, John Diefenbaker, said this of the Liberals of his day: "They are the flying saucers of politics. No one can make head nor tail of them, and they are never seen in the same place."

I quote the Chief because, by extension, he was saying that you can always find the Tories in the same place, regardless of how times change. I know now, Mr. Speaker, that this is true.

I have served for five years in opposition and for six years in government and I thought, Mr. Speaker, that I had seen everything about the operations of this Assembly. I thought that I knew where I could find both opposition parties on just about any issue — the Liberals where the wind is blowing and the Tories to the right of that.

I remember when the Tories were in government, that they did everything possible to block and then to interfere with the Public Accounts Committee — reports not released on time, members not available for meeting. In short, playing games with public accountability.

Public accountability was not part of their vocabulary. When the voters chastised them, I thought they had learned a lesson. They even flirted with the word "accountability" as long as it applied to the government of course, but it was too hard for them to swallow. Like Dief said, they're still in the same place; they're still playing games. Roll over, Dief, roll over.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Inquiry into Channel Lake

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions this afternoon are for the Premier. Mr. Premier, for two weeks the NDP has been accusing us of not being willing to do the work in Public Accounts. Mr. Premier, we've always been ready to do the work. The question is, are you willing to let us do the work — that's the question. Or is this whole thing going to be just one more NDP whitewash, like the Crown Corporations Committee proposal the NDP put forward yesterday?

Mr. Premier, we have called a Public Accounts meeting, and we have tabled a list; we tabled a list of over 60 witnesses and hundreds of documents we want to have before the committee. Mr. Premier, will you provide all the documents we have requested, or is this going to be just one more NDP whitewash?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, you don't know whether to laugh or cry when that member gets on his feet. But I say to him clearly that there will be an inquiry into this issue, that begins here in this building, and it will happen on March 31 at Crown Corporations Committee.

Why are we doing that? Because for two weeks you have said that Public Accounts Committee did not have the credibility. Your Chair called it a kangaroo court, and I find that shameful. And today, when trapped into coming to another committee of the legislature, you now say no, isn't no; after saying no means no for two weeks without saying no means maybe. I tell you, you don't have any credibility.

What should happen here, what should happen here is you should get your notes together and appear at the Crown Corporations Committee, and ask the questions as other members of the Assembly will be doing.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, on March 18 in this House, you made the following commitment to this legislature: we say subpoena anybody that you think is relevant at Public Accounts. We have given our assurance that this will be honoured. We say that the people will be allowed to be questioned; documents, as appropriate and where available, will be there.

You should be careful what you ask for, Mr. Premier — you might get it.

Mr. Premier, you said call on anybody — call on anybody. Well we're calling on you. You are going to be the first witness, Mr. Premier, and we think that you know a whole lot more about this Channel Lake affair than anybody else in your government. And we think you're the one that has kept stepping in to save Jack Messer from this whole . . . from getting fired. Mr. Premier, do you intend to honour your word? Will you come to Public Accounts or will we have to drag you in there with a subpoena?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the member who last week drew the line in the sand, as he said. He was going to shut the House down until he got his way.

Well let's see how he stands up to that now that a committee with credibility, huge credibility, supported by members of the opposition and government members, start to inquire into the issue surrounding Channel Lake on March 31 here in this building in Crown Corporations Committee.

Let's see how you draw the line in the sand, sir, when you made the commitment that you weren't going to back down, when you said no meant no; and today you say that what you call a kangaroo court is now going to do the work of the Assembly. Where in fact is your credibility? Where's the credibility of the Chair of that committee today?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well there it is. The great Premier won't come to Public Accounts. You said you'll be there — not going to be there. We're calling on you, Mr. Premier, and all of a sudden you and your government are singing a different tune.

We know, we know that you stepped in to save Jack Messer. April 14, 1994 — does that date ring a bell, sir? We know that. Jack Messer didn't get his severance because SaskPower owed it to him; Jack Messer got his severance because you owed it to him. You know a lot more than you've been saying so far and the only way, the only way, Mr. Speaker, we're going to get the truth out of this Premier is under oath at the Public Accounts meeting.

Why won't you show up, Mr. Premier? Will you give the assurance to the legislature and the people of Saskatchewan that you will attend Public Accounts and you will, under oath, testify to your involvement in this whole Channel Lake affair?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, what I want to ask the member from Kindersley is whether or not he has talked to his colleague, his desk mate, and asked whether or not her opinion of the Public Accounts Committee — that it's a kangaroo court — still is maintained when you're talking about now wanting to use it.

Which is true? Which is true? That this is a committee, that this is a committee that can be used or are you maintaining, as you were days ago, that this committee that you chair is a kangaroo court. When did no not mean no, and when did you decide that no meant maybe if you get certain conditions — when did that change?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For two weeks all we've heard from this government is, call Public Accounts, call Public Accounts and everyone will be there; that's what you said — everyone will be there. Well I guess the Premier thinks he's not included in everyone.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, order. Order, order. Now I think all hon. members will recognize that so far during question period it's been a little difficult to hear the question being put and it's been difficult to hear the answer being provided. And I will ask for the cooperation from members on both sides of the House in order to permit the question to be heard and the answer to be heard as well.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Everyone will be there — that's what you said to this legislature.

Well I guess the Premier doesn't include himself in everyone. I think the Premier thinks he doesn't have to testify. I think the Premier thinks he's above the law in Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Premier, we don't think you are and I don't think the people of Saskatchewan think you're above the law. You have all kinds of relevant information about this sorry mess and you should answer questions just like everyone else in your government will have to provide information.

We know now, after what we've seen today, Mr. Speaker, that the only way we're going to get information out of this Premier is under oath with a subpoena, and that's what will be provided to him.

Mr. Premier, are you going to be man enough and show up or are you going to hide behind this whole affair, just like you've done right from the very outset, and not provide any information, not provide any answers for the taxpayers of this province?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, after two weeks of saying they won't use the committee because they believed it didn't have credibility, I have two letters here today. One from the member from Kelvington-Wadena, the former Liberal, the person who was elected as a Liberal from that constituency, to another member, elected as a Liberal, now running for the leader of the Saskatchewan Party.

So you have two Liberals writing to each other from the benches of the Saskatchewan Party; the Chair who has said the committee has no credibility, asking each other whether they should have a committee meeting. And guess what they said? And guess what they said? Guess what they wrote back to each other? Guess what they wrote back to each other? They said, after two weeks of protesting, this committee has no credibility.

Now we're going to have a meeting. And they wrote letters and they wrote them one day on the same day. They wrote the letter, got the letter back. Why don't you just at a caucus meeting make up your minds whether you're a Liberal, whether you're a Tory, whether you're a Saskatchewan Party, whether you believe in parliament. Quit playing the games, come to Crown Corporations Committee, and ask the questions that you want answers to.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Compensation for Hepatitis C Victims

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, yesterday we learned that a committee of provincial Health ministers, which you chair, agreed on a compensation package for victims of hepatitis C infected by tainted blood.

Mr. Minister, so far your only comment on the hepatitis C is that the package is fair. There is only one problem with that, Mr. Minister, the package isn't fair. Reports show that as many as 95,000 people were infected by tainted blood through no fault of their own and yet only 22,000 of those innocent victims will receive compensation.

Mr. Speaker, the minister says the bottom line is that the compensation package is fair; however we say it ignores a number of innocent victims. Mr. Minister, will you confirm today that the compensation package excludes at least 70,000 victims, and would you explain to those innocent hepatitis C victims why you think that the package is indeed fair?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health, along with his federal and provincial counterparts, will be announcing details of the financial assistance package in the very, very near future. It would be inappropriate to provide comment at this time on leaked media reports and speculation by the member or others. But I am confident that the Minister of Health and

Health ministers from across the country will be announcing a package that will be viewed by the majority of Canadians as fair and reasonable.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Speaker, a further question to the minister. Mr. Minister, you've said you believe this inadequate compensation package for hepatitis C victims will remove the need for a class action suit. But the Hepatitis C Society of Canada begs to differ. They say they won't give up the fight until all victims of tainted blood are compensated. Mr. Minister, you and your colleagues have turned your back on at least 70,000 hepatitis C victims and yet you think there is no longer a need for legal action.

Mr. Minister, what is your plan for those 70,000 victims that were left out in the cold in this compensation deal? Is it your plan to manage the legal actions that will surely be launched against you by attrition, or are you simply banking on the simple, tragic certainty that most of the hepatitis C victims you have turned your back on will die before they take you to court?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, I've already indicated to the member that details of the compensation package will be announced in the very near future by the Minister of Health and his colleagues.

But I would also add, for the information of the member and the House, Mr. Speaker, that whatever the package is, Mr. Speaker, it certainly will not be taking away whatever legal rights any unfortunate victims of hepatitis C may have to recourse through the courts, Mr. Speaker. Whatever rights people have, people will continue to have, Mr. Speaker, regardless of whatever package is announced.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it appears the government are the only ones who don't understand the incidence of the hepatitis C survey that's been done and released.

Mr. Minister, yesterday I spoke with Richard Dumont of Welwyn, someone who has contracted hepatitis C from a blood transfusion in 1982. And therefore of course he doesn't fall into the arbitrary guidelines that the government has set on their committee chaired by this Minister of Health.

In a letter Mr. Dumont writes that:

Governments see victims as dollar signs and they wish that we would go away. If these government think for a minute they are going to get away with compensating only a select few, then they are in for a rude awakening.

Mr. Dumont is now examining the possibility of launching a class action suit on behalf of himself and the other victims.

Mr. Minister, why are these people who have contacted hepatitis C through no fault of their own, why are they having

to go to court to receive compensation from your government who cares nothing about their interests?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Let me say firstly, Mr. Speaker, that this government, all members of the House from all sides, all governments in Canada — and I'm sure the federal government — care deeply about the people that have been infected by hepatitis C through some very unfortunate events in the blood system, Mr. Speaker. That is something we are all concerned about.

And the federal Health minister, the provincial ministers of Health, are trying to come up with a package to compensate people for some wrongs that have been done for which they are prepared to assume responsibility. And they will be announcing the details of that package very soon, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to say to the member that if there is anyone that has any right to take legal recourse because someone has committed a wrong, those rights will not be removed by any package that the governments bring forward, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In his correspondence, Richard Dumont writes that he is very disappointed and bitterly disillusioned by the NDP's stance on this issue. He writes, and I quote:

I have always voted for the NDP and although it pains me to turn my back on the party, I have no other choice. I . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Now I'll ask for the cooperation on the part of members of the government and the official opposition to allow the hon. member's question to be heard.

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Dumont writes, and I quote:

I have always voted for the NDP and although it pains me to turn my back on the party, I have no other choice. I can't relate to a government that is so insensitive to all the suffering of its citizens. Obviously the NDP has lost its way and turned into Tories.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Dumont is right. You have lost your way.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we heard a government member state in this House that it was a proud day for the New Democratic Party. Well today is a sad day, Mr. Speaker, for hepatitis C victims who are being cast aside by this government.

Mr. Minister, why are you putting a price on compassion? Why are you abandoning those who are suffering in this province? And, Mr. Minister, won't you accept your moral responsibility and look after these people?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, I think it's unfortunate that that member over there wishes to play partisan politics with a very serious issue. The member gets up and talks about the

NDP doing this and the NDP doing that. Well I want to say to the member that the package that will be announced tomorrow is with the agreement of the federal Minister of Health, who happens to be a Liberal, with Conservative ministers of Health around the country, and with New Democrat ministers of Health also, Mr. Speaker.

This is not a political issue. This is a serious issue about the health of Canadians. It's a serious issue about a very tragic situation. It's an issue with respect to which all the governments of Canada are going to try to grapple with in a fair and reasonable way. It is not an issue to play politics with, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Health Care Funding

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning the Premier unveiled the NDP government's plan to redesign social assistance. He noted how important it is to monitor, assess, and tackle problems and I agree.

