

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to finally show a serious commitment to roads and highways in Saskatchewan by urging it to increase its highway and road construction and maintenance budget by \$300 million over the next five years as called for in the Saskatchewan Party's election platform.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures to this petition come from Unity; yes all of the signatures are from the community of Unity. Thank you.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present on behalf of Saskatchewan disenfranchised widows. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to have the Workers' Compensation Board Act amended whereby benefits and pensions are reinstated to disenfranchised widows and whereby all revoked pensions are reimbursed to them retroactively with interest to April 17, 1985.

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

These petitions come from the Regina, Estevan areas, Mr. Speaker, a large number.

I so submit.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions to present this morning. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to demand the federal government to work with Saskatchewan to put in place a farm aid package that provides real relief to those who need it, and that the provincial government develop a long-term farm safety net program as it promised to do when it cancelled GRIP against the wishes of farmers.

The communities' signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Kamsack, Runnymede.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, as well to present a petition. Reading the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to finally show a serious commitment to roads and highways in Saskatchewan by urging it to increase its highways and road construction and maintenance budget by \$300 million over the next five years as called for in the Saskatchewan Party's election platform.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the petition I present today is signed by individuals from the Macklin, Lloydminster, Unity areas of the province as well as the community of Provost in Alberta.

I so present.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of citizens concerned about the unfairness of the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement.

The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to end its unfair tendering policies and immediately cancel the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement.

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are all from the city of Regina.

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition to finish paving Highway 349.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately repair and pave the gravel portion of Highway No. 349.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Everyone that signed this petition is from the beautiful community of Rose Valley.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition this morning to present as well, and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to end its unfair tendering policies and immediately cancel the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement.

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

This petition comes from the city of Regina, and I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

**Ms. Julé:** — Mr. Speaker, I too stand today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to

demand that the federal government work with Saskatchewan to put in place a farm aid package that provides real relief to those who need it, and that the provincial government develop a long-term farm safety net program, as it promised to do when it cancelled GRIP against the wishes of farmers.

And the signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from MacNutt and Calder, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise today to present petitions for behalf of people of the province of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to call on federal and provincial governments to dedicate a significantly greater portion of fuel tax revenues toward road maintenance and construction so that Saskatchewan residents may have a safe highway system that meets their needs.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by people in the communities of Strasbourg, Govan, Cymric, Nokomis, and Raymore.

I so present.

**Mr. Hillson:** — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I am pleased to present petitions from approximately 250 of my constituents who have responded to the request of the hon. member from Humboldt and have requested that this legislature act to address the serious problem of child prostitution. I so present.

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't find words to express how much I appreciate being able to be here today to present a petition on behalf of people of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to call on federal and provincial governments to dedicate a significantly greater portion of fuel tax revenues towards road maintenance and construction so Saskatchewan residents may have a safe highway system that meets their needs.

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

The signatures are from residents of Fort Qu'Appelle, Lipton, Balcarres, and Esterhazy.

I so present.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to present petitions on behalf of the RM (rural municipality) of Benson, and I'll read the prayer.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately start work on the rebuilding of our secondary highway system to provide a safe driving for what are

becoming known as pothole roads, to enter into negotiations with SARM and SUMA for a longer-term plan of rural road restoration and reflecting the future needs, and to provide safety for all drivers as new trucking regulation changes safety factors on these roads.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories are from of course Benson, but they are also from Lampman and Estevan and Weyburn, I see. And I'm happy to present these on their behalf today.

## READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Clerk:** — According to order petitions presented at the last sitting have been reviewed and found to be in order. Pursuant to rule 12(7) those petitions are hereby received.

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 10 ask the government the following question to the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation:

Has the proposed FarmGro organic mill announced by the minister received all the necessary export permits from the Canadian Wheat Board.

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 10 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: will the minister provide an explanation why the Watrous hospital has only four beds and an acute ADC of six; will the minister please explain why the health district is so underfunded that it cannot provide enough staff for the number of beds needed to adequately deal with the patient load at this hospital.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day 10 ask the government the following question of the Deputy Premier:

My constituents are asking what research has gone into the development of Bill 9, The Respect for Constituents Act; is there any precedence for this legislation; who did the research; and will the legislation prevent new parties from being started; how many NDP backbenchers will be prevented from joining the newly proposed Green Party of Saskatchewan; and is this Act constitutional?

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

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a constituent of mine, Mr. Bob Ivanochko, and I single him out today because this past year he received an award for community service as a volunteer in many areas of the community. So Bob's just the kind of person that makes Saskatchewan a great place to be. And join me in welcoming

him today.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see sitting in the west gallery Mr. Jay Litman, who is a constituent of actually, I think, the Minister of Health in Saskatoon, but is a former law associate of mine. And I'd like to welcome Jay to the legislature, and I'd like everyone here to join me in welcoming Jay to the legislature.

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

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Farmer of the Year Award

**Mr. Ward:** — Thank you Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Estevan Chamber of Commerce held its 18th annual Farmers Day — one day to recognize the year-round contribution of the farming community. The highlight is the honouring of the outstanding farmer of the year.