But why doesn't this same philosophy apply to health care? This government will spend \$1.7 billion on health care this year, yet we still have waiting-lists that are at all-time highs. We have stretchers halfway down the hallways. There are days when there is not a single bed available in the city of Regina. And virtually all of our health districts are now in the process of designing more cut-backs to deal with their deficits.

Mr. Minister, will you tell this House what you are going to do about the fact our health care system is in crisis? Why is the money not going to the needs of the people of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, last Thursday a budget was introduced in this House which commits this government to providing more money for health care than ever before in the history of this province.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Eighty-eight million dollars more this year than last. And I want to say to the member opposite and to the House, Mr. Speaker, that it doesn't really matter what this government does in terms of funding health care because no matter what we do, that member and that party over there will get up and say it's not enough. And it doesn't matter what we do, they'll complain about it, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to ask that member this: why is it all right for the federal Liberals to take money out of health care and not put one cent into the health care system, Mr. Speaker, not one cent of new money? And the member for Melville gets up and says there's nothing to complain about in terms of the federal budget, but there's no recognition, Mr. Speaker, of the biggest single health care expenditure in the history of our country, which comes from our budget, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!



**Mr. Hillson:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister has the nerve, the temerity, to mention his budget in this House. He told us last week there's 88 million more in health and of course his own figures say it's 39. He takes credit for an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) he didn't put one red cent into. I'm amazed he's got the nerve to even mention that budget.

Mr. Speaker, last week the Saskatoon Health District told us they're facing a \$5 million shortfall this year. It could be as high as 13 million next year. Regina Health District, \$5 million deficit; the sky is falling in on Living Sky District where our leader is visiting tonight. Today I can tell this House that my own district, the Battlefords, faces a \$1 million deficit and the board there is struggling with where the axe will have to fall.

Mr. Minister, health care fires are blazing across the province. How are you going to put them out besides pedalling your bogus figures out of the budget?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the member, we will be putting more money into the Health budget this year than ever before in the history of our province. The fact is, whether the member wants to admit it or not, that there is a total of \$30 million new money this year going to the health districts. Overall we have committed \$1.72 billion to the health system this year, Mr. Speaker — \$1.72 billion. These numbers, Mr. Speaker, mean that in Saskatchewan we have committed 38 per cent of our operating dollars to health care.

Now there's always more money you could spend, Mr. Speaker, there's no question about that. But are we doing more this year? Yes we are. For Saskatoon Health District, Living Sky Health District, The Battlefords, and every other health district, Mr. Speaker. Are we doing more? Yes. Are the Liberals doing more? No.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Investigation of Gemma House

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last November a constituent had contacted me about serious problems at Gemma House in Regina. She also wrote to the Minister of Social Services on November 12 of 1997 will allegations of a high percentage of staff not being qualified, the degrading of clients, clients being physically assaulted, and racist remarks, and other problems too numerous to mention here.

On January 5 I wrote the minister asking about the status of his investigation into those very serious allegations. He responded on January 21, and I quote:

The department is anticipating that the investigation will be completed by mid-February 1998, at which time my officials will present the results and any recommendations to the Salvation Army.

My question to the minister is, has the investigation been completed, and if so what are the results?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not, in the public forum of the legislature, I'm not going to be discussing the implications of the inquiry at the Gemma House. I can assure that member that we've taken the allegations that have been made very seriously; that the department has been working with Gemma House and the Salvation Army.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say this though. Let there be . . . lest there be any misunderstanding, the Salvation Army, as with many other community-based organizations, are providing some very, very valuable services to the people of our province and I would want no implication out of the member's question to reflect upon the Salvation Army or the good work they are doing.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question was precisely about what was happening at Gemma House, and certainly there were no allegations on my part of the Salvation Army not functioning well.

I want to know whether this investigation has been completed, and that is what I've asked the minister. He has stated that it would be completed by mid-February. In the meantime, the report is now a month overdue, and in the meantime there are children in the minister's care who may be at physical and emotional risk.

So I again ask the minister, when do you expect the investigation to be completed, and will you provide the Assembly with its results at your very earliest opportunity?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I will be consulting with the department. Any information that is appropriate to be released publicly, I am confident will be released publicly. Mr. Speaker, the member raises the very, very important issue of the care of children within the Department of Social Services; the care of children across this province.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity, with the Premier of our province, to announce perhaps the most fundamental set of initiatives we have seen in this province in 30 years, directed precisely — precisely — towards caring for the children of our province, investing in the children of our province, investing in their families because, Mr. Speaker, I know, we know, that an investment in those children and families is a real investment in our future.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a very proud day for this government in terms of the "building independence" initiatives that we were able to announce this morning. We were joined by a wide group of community organizations who applaud us on this initiative. I applaud them for partnering with us.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister to get back to the question at hand.

Mr. Speaker, people have resigned from Gemma House because of these very serious problems in order to retain their own

integrity. I would like to know from the minister, in the interim, have any interim measures been taken or implemented to alleviate the situation at Gemma House, so that we can ensure that the children and the young people there are being protected?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to report to the member and to all members of the House, I have much confidence in the officials of the Department of Social Services who are at work in this situation. I've assured that member that if there is information that is appropriate to be released publicly, we'll be doing that. And I want to assure her that the officials of this department, sincere and caring individuals, are working with this situation.

That is one situation, Mr. Speaker, we're concerned about. But equally we are concerned about the well-being of all children in our province — children particularly at risk and children in low income families.

And I repeat, Mr. Speaker, this is a proud day for the province of Saskatchewan, when today as the only province in Canada, we can announce the kind of initiatives through the "building independence" program that we've been able to announce today.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

##### "Building Independence: Investing in Families"

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Let me make this statement. Mr. Speaker, I rise in this legislature to make a statement of vital importance to Saskatchewan children and families. Today we're announcing the details of a major new series of initiatives called "building independence: investing in families."

These measures represent a huge step towards ensuring that every Saskatchewan child can build a productive life on the solid foundations of a secure childhood. These measures represent the helping hand to Saskatchewan parents who are working to give their children the very best start in life that it is possible for them to give.

Mr. Speaker, I have often spoken of the Catholic bishops of Canada, who said that, quote, "the social blight of child poverty is an indictment of our rich society." To me, that statement was a challenge to all of us. We have made progress in meeting that challenge in the past with initiatives like award-winning Saskatchewan action plan for children. We are very proud of that.

But we are challenged to do more, Mr. Speaker, and today I'm announcing that our hard-won financial freedom and the hard work and dedication of many people in Saskatchewan means that we will do more for Saskatchewan children and families.

I stand here today privileged to be able to announce these initiatives. They stem from our basic Saskatchewan values of caring, community, and cooperation, and from a desire of Saskatchewan people to give the best possible to their children — every child in this great province.

Mr. Speaker, our program for "building independence: investing in families" contains six components, all aimed at helping Saskatchewan children and families.

First, the Saskatchewan employment supplement will be available to provide assistance to 19,000 families to help low income working parents stay in the workforce. This supplement will ensure that their children are better off when their parents are working rather than on welfare.

Second, the Saskatchewan Child Benefit, part of the first new national social program in Canada in 30 years, will provide help to 80,000 children in 40,000 families. This child benefit will help parents provide their children with a decent shelter and good food, the foundations for future success.

For each of these 80,000 children, the child benefit will help fill childhood with good memories, and more importantly I hope, opportunities to grow into their best and fullest potential.

Third, we're extending additional health benefits to another 23,000 families — that's 46,000 children. Right now the sad reality is that if parents leave welfare, even to enter the workplace, their children lose health benefits. No more, Mr. Speaker. No longer will parents be forced to stay on welfare in order to ensure that their children can receive the dental care or eyeglasses that they need.

These three new initiatives build on the good work already begun with three others. One, the provincial training allowance which provides assistance to nearly 3,000 people enrolled in adult basic education; two, the Youth Futures pilot project in Prince Albert, linking youth to education and employment opportunities; and finally, strengthened program accountability measures targeting resources to those most in need.

Mr. Speaker, "building independence: investing in families," is all about helping tens of thousands of Saskatchewan children. It's about helping tens of thousand families break the grip of welfare's cycle of dependency and freeing them to build good, productive lives. It's about helping tens of thousand Saskatchewan parents to support their children through the labour of their hands, and the keenness of their minds, and the spirit in their hearts.

Mr. Speaker, in short, it's about caring and it's about sharing and it's about cooperation and it's about compassion, and above all it's about Saskatchewan and Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Speaker, just a few comments in regards to the statement just made by the Premier today.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the action plan that's been announced by the government today, I certainly want to acknowledge that I believe there are some good points that have been brought forward. In fact I think the Minister of Social Services, plus the former minister who is now working in other fields, will acknowledge that we've discussed a number of these issues.

Certainly the plan of dealing with low income families and the fact that low income families in many cases on many occasions, rather than taking a job opportunity that may be available, were forced back onto welfare because they couldn't afford the system; they couldn't keep up in the system. And so in that regard, I commend the government for some of the steps they have taken.

However, Mr. Speaker, there are some things we need to be careful of when we're offering our congratulations and commending the government. This is an issue that the government has spoken about since 1991. On almost every throne speech they talked about addressing a number of these concerns, and what we've seen is we've basically moved through eight years or seven years of throne speeches. We really haven't seen a lot of action.

So I guess what we will be doing, we will be sitting back — while we recognize a lot of positive moves — we will be sitting back and seeing whether or not this is another area of rhetoric or indeed we're going to see some real action.

Now I guess a couple of concerns arise out of this delivery of meeting the needs of families. And as I see it today, I think the positive parts are supplementing low income, certainly child benefit programs. I see in that basically a means test for individuals with regards whether you qualify. And it's unfortunate the government removed the pension plan, Saskatchewan Pension Plan. I see the move to family health benefits. I think that is positive.

The government also announced a training program, but here's one area that I really have a problem with. Earlier this afternoon in a member's statement, the member from Regina — I just don't remember, was it Lakeview? — Wascana Plains talked about employment opportunities in this province. And we look at Hitachi and you have to ask, Mr. Minister, or Mr. Speaker, where did Hitachi come from? How did it come to this province?

I think there are some problems here when you look at job training. You can provide all the job training in the world, but if you've got a negative job employment opportunities program — as we have in this province when you see the red tape, labour standards codes, Workers' Comp, Crown tendering — people may get job training, but where are they going to go to apply the trade at the end of the day? Is there really real meaningful job employment? Those are some concerns.

(1430)

So while we say, Mr. Speaker, there are some positive things, there are some issues and benefits that I think are certainly lacking, the public of Saskatchewan will look at, and I guess at the end of the day, the proof will be in the pudding.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We in the Liberal opposition are hopeful that the government's announcement here this afternoon with respect to redesigning the social assistance is a true step forward because action has been long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, the headline in the Moose Jaw paper here this afternoon is one of "Need for Food Bank Increases." You know, if we don't need that sort of a proof that action is needed to fight poverty, there's also the tens of thousands of families on welfare and children that are going hungry across this province.

The announcement that the province is cooperating with the federal government to introduce a child benefit while also introducing their own health and employment benefits for the working poor, is a sign that the NDP is trying to regain its ability to care for the average person in this province.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, I found it interesting to listen to the remarks from the member from Moosomin here this afternoon. He should get together with the member from Canora-Pelly, because his remarks in the House on March 11 with respect to this very program were that these efforts to help the poor were just nothing more than, I quote, "expensive programs with," I quote again, "ill-defined goals." And I think that's a sure sign that they don't care about average people.

Mr. Speaker, we are hopeful about the announcement by the Minister of Social Services earlier and the Premier here this afternoon with the assistance of the federal government. We look forward to examining the details of the programs, and we do intend to keep a watchful eye to see that they are indeed providing the hope and helping to eliminate child poverty as well as the many burdens that are now facing the working poor in this province, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### **Bill No. 741 — The Tory Bell Ringing Expenses Indemnification Act (Who's Tory Now at \$28,000 per day?)**

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill No. 741, An Act respecting Taxpayer Indemnification for Obstructionist Parliamentary Tactics. I move it be now introduced and read a first time.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Before orders of the day, I would like to ask leave to move a motion pursuant to Rule 46.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Kindersley requests leave to introduce a motion under Rule 46. I'll ask the hon. member from Kindersley to very, very briefly describe why he feels the matter is of urgent and pressing necessity and then to advise the House very briefly of the nature of the motion he wishes to introduce.

## MOTION UNDER RULE 46

### **Channel Lake Inquiry**

**Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, it is clear that a thorough public investigation of the NDP's mismanagement of Channel Lake is needed and efforts have been blocked to have a public inquiry;

so the second best route is all we have available — the Public Accounts Committee.

On March 18, the NDP House Leader issued a news release calling for an open, televised session of Public Accounts. The rules, Mr. Speaker, state that this can only be done through a motion of the Assembly. Therefore I move the following motion:

That this Assembly authorizes the use of photography, audio, and video recordings and broadcasting without restriction, of the Standing Committee of Public Account's review of the circumstances surrounding the purchase and sale of Channel Lake Petroleum Ltd.

**The Speaker:** — The hon. member for Kindersley has advised the House of the reason for his request that it set aside its ordinary business to debate this motion that he advises the House of. Leave is required. Is leave granted?

Leave not granted.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order. Order. I will ask all hon. members on both sides of the House. Order. Written Questions.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, to supply the answer to question 1 and with leave, in order to save time at the same time, I would like also to table the answers to questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

**The Speaker:** — The answer to question 1 is provided. The Government Whip requests leave to simultaneously provide the answers to items 2 through 7. Is leave granted? Leave is granted and the answer is provided for all of those questions.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, we request conversion of question no. 8 to orders for return . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Now I can't hear the whip providing the information to the House as to what's happening with the answer. And I will ask both sides of the House — order! — I'll ask both sides of the House to enable the Chair to be able to hear the House do its business.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that question no. 8 be converted to orders for return (debatable).

**The Speaker:** — Question no. 8 is converted to motions for return (debatable).

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to submit the answer to question no. 9, and with leave, to submit the answer to question no. 10 as well.

**The Speaker:** — The answer to question no. 9 is provided, and leave is requested to simultaneously provide the answer to question 10. Is leave granted?

Leave is granted and the answer to no. 10 is provided as well.

### SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

**Mr. Kasperski:** — Mr. Speaker, it's with great pride that I rise after a week or so to speak on behalf of my constituents in Regina Sherwood in the throne speech debate.

As my hon. colleagues and the members of this House may recall, I started in my address and remarks on the throne speech debate, I was talking about the six major areas that were outlined in the throne speech debate, being this government's commitment to invest in families, invest in health care, transportation, education and training, maintaining fiscal integrity, and jobs.

My Ottawa colleagues may also recall, Mr. Speaker, that I did manage to conclude my remarks on our investing in families portion of the throne speech debate. And I'm also proud, Mr. Speaker, to acknowledge that this was again covered off in this very important announcement made by the Premier this afternoon of this government's commitment to investing in families.

And I'll say no more about that after that was so eloquently stated by the Premier earlier this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to return to the other initiatives outlined in the throne speech debate, and next go to health care.

Mr. Speaker, I'd first of all like to take a couple minutes to talk about the accomplishments of our government in investing in health care in the last year. Mr. Speaker, it's important to point out that from 1991 to 1996, home care services increased by 38 per cent here in the province of Saskatchewan. Home palliative care service increased by 130 per cent and respite beds increased by over 40 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

According to national experts, seniors in Saskatchewan received better quality home care services that anywhere else in the country.

Mr. Speaker, in 1997-98, the current fiscal year, an additional 56 million was added to the health care budget over and above a complete back-filling of sums that were withdrawn by the federal Liberal government.

Mr. Speaker, health districts are now funded to provide 24-hour access to home care services. Strategies to improve weekend on-call services and physician recruitment in rural areas are also being implemented, Mr. Speaker.

A new vaccine for whooping cough is now available. Plans are in place for Saskatchewan Health Information Network, which can make health professionals throughout the province also

engage in telemedicine pilot projects. Mr. Speaker, an expanded role for the nurses in primary care is being developed through our pilot projects.

The province has provided operational funding for an MRI unit in Regina to serve all of southern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And that will be available this fall.

Mr. Speaker, increased funding for cancer treatment, neurosurgery, and other vital programs have been provided for in the current budget. An additional 1 million over three years has been targeted to improve programs relevant to spinal cord injury.

As well, an additional aircraft has been purchased by Lifeguard, Saskatchewan's internationally recognized air ambulance service.

Funding has also been provided to the Saskatchewan Institute on Prevention of Handicaps for a project to prevent fetal alcohol syndrome, which is a very major problem that we are facing these days.

In May of 1997, Mr. Speaker, an additional \$187,000 was awarded to 28 non-profit organizations under the wellness grant program. Grants are provided all across the province for projects that address the various issues affecting health of our citizens.

There are nearly 3,000 more professionals working in the health sector in rural Saskatchewan than there were in 1991, Mr. Speaker. Almost 80 per cent of health funding still goes . . . Although at the same time we must recognize that 80 per cent of health funding still goes to hospitals and nursing homes.

Saskatchewan is the first province to provide coverage for both MS (multiple sclerosis) drugs that are on the market today — Betaseron and Copaxone. Mr. Speaker, renal dialysis services has further been expanded into rural Saskatchewan, reducing travel to Saskatoon and Regina. And just the other day in a member's statement — I think it was my colleague, the hon. member for Carrot River Valley — talked about the expansion of renal dialysis services in Tisdale, I think it was.

(1445)

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech, as I indicated before, addressed six major issues. I've had a chance to discuss two of these areas. That is, investing in families, which we heard more about early this afternoon, and also investing in health. And I'd like to quote a portion from the throne speech debate which says, and I quote:

My government will work with its many partners to move health care and provision of services forward.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech outlines how this government will continue to build on a partnership with health care providers, ensuring modern, effective health care facilities, and investing in the future through technologies like SHIN, the Saskatchewan Health Information Network, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this government is doing a lot. And the throne

speech debate outlines our continued commitment to providing premier health services in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like maybe now to turn to the next major thrust covered off in the throne speech, and this was the investing in transportation segment of the throne speech read by His Honour a little over two weeks ago. And also I'd like to introduce my remarks in this area by talking about some of the commitments and actions taken by our government during the current fiscal year in the area of transportation.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to realize that we in Saskatchewan have over 26,100 kilometres of provincial roads, highways, and highways to maintain and upgrade. We also have almost 160,000 kilometres of municipal roads.

Mr. Speaker, our system has 800 bridges and 12 river crossings served by ferry operations. Six per cent of our total network carries 70 per cent of total traffic. Mr. Speaker, it costs between 200,000 and \$350,000 per kilometre to construct a primary highway and approximately \$2,500 per kilometre on annual maintenance.

In 1972, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan had 14,500 kilometres of rail lines and 900 grain delivery points. To date, 3,400 kilometres of these rail lines have been abandoned with another 1,140 kilometres to be identified for abandonment in the near future. Mr. Speaker, there are 450 delivery points that are left from those 900 delivery points of 25 years ago and more are disappearing every year. Neither the railway companies, Mr. Speaker, nor the grain companies contribute to the construction and maintenance of our road system under the damage being caused.

In light of this, Mr. Speaker, during this current fiscal year our government has committed \$198 million in its budget to the Department of Highways and Transportation — a 30 million increase from last year. We have committed 2.5 billion over the next 10 years to build and upgrade the highway transportation system.

Mr. Speaker, we have committed to complete the twinning of Highways No. 1 and 16 from Battleford to Lloydminster within the next 15 years. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that if federal costs were available or if we could participate in a federal cost-sharing program, the length of time for getting this done could be much, much sooner.

Mr. Speaker, we have been urging the federal government to continue to work with the provinces — not continue — to start working with the provinces in creating a national highways program, Mr. Speaker. We are also urging the federal government to come up with a modern transportation policy.

An additional \$10 million, Mr. Speaker, was invested in highways this summer and fall, over and above what was announced in the spring of last year. Mr. Speaker, the throne speech, and the budget as well, outline our government's continued progress in working on the priority of investing in transportation for all the people in all areas of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the throne speech also indicates that this government will continue to speak up for Saskatchewan on the need for a national transportation policy.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn next to the initiatives in the throne speech that talked about investing in education and skills training. Mr. Speaker, I first of all maybe would like to give a little background and outline some of the accomplishments that this government has underdone . . . undertaken in the last year.

I'd like to point out that in terms of the educational infrastructure in the current fiscal year that this government has provided 363 million in operating grants to K to 12 schools, and 369 million will be provided in the next year — an increase of \$22 million, Mr. Speaker.

We have given 163 million to operating grants for the two universities, replacing every dollar withdrawn by the federal government, and more was announced in the recent budget from last week.

Mr. Speaker, we are putting \$131 million in the current budget towards the Saskatchewan training strategy that's entitled *Bridges to Employment*. This training strategy, Mr. Speaker, was created to repair the federal government's abandonment of training programs and its withdrawal from the job training sector — \$47 million taken out by the federal government, Mr. Speaker, has been put back in by our government.

We have expanded the JobStart and Future Skills training program. There are now 8,500 places in training and employment services with the goal of creating a relevant, skilled workforce that is needed by our burgeoning economy, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have also merged the New Careers Corporation with regional colleges and the strengthened SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) role in post-secondary education. Mr. Speaker, nearly 500 certificate and diploma learning opportunities exist through the Saskatchewan institute of arts, sciences and technology.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan training strategy has established nine sector partnerships and in 1997 created 500 apprenticeship positions.

Mr. Speaker, we have also implemented a provincial training allowance which provides income support for low income adults to further their basic education.

Mr. Speaker, post-secondary education and skills training was another major important plank of the throne speech and one which has been expanded upon further in the budget which we will be debating in the days to come.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech outlines this government's continued commitment to strengthen our continuing partnerships with teachers, with parents, and others for a high-quality kindergarten to grade 12 public education. And also, Mr. Speaker, a commitment to provide partnerships in other lifelong learning situations identified in our provincial training strategy.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech goes on to explain that full provincial control of workforce training comes into effect this year and outlines our government's commitment and plans to build upon our Saskatchewan training strategy, to strengthen

our universities and post-secondary institutions, to further expand our successful JobStart and Future Skills initiative, and build upon the multi-party training plan. And also, Mr. Speaker, to broaden our apprenticeship training program.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech had lots . . . explained very well our government's continuing commitment to invest in post-secondary education and skills training.

Mr. Speaker, the last two areas outlined by the throne speech dealt with fiscal integrity and with job training — sorry, with the creation of jobs. Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that we must as a government and a province maintain the hard-fought fiscal integrity and hard-won fiscal integrity gained in recent years.

I'd maybe like to take a couple minutes and talk about what our government has also accomplished in this area. Mr. Speaker, we have achieved, with the announcement of last week's budget, five consecutive balanced budgets. The first time, Mr. Speaker, since the government . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kasperski:** — Mr. Speaker, this is the first time that this has happened in the province of Saskatchewan since the government of Allan Blakeney in the 1970s. We have reduced total provincial debt from slightly over \$14 billion, which there was in 1996, to a little under \$13 billion. It now stands at \$12.9 billion in the year 1997.

Mr. Speaker, the total government debt at the percentage of GDP (gross domestic product) was 47 per cent on March 31, 1997, down from 70 per cent just four years earlier. Mr. Speaker, that's a drop of almost . . . of a little over 20 per cent in the percentage of debt to GDP here in the provincial economy.

Mr. Speaker, we have established a plan whereby total debt will be eliminated as quickly as possible in light of the priorities of this government in the area of investing in people and preparing Saskatchewan for the 21st century. We have committed all future government surpluses to be divided three ways, Mr. Speaker: debt reduction and relief, sustainable tax reductions, and program enhancement. And, Mr. Speaker, this was accomplished in the budget announced by our Minister of Finance just last week which this House and myself look forward to debating in much greater detail in the days and weeks to come.

Mr. Speaker, in 1997 total government expenditures were down \$17 million from a year earlier. Our 1997 government revenues were \$158 million higher than estimated because of our thriving and burgeoning economy.

A reduction in debt immediately reduces the interest we spend each year on debt, and these interest costs, Mr. Speaker, are going down gradually. Interest costs have already fallen from 882 million two years ago to 750 million in the current fiscal year that's just ending. And, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance in his budget address announced even lower payments on our debt for the coming fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that the people of Saskatchewan understand that money saved from lower interest costs can be used to invest in important public services and to lower taxes.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kasperski:** — Mr. Speaker, the throne speech outlines our government's continued commitment to maintain Saskatchewan's hard won fiscal freedom. And, Mr. Speaker, at this point I'd like to turn to the final major area of the throne speech and talk about jobs and job creation and the economy here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is the area of most importance and one of the most important and relevant areas to our young people and indeed all citizens of Saskatchewan. And again, I'd like to maybe start and somewhat preface my remarks by going over some of the accomplishments this government has made in the last fiscal year and in the very recent past.

Mr. Speaker, for the fifth month in a row here in Saskatchewan, there is a record number of people in our workforce. Our unemployment rate consistently is among the lowest in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to also note that in the 15- to 24-year age category, 98,800 youth were working in the month of August 1997, an increase of 5,100 jobs from the year previous. This, Mr. Speaker, in an area which has been a source of problems in our economy in the past, the employment for those aged 15 to 24. Mr. Speaker, this is a great, great progress in the area of job employment for Saskatchewan people.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kasperski:** — Mr. Speaker, it's also important to point out that over 1,000 new Northerners are working in the year from August '96 to '97. And, Mr. Speaker, it's important to point out that this government is on target to achieve 30,000 new jobs in our economy as outlined during the 1995 election campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to talk about some of the economic indicators and their performance in the past year. Mr. Speaker, last year retail sales have increased 9 per cent during the first nine months of 1997 over 1996. In 1997, farm cash receipts are at a near record \$5.4 billion.

Mr. Speaker, \$33 million total expenditures on mineral exploration was carried out over and above what was done in 1996. In the oil sector the value of crude oil sales jumped 33 per cent in 1997 over 1996.

Oil and gas activity, Mr. Speaker, is increasing at a very, very good rate and trends seem to indicate that this will continue. Crude oil production was up 9.9 per cent for the first four months of 1997 over the 1996 period.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, manufacturing shipments increased almost \$500 million than January 1997, which is up from 350 million, an almost \$150 million increase in manufacturing sales in Saskatchewan from January 1996 to January 1997.

Mr. Speaker, there was other good news in the economic indicators. Motor vehicle sales were up 14 per cent in the first

four months of 1997 over the same period in 1996. And urban housing starts were up 10 per cent in the first seven months of the year 1997. The population of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, now approaches 1,025,000 and has been experiencing constant and steady growth since 1991.

Mr. Speaker, during 1997 in Saskatchewan there existed 22 regional economic development authorities, or REDAs, that were in operation. And Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance in the budget announced last week, announced our continuing commitment to expand and support this regional economic development authority network here in the province of Saskatchewan.

(1500)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are other examples of significant economic development in 1997. A \$1.1 billion enhanced oil recovery project was announced in the Weyburn area, in the Weyburn-Midale oilfields.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there were 728 infrastructure projects worth almost \$45 million that were carried out in Saskatchewan during the past year. Sixty-eight call centres now operate in the province employing a total of 2,268 people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there were 53 agricultural research and development projects in 1997 worth \$5.1 million that were funded by the Agricultural Development Fund. An additional 5.5 million from the Agri-Food Innovation Fund was also invested on sustainable agricultural activities in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was also \$6 million that was expended by a strategic initiatives fund to enhance agricultural and value-added sectors of our economy.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, production budgets for films produced here in Saskatchewan increased 500 per cent between the period 1991 to '96. And, Mr. Speaker, with the announcements of our Minister of Finance in last week's budget, we anticipate this to grow even more.

Mr. Speaker, this province is starting to . . . the economy of this province is starting to burgeon. It is doing very, very well, and we feel that this will continue in the years ahead.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech outlines our government's support and plans for continuing program activity in the job sector. The throne speech outlines this government's continued support to research and development. It plans to invest in the innovation and security of farm producers. It also is promoting job creation in rural Saskatchewan through a sustainable resource development initiative. And we have a continuing commitment, Mr. Speaker, to renewing our Crown corporations.

Mr. Speaker, many of these initiatives were further clarified during the Speech from the Throne — or sorry, during the budget speech — and I think they demonstrate very well our government's continued commitment to the investing in people strategy that was outlined a little over a year ago, and was further outlined in this past Speech from the Throne.

On the line of . . . I might like to take a minute and talk a little

bit about the importance of Crowns — it's something that we've talked a little bit about in this legislature in recent days — and go to the positive side of what our Crown corporations mean to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to know that our major Crowns and the major public investments that are held by the Crown Investments Corporation account for 17 per cent — that is \$4.2 billion — of the gross domestic product in the province of Saskatchewan. It also — the Crown sector and our investments by CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) — also account for 9 per cent of total employment here in the province of Saskatchewan. That is over 43,500 jobs, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

A little bit more about our Crown corporations, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Even with rates among the lowest in Canada, our Crown corporations earn profits that are about the same as privately owned utilities in other provinces. About half the profits of our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, are reinvested to pay for capital expenditures and needed to provide service to Saskatchewan residents in all parts of the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Crown corporations pay about half of their profits to the Crown Investments Corporation as a dividend. This represents a normal rate of return on money that CIC, on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, has invested in those Crowns.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, CIC uses this money in turn to continue to fund the remaining costs of many megaprojects that were embarked upon during the Devine years here in this province in the 1980s. This drain of money has been slowly but steadily declining as a result of the re-negotiation of many of these deals.

The remainder of Crown dividends, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is turned over to the government to pay for our much needed services in health, education and in highways.

And I'd like to talk a little bit about rates of our Crown corporations, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Even with the recent local rate increase, SaskTel's local rates are the second lowest in the country, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The increase was the first . . . the recent increase was the first local rate increase here in Saskatchewan since 1993. Over the past five years long-distance rates have also dropped by over 50 per cent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with SGI Auto, the residents of Saskatchewan experience the lowest insurance rates in Canada. Until this year's rate increase, rates have been frozen since 1993. And it should be pointed out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the recent rate increase was required to pay for the increasing costs of repairing automobiles.

Regarding SaskEnergy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it should be pointed out that we experience the second lowest natural gas rates in the province — or sorry, in the country. The rates go up and down in relation to the price of natural gas, a price fluctuation which we have no control over and does reflect rates in that very volatile market.

But it's important to remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we experience the second lowest rates, energy rates in Canada. The average cost of heating a home is lower today than it was in 1994.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, on SaskPower. Saskatchewan has competitive power rates. The last rate increase was 1995, and power rates are frozen till the year 2000. Mr. Speaker, I would argue that these Crown corporations have served the citizens of Saskatchewan well. They continue to serve us very well.

It's important to remember that these rates are among the lowest in the land in all sectors, except perhaps power where we're in the medium range across the land. And this cannot be overlooked, their importance cannot be overlooked in our provincial economy. As I had pointed out before, over 43,000 jobs are involved in our Crown sector, and in the area of investments held by CIC, representing a significant part of our gross domestic product, almost 18 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, with those remarks I maybe will conclude my remarks because I'm looking forward to getting back into the budget debate when we get around to that.

In conclusion I would like to say that on behalf of the good citizens and my constituents of Regina Sherwood, that I will be very much in full support of the throne speech by the motion from my hon. colleague, the member for Wascana Plains, which was seconded by my colleague, the member for Estevan. And with those remarks I'll take my place.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very, very pleased to be able to stand in the House this afternoon in support of the Speech from the Throne as read by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor. And I want to just make a very few points about why I support this speech and will be voting for it in a matter of some minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I support this speech on a very fundamental question. I support it because I believe this speech very well reflects the spirit of Saskatchewan, the spirit of the people of Saskatchewan,

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to take just a couple of minutes to, from my own point of view, describe what I like to call the spirit of the people of Saskatchewan — the spirit of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thought that spirit was well reflected in an article which appeared in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* in the sports section, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on February 17 of this year. Now I ask you to note the date because the date is important. February 17, 1998 you will recall, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and other members will recall that the Olympics, the winter Olympics were happening in Nagano just at that time.

This was an article appeared in the *Globe and Mail* on February 17 and I want to quote from it, Mr. Speaker, because I believe it illustrates something about the Saskatchewan spirit.



The headline of this article is "There's a new Olympic bully" and it is subtitled, "The new, red menace." It's written by Geoff Calkins for the Scripps Howard News Service and so it appeared across the United States, in journals and papers across the United States. This is what Geoff Calkins writes:

Break up Canada.

No, not the hockey team. (Break up) The country.

Saskatchewan, one place.

Ontario, another.

British Columbia, a third.

How else (are we) to stop the Canadians? How else (are we) to end the new red menace?

Canada defeated the United States in men's hockey Monday 4-1. It wasn't that close. Canada led 4-0 until Brett Hull scored a goal for the Americans. (But) Hull was born in Belleville, Ont. He's about as American as Alex Trebek.

But if this were only about hockey, it would be easier to take. If this were only about curling and hockey, it would be easier to take. It's not. It's about the entire Olympics.

Canada is cleaning up.

Here's the up-to-date medal count: (February 17) Canada 9, United States 7.

Here's the up-to-date gold medal count. Canada 4, United States 2.

Canada over the United States. In something other than that map on your wall. Who would have imagined that?

Now listen to this, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

As you might expect, the Canadian people are having great fun with this. One Toronto reporter . . . pointed out that the United States now has exactly as many gold medals as Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — "And Saskatchewan still has Theoren Fluery."

(Now) Canada wasn't always so ambitious of course. It used to be that the two countries had a deal. Canada would give the United States hockey players and beer. The United States would give Canada acid rain and Doug Flutie. (And) Then we'd knock Canada into the next week during the Olympics.

Canada has never wound up with more medals than the United States. Not in the summer. Not in the winter. Not in their wildest Olympic dreams . . .

Now it appears all bets are off. Maybe we should have been suspicious when they returned Flutie . . .

So now we're faced with a new threat to athletic supremacy. And boy, is it ever humiliating. Losing to Russia is one thing. Losing to Canada is a red of a different colour.

Canada is Michael J. Fox and Gordon Lightfoot. Canada is Peter Jennings and Bryan Adams. Canada is North Dakota with French subtitles, Montana with the metric system . . .

So that's it for Canada, time to treat it like the Soviet Union, break it into seven or eight pieces. And once that happens, we'll only have one problem (left).

We'll still have to deal with Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we saw at the Nagano Olympics and we identified it in the throne speech read by His Honour — the performance of Saskatchewan individuals in that athletic competition. I would wager, Mr. Speaker, that there are more Saskatchewan residents wearing medals as a result of those Olympics than in any other jurisdiction of a million people in all the world.

We have excelled as Saskatchewan people in athletics. But it's not just in athletics, Mr. Speaker. You will know that Saskatchewan writers have earned more Governor General Awards for literature than from any other province per capita. You will find Saskatchewan people in the board rooms of every major corporation in this nation. You will find them in lecture halls. You will find them per capita more represented in almost every field of endeavour than from any other province.

(1515)

I picked up a little article again from *the Globe & Mail* talking about the scholars nests, written by Robert Sheppard. He's talking about the universities in Saskatchewan. What does he say?

It is a fact, little appreciated in this country, that Saskatchewan is a hotbed of scholarship. Since 1960, the U of S (the University of Saskatchewan) has produced something like 11 Rhodes Scholars, second only to McGill and the University of Toronto, two vastly larger institutions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe there is a spirit of the people of Saskatchewan that has made this a very, very special place to call home. And I'm not just saying this. I'm not just saying this. The United Nations said it. You will know and all members will know that for the past four out of five years the United Nations has determined Canada to be the best place, the best nation on earth in which to make a home — the best nation on earth. And when those criteria as set out by the United Nations are applied to the provinces and territories of Canada, each and every time Saskatchewan has been described as the best jurisdiction within this country to make a home.

And so here we are, Mr. Speaker, here we are living in the best province in the best nation in the whole world as determined by the United Nations. It is due, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is due to

the spirit of Saskatchewan people. We are a special people and we've created a very special place to live on this globe.

I ask myself sometimes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is it that has made us special? What is it that crafted on this prairie and in this parkland and in this forest, what has crafted this speciality of Saskatchewan people and our spirit? It may be our climate. It may be long, hard winters; sometimes dry, hot summers.

We've had to be tough. We've had to do things differently. We've had to pioneer, we've had to be creative, we've had to be smart, and that goes right from our first-born aboriginal people to every immigrant that has come to this place.

Perhaps it is because in this province, unlike any other province in Canada, neither of Canada's official linguistic groups forms the majority. We are truly the multicultural province reflected in our throne speech, reflected in our provincial motto, from many peoples comes strength, perhaps because we have had to live together and learn to work together as Saskatchewan people.

I truly believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that part of the answer that makes this province special is that from our very beginning we have never been a people frozen in time, we have never been a people who have been frozen in time. We have always been willing to look at new ideas, take on new challenges, to do things in our province differently — differently than we've done them before and differently than any other province or jurisdiction in Canada.

We have never been a province frozen in time, and that, Mr. Speaker, again, is reflected in this throne speech. This is not a throne speech that freezes us in some past time, it is a throne speech that turns corners towards the next century.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — So in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you well know, we have an abundance of rich land; we have an abundance of mineral; we have an abundance of forest. But above all we have an abundance of creative, caring, and compassionate people whose spirit has been forged by our history; whose spirit is unique in all the world; whose spirit has shown itself to all the world. And that, Mr. Speaker, is at the basis of this throne speech.

And my time is limited this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and I hope I have other opportunity, but I cannot pass this opportunity, given the day, to lift from this throne speech one initiative which is identified as central to this throne speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this throne speech our Lieutenant Governor said, and I quote: "As communities are the bedrock of Saskatchewan, our families are the bedrock of communities." Mr. Speaker, we as government believe that sincerely. The bedrock of the community of Saskatchewan are the families, the households, the parents and children of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I was very proud to stand this morning beside the Premier of this province to announce a brand new-initiative to assist, to build, and to strengthen the families of our province — an initiative we have called "building independence: investing in families."

Mr. Speaker, we have put together a significant number of new dollars. From the federal government's input into the National Child Benefit, we will be saving some \$15 million from welfare. In addition, Mr. Speaker, to that \$15 million being redirected, we are adding in these programs thirty-seven and a half million new dollars — our dollars, Saskatchewan dollars.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — And as my colleague points out, we are the only province to make this kind of new investment in families and children, Mr. Speaker.

These programs, Mr. Speaker, we know over time — short-, medium-, and long-term — will accomplish some important goals. They will strengthen Saskatchewan families. They will begin to lift children out of poverty. In this circumstance where we have too many children living in poverty, these programs will begin to lift children and their families out of the poverty cycle.

For families receiving welfare in Saskatchewan today, Mr. Speaker, these programs will turn the welfare system on its head; they will tear down the barriers. They will ensure that families are better off working than on welfare. Mr. Speaker, these programs will invest in the health of our children. Well beyond those children who now receive social assistance, we will be investing in the health of children in all sorts of low income families, among what are sometimes called the working poor.

Mr. Speaker, in the last 30 years in this province and in fact in this nation, we have not seen this kind of social policy initiative. We are stepping again, as Saskatchewan people always have, into new territory. We are not frozen in time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are moving forward and we are doing so to strengthen Saskatchewan families.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I will take my place but let me just, if I may, reflect on the role of two leaders of the social democratic movement in our province. I speak first of the Premier of our province.

It was by, if I may say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the political will of this Premier that we have turned the fortunes, the economic and fiscal fortunes of this province around. This Premier has provided the leadership that has taken us from the dark, deficit days of pre-1991 to a circumstance of fiscal balance today and fiscal freedom to begin to craft and create programs for people.

It is the political will of this Premier that has moved these initiatives — to strengthen families through government. And if I may say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the political wisdom and will of this Premier that has taken the agenda of children and families from this province and made it the agenda of this nation.

Another leader of our political movement, some many years ago, J.S. Woodsworth, once said these words in a prayer, Mr. Speaker. He said, what we wish for ourselves we desire for all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we who are privileged to be parents wish for the very best for our children. What we wish for our children, what we desire for our children, we desire for all children of this province.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — And we, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who've had the privilege of public education in this province; who have known a strong health care system into which we have grown up; we who have had the talents and the abilities to share with our community; we who have had those opportunities to be active members of our communities — what we desire for ourselves, we wish for all. We want to make those same opportunities available to every Saskatchewan family.

And, Mr. Speaker, today in Saskatchewan we took a new step forward towards that vision. That is the vision of the throne speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker; it is an investment in people. And for that reason, to stand with a government who will invest in its people is a proud moment for myself and all members of this government. I will be supporting the throne speech.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today in Saskatchewan we've seen, in the last week or so, we've seen a lot of developments — the throne speech, the budget, the whole affair surrounding Channel Lake, how this government moves on every occasion to thwart the will of the people of Saskatchewan. We hear the member standing up and praising this government up and down and saying that they are essentially doing the work of the Lord before the people of Saskatchewan; that somehow or another they like to set themselves apart and say that they are the only ones in Saskatchewan that are going to protect the people of this province.

And at the same time, at the same time they get up and talk about the past. They always want to refer to the past and all the great things that they've done, all of the great things that they've done. Yes, they always want to talk about previous administrations or the federal government, whomever else they can decide to throw some blame on today to try and somehow or another absolve themselves of whatever responsibility they feel that they should be taking for actions of their own.

In the 1980s when there was debt run up . . . yes, there was debt and there was plenty of debt run up. Everyone knows that, Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that. And at the same time, at the same time that that debt was being run up in this province, what were the members opposite saying at that time? What were you people saying at that time? What was the member from Rosetown-Biggar saying at that time? What were those people saying on the front bench at that time? What were they saying?

They were saying spend more. Spend more — more on education. The Premier says if anybody tells you that it isn't more for education, they are wrong. If there isn't more for agriculture, they are wrong. If there isn't more for health, they are wrong. When there was a 2 or 3 per cent budget increase in any one of those departments, this government today wants to absolve any responsibility for that. But at the same time when

they were sitting in the opposition benches during the 1980s, each and every one of them on that side of the House would say, spend more, spend more, spend more.

And even to the point of in the 1986 election campaign, the Allan Blakeney administration at that time promoted a 7-7-7 plan. I can't even remember the details of exactly how it worked, but it seems to me it was something like a \$70,000 mortgage at 7 per cent for 7 years. Independent observers say it would have been a billion and a half dollars to what would have been involved in that kind of a promise.

In addition to all of the promises that they were making in that election campaign, every time they spoke, every time they spoke they said spend more, spend more, spend more. And today we're supposed to believe they're some kind of virgins when it comes to not suggesting that debt be run up during those years.

Well I'll tell you, you people know everything there is to know about spending. You know everything there is to know about making promises. No one can take any lessons from you people about those kinds of things. Everyone fully is understanding about what you said during those same time frames. And today everyone is supposed to believe you have absolutely no responsibility in this whatsoever, even though at the time you were saying exactly the opposite.

But that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is exactly the one characteristic that an NDP has that sets them apart from everybody else. On one hand they say one thing and on the other hand they do exactly the opposite and argue that they never said anything about it in the past at all. That's the thing that sets them apart from every other political party in Canadian history. If it's good enough today, it may not be good enough tomorrow; if it was good enough yesterday, it may not be good enough tomorrow.

That's the difference between the NDP and anyone else. That's the difference between anyone else and the NDP — always has been, always will be. Say one thing, do exactly the opposite, and argue till they're blue in the face, till they're blue in the face that they didn't say what they said before. That they didn't say what they said before. And today, in the last few days, we've witnessed it again. We've witnessed exactly that same sort of hypocrisy that the NDP is so famous for.

On one occasion back a few days ago the Premier of this province got up in his place and he says, we will have Public Accounts and we'll drag you in there kicking and screaming, and if we have to subpoena each and every single one of you to come to that committee, that's what we'll do. And today what does he say? What did he say to the media today? I'm not going to Public Accounts; I'm different. That's what he's saying, in essence. I'm different than anyone else.

(1530)

When he says everybody, that does not include himself. He does not believe in that kind of democracy. He believes in NDP democracy — say one thing today, do the exact opposite tomorrow. That's what he believes in.

Democracy suffered a huge blow in Saskatchewan in the last

few days. The will of the public has been thwarted — a public inquiry. And in the hearts in each and every one of those members opposite knows what's clearly the way to get to the bottom of this whole Channel Lake affair — was the only way to get to the bottom of this Channel Lake affair.

Who was on the opposite side of this issue? Who was on the opposite side of this issue? The NDP, every step of the way of the way, said no, no, no, we don't want to get to the bottom of this thing. We want it whitewashed over in some smooth little fashion so that no one else knows what went on in this whole thing.

It's been quite a little exercise that the public has witnessed here. I don't think we've seen the decline of a government in terms of its credibility in such a fashion as we've seen in the last few days in this legislature. Thwarting the will of people, ruining democracy, doing everything they can to try and somehow or another again absolve themselves of any responsibility for their actions. Absolve themselves once again for their actions.

And we know, we know because some of the people around this province that have dealings with this government are beginning to talk. Remember when you people all used to get the phone calls when a government is about to change? Remember how the law firms, remember how the accounting firms, remember how the people within Crown departments, whether they were in CIC, started calling and started sending documents. Remember when that was all happening?

Well the shoe is on the other foot now, my friends. The shoe is on the other foot now and the calls are coming here. They're saying to us, this government has to be stopped. This cannot go on.

And I think even some of the members in the NDP are beginning to wonder about this. We know very well that the Finance minister was on the other side of this issue. We know very well that the member — one of the Regina seats in the front row here; I forget his constituency — was on the other side of this issue.

We know very well that the Deputy Premier is on the other side of this issue in cabinet. And I suspect there's a lot of back-benchers on the other side of this issue. I suspect there's a lot of back-benchers that are the other side of this issue.

And we know now that Jack Messer is on the other side of this issue. The NDP is going to do the old two-step, just like they always do. They're going to get into committee and then they're going to pin the blame, pin the blame on some poor, unsuspecting soul.

And it's going to be either Jack Messer, because Jack rolled over on you, and I think he's probably a pretty good candidate. They're going to pin the blame on Jack Messer if they can. And if they can't do it to him they're going to pin the blame on, possibly Portugal. And if they can't pin the blame on him it'll be DEML (Direct Energy Marketing Limited). Or if they can't blame it on them, they're going to blame it on SaskPower officials. They're going to blame it on everybody but themselves.

And at the same time we have a member here sitting in the legislature from Rosetown-Biggan that sat at the table. We have a member from Athabasca, I believe it is — pardon me, Cumberland — that was sitting at the table. We have a member from P.A. (Prince Albert) that was sitting at the table. We have current Deputy Premier that was sitting at the table. We have all of these people sitting at the table, all with the full knowledge of what went on, all with the full knowledge of what went on and none of them — absolutely none of them — have the courage to stand up and take responsibility for their actions.

This was a government that was elected on the promise of accountability — opening the books, opening the books — opening the books and accountability. Opening the books, yes, and jailing the crooks. Well look who the crooks are today. Look who the crooks are today. Look who, after this Channel Lake affair gets finished, look who is going to be dragged through the courts.

I predict that the people of Saskatchewan will rise up. I predict that the people of Saskatchewan will rise up in the next election campaign and say no to the NDP. They will say no to a government that wants to try and whitewash this thing away. They will say no to a government that is intent on keeping the details of this away from the public of Saskatchewan.

On one occasion the Premier of this province says one thing and does exactly the opposite. And on another occasion the former Finance minister does exactly the same. You saw it today in the legislature, Mr. Speaker, us moving . . . the official opposition moving a motion, and I want to read it into the record one more time:

That this Assembly authorizes the use of photography, audio and video recordings in broadcasting without restriction, of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts review of the circumstances surrounding the purchase and sale of Channel Lake Petroleum Ltd.

I'll tell you why we did that. Because we believe, even though it appears now that this government is going to use its mass majority to thwart the will of the opposition and the people of this province from having a public inquiry, we believe that the only available tool left to us is to go to Public Accounts.

Yes, you beat us on that. Yes you did. We admit it, we have no problem admitting it. We fully understood right from the very outset that eventually the government would find a way, find a way to get by opposition to this whole thing and stymie the will of the people of this province and hide the facts, and hide the information, and do everything they can to keep the people of Saskatchewan from getting to the bottom of this and knowing exactly what went wrong, who benefited from this, all of those kinds of things.

So we asked, we asked today, Mr. Speaker, that this not happen in Public Accounts. We wanted a full and open opportunity for the people of Saskatchewan to go before Public Accounts and view the proceedings, the media to view the proceedings, the media to report on the proceedings from within so that they would have opportunity to report to the people of Saskatchewan what kind of whitewash this government wants to present.

And what happened here this afternoon? No, again the government uses its massive majority to vote down the wishes of Saskatchewan even though, even though on March 18 a press release from the Saskatchewan New Democratic caucus services over the signature of the Government House Leader, the Government House Leader, said that they would allow a full and open hearing. That they would allow anyone to attend, that they would allow, that they would allow . . . and here's the direct quote: "On March 31, 1998 at approximately 9 a.m. the government members of the Public Accounts Committee will attend."

She's made that commitment that they will attend in addition to the Premier's commitment to attend; she made the commitment that they will attend. Public Accounts Committee will attend the meeting in the Legislative Building in an open televised session. We hope opposition members will join us at that time to begin the work of Public Accounts Committee.

And today, today the chairman of that committee has said all right, all right, we're going to have this meeting then. We've got no choice here. The government is using every procedural method possible to thwart the will of the people so we're going to have to go ahead with this meeting even though a public inquiry clearly is the only way to get to the bottom of this. Even though a public inquiry is clearly the way to get to the bottom of this, we will attend Public Accounts.

Yes, and the first order of business will be to start setting out the agenda, and starting down the numerous witnesses that we want to call forward, and asking for the documents.

The documents are very, very important in this situation, Mr. Speaker. The documents are very, very, very important in this situation because they outline the options that the NDP had. Outlined the options. And the Premier knows all about this and that's why we want to call him as the first witness.

I think it will be the first time in the history of this province, probably the first time in the history of Canada — we haven't researched that but I suspect it's very likely — that the committee will have the Premier of Saskatchewan go before them and have to raise his right hand and say that he does solemnly swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help him God.

And I think he's going to need the help of the Lord because I think there's some vague questions going to be asked of that Premier. I think there's going to be questions like, Mr. Premier, did you in April 1996 personally intervene, did you in April 1996 personally intervene even though, even though there was a unanimous decision of the board of SaskPower to fire Jack Messer, did you personally intervene to stop that from happening?

That will be one of the first series of questions. And I think the answer to it will be a little difficult for Mr. Premier because under oath he realizes he has very few options. And I'd suggest to him that telling the truth would be a pretty good start, a pretty good start. And when he gets to that, when he gets to that truth, we're also going to call in people that can call into question whether or not he is telling the truth. Every single board member, current and past, at SaskPower is on the list of people

that we want to speak to.

Every Crown employee that has anything to do with this whole thing is on that list. Every minister that has anything to do with this whole thing is on that list. And the member from Cumberland better start thinking about preparing some answers for that committee because he'll be asked to come before that committee.

And the member from Rosetown . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, you're a small fry in this, unfortunately. I don't think you know anything about it. Other than what you've been told by the Premier and caucus, I don't think you really know anything about this, sir.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order, order. Now I know the hon. member from Kindersley will recognize immediately two things. One is that the normal procedure for debate is to direct the debate through the Chair; and secondly, that we are on the debate on the Speech from the Throne and that he'll . . . although it is a wide-ranging debate, I'm sure that he'll want to tie his remarks in some way to the subject which is before us and to help the Chair understand how this relates to the Speech from the Throne.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, of course when you talk about the Speech from the Throne, it is a very wide-ranging debate and we do know that. And part of the purview of a government is Crown corporations. And within the Crown corporations, there's a lot of questions that need to be asked.

And the people of Saskatchewan, as a result of the throne speech, I think are asking those very, very important questions about Crown corporations and that's why Channel Lake is on the table these days. That's why Channel Lake is on the minds of people these days. That's why Channel Lake is being talked about in the coffee-shops around Saskatchewan today and in the hockey rinks and in the curling rinks and in the banquet halls and the restaurants and the hotels and everywhere else.

Any place you go in Saskatchewan today, if you want to strike up a conversation with anybody, just ask them what they think of Jack Messer; ask them what they think of \$300,000; ask them what they think of a Premier that wants to try and stand up for his old buddy; ask them what they think about all of that and see what their response is.

Ask them to just see what their response is. They think this deal is dirty! They think this government is in a lot of trouble, Mr. Speaker. They think this government's got a huge problem in terms of credibility. They think this government is out of control. They think this government is arrogant. They think this government is attempting to whitewash this whole thing through. They think this government has no intention of telling the truth when it comes before the Public Accounts Committee. They think this government is going to do everything they possibly can not to hold a public inquiry.

What they want to hold, what they want to hold is some sort of committee meeting where they can control the agenda, first of all. And I predict, Mr. Speaker, that when we get to Public Accounts, either they're going to try and control that committee with the majority of members that they have on that to sit . . .

Couple of things — first of all, time allocation, so that you and we as opposition members will not have an opportunity to ask all of the questions. We think they're also going to put in place some sort of almost a witness protection plan so that this government does not have to bring its Premier, or this government does not have to have its ministers come before them. We think that's another strong possibility that's going to happen.

And we also think that this committee is going to try and — almost in the dark of night — slip this thing through so that no one knows what is happening in this whole Channel Lake affair.

**An Hon. Member:** — The damage has been done.

(1545)

**Mr. Boyd:** — Exactly. The damage has been done. What we're going to see in these committees, whether it is unfortunately Crown Corporations or whether the government will use its majority of committee members in Public Accounts, we're going to end up with an NDP jury; we're going to end up with an NDP judge; and we're going to end up with a bunch of NDP defendants.

And at the end of the day, does anyone in Saskatchewan really believe that an NDP jury and an NDP judge is going to convict, convict NDP defendants? I don't think so. I don't think anyone believes that.

That's why the judicial system and a public inquiry was the right way to go, Mr. Speaker. That's why people want independence. That's why we have independence like a Speaker in the legislature. That's why, in a judge's chambers, you swear before a judge that you're telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth. That's why people have to have confidence in a system, in a democracy. Ultimately the rule of law is what is above everything else. And that's the confidence that people have to have. And they don't have it in this, I'll tell the members opposite.

They don't have any confidence that the members on this committee are going to do what is asked of them in this committee. The member from Regina has already said, we will review this situation, and we'll bring forward the pertinent information that we feel is relevant. And we will also, if it affects the competitive position of SaskPower, we will not bring any additional information forward.

How can the public of Saskatchewan possibly have any confidence in this committee when those are the parameters that have already been set by the Deputy Chair of that committee. How can anybody possibly believe that we're going to get to the bottom of this?

That is why, that is why ultimately, Mr. Speaker, we won't have a public inquiry. That is why the people of Saskatchewan will not know the truth about this deal. That is why the people of Saskatchewan do not believe that this government has credibility on this issue any longer. And that is why I believe that in the next election campaign, the NDP will be defeated, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Boyd:** — Because the people of Saskatchewan, even though up to this point — and I will give you this — up till this point, they have had a trust in you, they have had a trust in you because you have demonstrated that you deserve a trust, in this whole thing, you have demonstrated anything but a trust for the people of Saskatchewan. They don't believe you on this issue. I don't believe you on this issue. None of the opposition, the official opposition, believes you on this issue.

The Liberals opposite are another story. The Liberals opposite are another story, Mr. Speaker. The Liberals' position can be summed up in one word, as one of the political observers of Saskatchewan has said: duh. They just don't get it. They just don't get it.

They bought into this NDP argument that somehow or another, somehow or another when the member from North Battleford gets to the committee that, because he's a prosecuting attorney or has been in the past, or a lawyer — he's been involved in the law at some point, I understand — that they have convinced that member, they have convinced that member that somehow or another he's going to be able to demonstrate to the people of Saskatchewan that he has some knowledge in this area. If he had some knowledge in this area he would know full well how this committee works. He would know full well that the majority on that committee are some of the most NDP-partisan people in Saskatchewan because they occupy the MLA position in this legislature.

They would know full well that these people are not going to convict any NDP defendants. They would know full well that this committee is not going to be independent. They would know full well that this committee is not going to want to get to the bottom of this issue, and that they would know full well at the end of the day that the people of Saskatchewan will not have the answers to the questions that they are asking. All across Saskatchewan they're asking these questions and that's why we're asking for the Premier first. The Premier of Saskatchewan first.

And we've spoken to some folks over in SaskPower and they're starting to get a little worried some of them, let me tell you. They're starting to give us those anonymous phone calls. And they're starting to give us those brown envelopes just as the people at CIC are beginning to do. Because you know why? You know why they're beginning to do that? Because they are so concerned, so worried, so concerned about their professional reputation because they realize fully that this government is in the biggest political jam it's ever been in. They realize that. They realize that and they also realize that this is the government that has no qualms whatsoever about pinning the blame on whoever is out there as long as they can't be somehow or another associated with the NDP.

I would suggest that Larry Kram and Christensen over at SaskPower better be concerned, because I think they're kind of up on the list of people that are going to be pinned with this blame. I think Jack Messer's way up on the list. I think he's number one. If they can't pin old Jack to the wall, somebody else is going to get it.

And the next one down the list is probably Lawrie Portigal. He's out in Calgary. He's out in Calgary right now. He just finished putting together a pretty good deal for his company — \$5 million off the purchase price. It's like he got a discount coupon courtesy of the NDP guys that are on the board of SaskPower — a \$5.2 million discount coupon.

So he marched back out to Calgary and he told the people that he's associated with out there, have I just run into a deal. You won't believe this — \$5.2 million they're going to give me as a discount and our company as a discount coupon. We can go back to Saskatchewan and buy up this Channel Lake company, buy it up and hang on to it for a little while, Mr. Speaker. And we can flip this thing and we can make ourselves a cool five mill for hip national. That's what he went back to them and said.

And then they got thinking about it a little bit further. They got thinking about it a little bit further, Mr. Speaker, and they said, you know, you know what's happening here. This is a rush job. You know what happens in rush jobs, Mr. Speaker, there's mistakes made. You know what happens when there's mistakes made, people also start thinking of how can I take even more advantage of these people.

They've got a situation here where on March 31 they've got to close the books on this thing. They've got some huge losses in unauthorized trading — we'll get to that a little bit later. I had asked one of my colleagues to make me a note about that because that's interesting in itself. They had some huge losses in terms of unauthorized trading of gas contracts — huge losses in that area.

So they wanted to close the books off on this thing by March 31, hoping that if they can show even some kind of modest profit in this thing, somewhere along the line they can hide those losses, unauthorized losses, that they entered into SaskPower without the knowledge of anybody, it appears. And then they can come out of this thing and show maybe a modest profit, a modest loss. Nobody would ever know the difference.

But of course these guys that they were dealing with out in Calgary, they just didn't exactly fall off the wagon the other day either. They didn't fall off a turnip truck. These guys didn't get rich because they are stupid. These guys got rich because they know business. And they know when someone comes a-calling and they're desperate. They know when someone's desperate like that that they'll make desperate-type moves. They'll do anything they possibly can to hide the facts; so they know at the other end of the deal, let's just squeeze them a little more and see how much juice comes out. Let's squeeze them a little bit harder. We've got them right where we want them. We got them right where we want them.

So what did they say? Well you know this is a pretty good deal even though they realize they got a \$5.2 million discount coupon right here. They know that, but they say to themselves, let's squeeze them a little harder. Let's see if we can not only that, get this deal out of them, but let's see if we can get a gas contract out of them on top of it.

**An Hon. Member:** — And guess what.

**Mr. Boyd:** — And guess what, exactly, as my colleague says, and guess what. They say to them . . . I wonder what the opening bargaining positions were. It would have been interesting to be in the room. And you get talking 2, \$300 million, it must be a little bit of a rush, I'm sure. I've never been involved in that big of a deal, but I'm sure it's a little bit of a rush when someone says 2 or \$300 million. Probably they started it higher because they thought well, you know, what have we got to lose. Let's start at half a billion; we'll negotiate down from there. These guys are over the barrel. So they say, oh I don't know, half a billion dollars.

You can just imagine Lawrie Portigal and his negotiating team. The buttons on their shirts must have just been popping open when they presented that \$500 million. You can almost hear Archie Bunker saying, I tell you, \$500 million. So then of course the guys on the other side — man alive, we can't possibly go for that number. So they're sitting there thinking to themselves, I wonder, where do you think these guys will saw off that? So they say, how about 300 million.

When you pop out and say 500 million, I don't think in anybody, probably not in the biggest financiers' wildest dreams, would you think anyone would go for 500 million; but I'll bet you they also didn't think they'd get 300 million. But what did they get? Three hundred million dollar untendered deal. Have you ever heard anything like it, Mr. Speaker? Have you ever heard anything like it?

These guys opposite used to accuse people of writing deals on the back of envelopes. There isn't enough room for \$300 million on the back of an envelope — to write the figure. That's the deal that they were able to extract out of the desperate moves and desperation of a government that was intent on covering this thing up. That's what they got. A 10-year exclusive contract, sort of like a cost-plus contract.

Anybody that's ever been in business knows what cost-plus contracts are. It's like saying — the member from Melfort-Tisdale, who runs a catering business — it's like me going to him and saying, we got a bit of a function here and we're in a bit of a jam; can you help me out. Can you help me out here; we got a thousand people coming to this thing and we forgot to order dinner. We forgot to order dinner; can you help me out here?

He's saying, oh man, these things get expensive, Bill, these things get . . . Mr. Member, these things get a little expensive. These things get a little expensive, and I'm saying, look, no problem — I got the taxpayers' cheque-book in my pocket. Don't worry about a thing; whatever it costs, just send me the bill and send the cost-plus contract along with it. And if I get time, if I get time, I'll even read it. If I get time, I'll even read it. But so he says, he just thinks to himself, the normal going . . . the normal going rate is 10 bucks a plate, sort of, for these kinds of things. But the government's doing this one, and the government's in a jam — they forgot to order dinner. So well, Jack, you're up to . . . well, Jack, you're up to 30 bucks a plate. That seems reasonable. Every one of us have had \$30-a-plate meals. So they write down the deal on a piece of paper and they get her done.

It's exactly the same sort of situation, exactly the same sort of

situation, Mr. Speaker. Cost-plus deals — every contractor in the entire world will tell you — those are the sweetest deals you'll ever find because you build in every cost you possibly can. You build it in at every cost you possibly can; and in this case it isn't just for dinner, it's for 10 years of dinner, 10 years of dinner — all courtesy of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, all courtesy of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

I bet those guys, I'll bet those guys flew out here, Mr. Speaker, on a commercial flight and bought a Lear jet to get home with because, man can they afford it now. \$300 million, \$300 million — will the member from Saskatoon Northwest ever be involved in a \$300 million deal? I doubt it, I doubt it, I doubt it. Unless he finally bails in with Cargill — maybe then, maybe then.

But anyway, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan unfortunately are the loser in all of this. I can make all the fun I want of the deal — and we have been — but it's a serious issue. It's a serious concern. It goes to the heart of accountability. This Premier promised opening the books, jailing the crooks, and accountability. He was elected two times with that same message. And he deserved to be elected two times with that message because he was accountable.

(1600)

I don't think he is any more. I don't think the people of Saskatchewan believe he's accountable any longer. And the days that have gone by in this legislature, the last few days, clearly show, clearly show that this government is no longer accountable and they have something serious — serious — to cover up. And they're attempting to do it every step of the way.

And it's very, very unfortunate because we have now . . . going to experience continued problems with the Crown corporations. We're going to see continued escalation of prices for natural gas because they just give away the farm — the biggest farm you could ever imagine — they just give her away to some guys from Calgary that knew they had this government over the barrel. And it's unfortunate.

They were involved in something called arbitrage. As I understand it, they were involved in it in an unauthorized fashion. It's buying, on the spot market, gas contracts and then, on a razor-thin margin these things trade, trading on the other hand and picking up a few dollars here and there, on those kinds of things. Speculative? Yes. Risky? Unbelievably risky. Anybody that's involved in commodity trading will tell you this is the most risky possible speculation that you can be involved in.

The NDP opposite will tell you that that's the most risky thing you can be involved in. Because they know full well that that is extremely volatile. Gas prices go up and down. We see in the last few days, oil prices bouncing all over the place, Mr. Speaker, in reaction to news out of the Middle East that there may be some curtailing of production in those areas. A buck and half a day is not unusual on crude prices these days, Mr. Speaker, a barrel. Huge fluctuations. You've got to know what you're doing. You've got to really know what you're doing.

We're seeing right now in the world scene, we're seeing banks in Japan and other places going down all over the place because

they've been involved in these kinds of things and they're extremely risky.

Who would have thought a couple of years ago that the Japanese economy and the Taiwanese economy and many other of the eastern economies would be in trouble like they are today. Who would have thought that a couple of years ago, when everybody was buying the mutual funds that were pouring literally billions of dollars into those economies . . .

And what happened with that money? They were involved in the same sort of thing that this government was involved in — speculative, the most highly speculative kinds of thing you can be involved in. You think buying penny stocks on the Vancouver exchange is speculative, this makes it pale in comparison to it. Huge opportunities for gain, yes. Huge opportunity for loss.

Now what we have here is SaskPower deciding — Jack Messer and the boys over there deciding — why don't we have a little fun. We got big-time cash. It's only taxpayers' money. We have the authority to raise and lower gas prices and power rates, all those kinds of things. Let's take a little bit of a flyer and see if we can't make some big cash for the province.

So they get involved in this thing. And I guess from all accounts it was working pretty good for awhile, making some money, making some good money. So if a little is good, more has got to be better.

So what do they do? They jump in with both feet and then they take for the Saskatchewan taxpayer a big bath, a big bath. And so what do they do then? They decide, we've got to cover this thing up; there's going to be some people find out about this deal. There's going to be some people asking some very difficult questions about this deal. And that's how this whole Channel Lake thing started.

And you want to know, Mr. Speaker, one other thing, one other thing. I think the guy that presented the discount coupon is an old NDP hack. I think he's an old NDP member, and I think he'll be one of the people — and I think he'll be one of the people — that are prominently featured, prominently featured when this whole thing breaks open, as it inevitably will break open. He'll be called up before the people of Saskatchewan and asked to account for how much money did he make on this thing.

And that is why, contained within our letter to the people of Saskatchewan in our news release, we are calling for a number of things to be included in Public Accounts. We think this has to be an absolute, the broadest investigation, the broadest mandate, that there can possibly be so we can get to the bottom of this situation.

We think that there is all kinds of relevant witnesses and documents that have to be called forward. We have a list that is just started at 60 people, hundreds of documents that need to be provided so we can have a thorough investigation of this situation. The list starts with the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the former minister of SaskPower, the current minister of SaskPower, and all the other NDP members of the board at the time. We're going to be calling the former board, the current



board, anybody that's had anything to do with this thing right from start to finish, and asking them what possibly went on in this deal. We think that it is extremely important.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that there is the possibility of civil action as the result of an investigation, and we also believe that there is a strong possibility of an RCMP investigation. This file is up and running and it is active. The people of this province have a right to know.

The one thing that this government in its arrogance has forgotten is it is not their dollars that they are working with here. It is not their money that they are working with, it is not CIC's, it is not SaskPower's, it is not anybody other than the working men and women that they like to talk about every time they get up on their feet in this legislature.

It is none other that those people that you like to champion the cause of every time you get up in this legislature. It is none other that the children of this province that you just finished moments ago, a few hours ago, saying that you were going to be doing everything you possibly could to help. It is those people that you just took money out of their pockets and somehow now, and somehow now do not want to come across, come clean and say why.

That is the question that everybody is asking, Mr. Speaker. That is the kind of concern that everybody is talking about in Saskatchewan these days. Everybody wants to know, everybody wants to know about what went on in this situation.

Last night, Mr. Speaker, last night, Mr. Speaker, I attended a hockey game here in town. A friend of mine has a son that plays hockey out at Notre Dame — or pardon me, goes to school out at Notre Dame. He's on one of the hockey teams out there and they were playing in Regina. They were playing over at the Al Ritchie rink. You're probably familiar with it. They were playing over there and I went over to the game to watch my friend's son play hockey. I was talking to four people there over the course of the hockey game.

One of them used to be a deputy minister in this government. One of them used to be a deputy minister in this government. He knows a lot of stuff about what went on in Saskatchewan in the last number of years and he was saying, I don't think I've ever seen a kind of a bunker mentality that has set in like this government has set in on. He said, I don't think . . . You wouldn't believe the kind of gag orders that are coming down all across Saskatchewan these days. If people saw me even talking to you within government circles, my job probably would be in jeopardy. That's the kind of thing that people are afraid of from this government. That's the kind of thing that people are afraid of from this government.

In addition to that gentleman, I talked to three other folks. One of them was the . . . I believe he was the coach of the Regina team. He came up to me after the game; I guess he recognized me. He came up and he said to me, you keep up what you're doing in the legislature, you people in the Saskatchewan Party. You keep at this government. You don't let these people off the hook because I, along with everybody else in Saskatchewan, thinks something's gone wrong here. This guy was about, I would estimate him at 45, 50 years old.

Then I was talking . . . After him I was talking to the two young coaches of the Notre Dame team. These guys are young. Like they're teachers out there, but they must be just barely out of university, because these guys looked to me like they were about 21 years old. And they said to me, this is bad. What we have seen here is unbelievable. What we see here is a government that doesn't want to come clean on this issue — and you hold them accountable. You hold their feet to the fire on this situation. You ask the kind of questions the public is demanding the answers to it. And even though the member from Saskatoon Eastview, is it? — no, the committee Chair of the Crown Corporations, even though . . . Southeast — even though she is going to try and whitewash this thing over, hold these people accountable. Hold these people accountable.

Does anyone actually believe that one of the most partisan members — and I am one of the most partisan, I'm proud to admit, and I think she is as well one of the most partisan members in this Assembly — does anyone possibly believe that she would be impartial in this situation? I don't. Those young fellows from Notre Dame didn't. They didn't believe it for a moment.

A little while after that, a little while after that I was talking and another gentleman came up. This fellow and his wife, they were, I would say they were 75. They were getting up in years. They came up to me . . . I had never met any of these people before last night, never other than they — pardon me — other than the deputy minister, I've met him on a few occasions in this legislature. Other than him, those other folks I'd never met before in my life. This older couple comes up to me and said exactly the same thing.

What does that tell you, Mr. Speaker? People you don't have a clue who they are; people you have never met before in your life; people who have seen I guess some of us, all of us probably in the media at some point, and recognize you as a political figure in Saskatchewan. People coming up to you and saying completely without prompting, with no knowledge of what you might say to them, or whether you even wanted to talk to them or not, coming up to you and saying that this situation demands a public inquiry.

I would ask some of the back-benchers in this government, when people are coming up to you in the last days, what are you possibly saying to them? What are you saying to them? We're going to have a committee at the legislature look at this thing, knowing full well that it's unlikely that they know what that even is; knowing full well that they don't know that this is a committee made up of the majority of NDP members on there.

How do you possibly . . . how do you possibly believe that the people of Saskatchewan are going to go for that bill of goods? I don't; the people of Saskatchewan, the folks that I met at the hockey game last night, people all across this province, editorialists, political columnists, opposition party — in one case not in another case, independent members one after another saying the same thing. The former Liberal leader saying that there should be a public inquiry; the member from Humboldt saying that there should be a public inquiry.

Morris Bodnar, former MP (Member of Parliament), has had experience in terms of legislative experience in the House of

Commons in Ottawa. He knows what committee work is all about. He knows about the law because he's a lawyer. He also knows about public inquiries because I understand he's been involved in them as a legal representation at some point. He knows all of the machinations of a legislative calendar plus all of what goes on in terms of legislative committees. He's sat on both sides of the fence.

When he says, people who had experience like he has, when he says that's the only way the people of Saskatchewan are ever going to get to the bottom of this situation, I think the people of Saskatchewan believe him. I think they listen to him and I think they know that that's the truth.

(1615)

**An Hon. Member:** — Even Jack Messer.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Yes, my colleague mentions even Jack Messer. That was a surprise to all, I'm sure. Monday morning . . . wasn't it Monday? I believe it was Monday in this legislature when we got news that Jack Messer appears like he's going to roll over on this government. I'll bet you there were some people on the opposite side of this House that were surprised, shocked, and scared to death about what Jack Messer is going to say.

Jack Messer knows everything. Jack Messer knows about how all of this has been put together. Jack Messer knows the whole situation. And what did Jack Messer say? Jack Messer said there should be a public inquiry.

Jack Messer realizes that even though he got \$300,000 — even though he got \$300,000; he won the NDP's lottery — even though he just finished winning the NDP lottery, he knows that this is a government that doesn't care about past loyalties, doesn't care about anything like that. They are going to hang him out.

He understands that. He's seen it before. He's probably participated in it before. He knows full well that he's on the chopping block. So I think he decided, I better get out of this process. I better try and do whatever I can to protect what little is left of his professional reputation and try and salvage something.

Do you recall, Mr. Speaker, reading the letter, or reading the news release? He talked about things like his personal reputation, his personal credibility, his family's personal reputations and credibility, his personal health, his well-being. What possible pressure . . . I don't think we can even imagine the kind of pressure that this man must be under these days, because he knows full well he's on the chopping block. He's on the NDP chopping block. And he's worried. He is worried to death about what people are going to be saying.

So what did he do? I think he thought to himself, now do I want an NDP jury and an NDP judge and me being an NDP defendant to be out there with the full knowledge that these people got to pin this thing on some poor unsuspecting victim? I think he said to himself, the only way I'm possibly going to get any kind of impartial hearing in this, any possibility for an impartial hearing, is not have NDP lawyers, NDP juries, and

NDP judges making decisions about his decisions with SaskPower.

And that's why he has said . . . and that's why he has said that there were other people that had knowledge of this. There were cabinet ministers that had knowledge of everything that was going on. In spite of the fact that all of the cabinet ministers are totally absolving themselves of any responsibility, he says they had full knowledge of this, Mr. Speaker.

He knows that they're ducking and running. He knows full well that he's on the old NDP chopping block. So he rolled over. He's rolled over on you guys and I suspect, I suspect before very long we'll be getting a call from good old Jack. He'll be calling us up and saying, I think you guys have a few questions that you should be asking the Premier of this province, the member from Cumberland, the member from Rosetown-Biggan, and P.A. Northcote. I think he's got some questions for you folks that he would like to have asked on his behalf.

What responsibility did you have, Mr. Member from Cumberland? What knowledge did you have of what was going on? What knowledge did you have of the transaction? Were you the one that supplied the discount coupon for \$5.2 million to DEML? Were you the one that negotiated . . . were you one of the ones that negotiated the \$300 million sweetheart supply contract . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order, order. Now I know the hon. member for Kindersley will recognize immediately that he's not debating in a manner that's required in the House and to direct his comments to the Chair, and I'm sure that he'll want to renew the traditional style of debate in the House.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to wrap up my comments now because I think we've made the points on this issue. I think we've made the points that Saskatchewan people . . . I think we've made the points the Saskatchewan people have been saying all along in this whole thing. In the end the old NDP Premier there has got a problem.

He's got a problem because his old buddy, the old war horse, the old guy that ran the campaign in 1991, the old fellow that knows everything about the inside workings of the NDP has rolled over on them. And I think he's going to have a kind of a tell-all type confession when he gets to Public Accounts.

And I think it's going to be an extremely interesting time in Saskatchewan politics over the next year or so leading into the next election campaign. The people of this province ultimately will not allow an NDP jury, they will not allow an NDP judge, and they will not allow NDP defendants to govern this province any longer.

The next election campaign this will be an issue. This will be an issue because we intend to keep it as an issue. We intend to call before this Committee of Public Accounts, person after person after person after person, document after document after document, until the people of Saskatchewan have got full knowledge of what went on in this situation. And when that happens, when that happens, the past in Saskatchewan will look meagre in terms of the investigation that will ensue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had some remarks that I wanted to make but there's been a change in the timing here. It was our understanding . . . And I might point out to those that watch us on television, that this House operates by agreement. When people say we're going to speak for a certain length of time to allow other speakers to get on to the speaking list, we take them at their word.

And the word we had from the Tories, or Saskatchewan Party, was that they would finish by approximately a quarter to 4. So one lesson that we can draw from the remarks of the member for Kindersley is that we can't take them at their word.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I want to . . . I just want to say that the remarks made by the member for Kindersley remind me of the old adage, the old adage which is: it's one thing to get on the tiger and to ride the tiger; it's another thing entirely to get off the tiger.

It's another thing entirely because when you get off the tiger, you risk a mauling. And what we've seen here today, Mr. Speaker, what we've listened to here today is a wounded member who's been mauled badly today in this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — What we heard today, what we heard today was a bitter, angry loser who's delusional in his anger. That's what we heard today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in wrapping up my comments, the member talked a lot about reputation. The member talked a lot about reputation. I just finished talking about a tiger. Maybe I should be talking about a leopard, Mr. Speaker. Because like a leopard, the Tories, or the new Saskatchewan Party, whatever they call themselves, they can't sort of change their spots, Mr. Speaker.

A leopard is a leopard. A Tory is a Tory. And when we talk about reputation, there's only one group in Saskatchewan that really needs to worry about their political reputation, and that is the new Saskatchewan Tory Party.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes my remarks. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 4:25 p.m. until 4:55 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

**Yeas — 27**

Romanow	Flavel	Van Mulligen
Wiens	Shillington	Mitchell
Johnson	Whitmore	Goulet
Upshall	Kowalsky	Calvert
Teichrob	Koenker	Trew
Lorje	Bradley	Scott
Cline	Stanger	Sonntag
Wall	Kasperski	Ward

Murray Langford Thomson

**Nays — 9**

Krawetz	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
Boyd	Gantefoer	Heppner
Hillson	McPherson	Goohsen

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**MOTIONS**

**Address be Engrossed and Presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor**

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Riversdale:

That the said address be engrossed and presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor by such members of the Assembly as are of the Executive Council.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

**Ways and Means**

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Rosetown-Biggart:

That this Assembly, pursuant to rule 92, hereby appoints the Committee of Finance to consider the supply to be granted to Her Majesty, and to consider the ways and means of raising the supply.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:59 p.m.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Krawetz.....	273
D'Autremont.....	273
Toth.....	273
Bjornerud.....	273
Heppner.....	273
Gantefoer.....	273
Draude.....	273
Boyd.....	273
Osika.....	273
Hillson.....	274
McPherson.....	274
Aldridge.....	274
Belanger.....	274
McLane.....	274
Goohsen.....	274

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk.....	274
------------	-----

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Goohsen.....	274
--------------	-----

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Krawetz.....	275
Romanow.....	275
McPherson.....	275
Mitchell.....	275
Kowalsky.....	275

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Strength of the Saskatchewan Economy	
Kasperski.....	275

#### Public Accounts Meeting Scheduled

Draude.....	276
-------------	-----

#### Children's Television Series to be Made in Saskatchewan

Hamilton.....	276
---------------	-----

#### Photo Radar

Osika.....	276
------------	-----

#### Lakeland Citizens of the Year

Langford.....	277
---------------	-----

#### Call for Channel Lake Independent Public Inquiry

Julé.....	277
-----------	-----

#### Public Accountability

Van Mulligen.....	277
-------------------	-----

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Inquiry into Channel Lake

Boyd.....	277
-----------	-----

Lingenfelter.....	277
-------------------	-----

##### Compensation for Hepatitis C Victims

Toth.....	279
-----------	-----

Cline.....	279
------------	-----

McLane.....	279
-------------	-----

##### Health Care Funding

Hillson.....	280
--------------	-----

Cline.....	280
------------	-----

##### Investigation of Gemma House

Julé.....	281
-----------	-----

Calvert.....	281
--------------	-----

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

##### "Building Independence: Investing in Families"

Romanow.....	282
--------------	-----

Toth.....	282
-----------	-----

Aldridge.....	283
---------------	-----

<b>INTRODUCTION OF BILLS</b>	
<b>Bill No. 741 — The Tory Bell Ringing Expenses Indemnification Act (Who's Tory Now at \$28,000 per day?)</b>	
Aldridge .....	283
<b>MOTION UNDER RULE 46</b>	
<b>Channel Lake Inquiry</b>	
Boyd .....	283
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>	
<b>WRITTEN QUESTIONS</b>	
Kowalsky .....	284
<b>SPECIAL ORDER</b>	
<b>ADJOURNED DEBATES</b>	
<b>ADDRESS IN REPLY</b>	
Kasperski .....	284
Calvert .....	288
Boyd .....	291
Van Mulligen .....	299
Recorded division .....	299
<b>MOTIONS</b>	
<b>Address be Engrossed and Presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor</b>	
Shillington .....	299
<b>Ways and Means</b>	
Shillington .....	299