I was pleased to have the Premier present to give the award to Stanley and Dorothy Fornwald of Lampman. Mr. and Mrs. Fornwald have been farming for almost 50 years on a farm that has grown and prospered over this time. The family believes in and practises soil conservation, shelter belts, zero-till seeding, and continuous cropping.

They have raised a large family and are dedicated, productive members of their local community. Stanley has held many political offices, and both are active members of their church.

This is an award to an individual — or in this case a couple — but it also recognizes and celebrates ideals and goals: the goal of achievement on the farm; the goal of contribution to the community; the ideal of citizenship. The same ideals and goals, Mr. Speaker, that built our province.

We're all proud to honour Stanley and Dorothy Fornwald. And I congratulate them for their life of contribution and achievement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Kamsack Air Cadet Selected to Honour Band

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I'd to congratulate a constituent of mine. I have a Kamsack air cadet selected for the 1999 cadet honour band of prairie region.

A young lady, Stephanie Setlack, daughter of Patti and Wayne Setlack, has been selected as a member of the 1999 cadet honour band of prairie region. She is one of a hundred cadets chosen from the 210C Army and Air Cadet Unit across the prairies.

Stephanie, who plays the clarinet, is a member of the 633 Kamsack Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron. The commanding officer of this unit is Lt. C. Pollen and the local sponsor is Kamsack Royal Canadian Legion.

Stephanie takes music lessons at school and enjoys music and drama club when not involved in the cadet activities.

The cadet honour band of prairie region will present concerts in Calgary, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Thunder Bay, Mr. Speaker. They will be performing in Saskatoon at 7:30, April 3, at Centennial Auditorium.

Congratulations, Stephanie Setlack.

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

### Regina Health District Performance Statistics

**Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to share with this Assembly some solid facts on how the Regina Health District has been dealing with health care this week.

In particular I would like to report that so far this week there have been 322 surgeries. Of those, 49 surgeries were unscheduled and were added in and an additional 36 were emergency. During this time no surgeries were cancelled due to lack of beds.

I want to repeat that: no surgeries were cancelled due to lack of beds.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to report that at no time were there more than one or two patients being treated in emergency while they waited for beds on a unit.

The health care professionals are to be commended for the work in this district. Mr. Speaker, I bring this information forward to the Assembly today because far too often the members opposite — and unfortunately media — buy into this and report only the bad news in our health care system.

This information today is indeed very good news that the Regina Health District is working and working properly.

Thanks very much.

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

### Social Workers

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With this week being Social Worker Appreciation Week it's ironic that the people feeling most under appreciated are social workers themselves.

On Valentine's Day hundreds of valentines were delivered to the Premier from social workers asking for help. They asked for more staff to help do the work the government has piled on them, and some of these valentines are messages from social workers. One talks about feeling neglected and abused by their employer — this government. Workers talk about not having enough staff and all programs and being treated disrespectfully by their employers.

Social workers are performing voluntary overtime just to do their jobs, yet the government which employs them says they are not getting more people or resources but to work smarter. This is a slap in the face of social workers trying to serve the

public as best they can.

There are signs that shortage of workers in social services may result in the overpayment of thousands of dollars of social benefits simply because there are not enough people to keep pace with the cases. There is an answer to this. The answer is to not hire so many communication specialists, go on so many international trips, or squander so much money on trying to cover up mistakes instead of owning up to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Teachers' Awards

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the last day of Education Week and on behalf of my colleagues, the member from Prince Albert Carlton and Saskatchewan Rivers, I want to congratulate five Prince Albert teachers who have won significant awards for their contribution to their profession and their students.

First, Linda Kasko, is a special ed. teacher at Ecole King George. She has been named Saskatchewan Teacher of the Year by the Council of Exceptional Children. She will be honoured at the council's annual convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, in mid-April.

Debra Kuzbik of Riverside Community School and Dawn Kilmer of Carlton Comprehensive have been honoured by the Canadian Teachers' Federation for a project that twinned grade 10 at-risk students with division 1 at-risk students to write children's books.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, two other teachers at Carleton High, Irene LaPierre and Linda Bird have received provincial awards from the Canadian Teachers' Federation for developing a culturally sensitive program that helps older Aboriginal students make the transition to high school. My congratulations to these five deserving and excellent teachers. Thank you very much.

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

### Moosomin and Area Volunteers Recognized

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment this morning just to recognize the efforts of some volunteers in my area. Certainly in this province, we recognize that most communities survive — and community events — as a result of the volunteer efforts given by many people across our constituencies.

Yesterday I had the privilege of attending the Sask. Housing Authority Recognition Award luncheon for John Corbett who served . . . given 15 years of his life to serve the community in the area of local housing authority. Certainly to John, I extend my congratulations as I did yesterday, and just to give recognition to all the housing authority members we have across our province.

As well when it comes to events, most members might be aware of the fact that the 2000 Imperial Oil provincial mixed curling championships are currently taking place in the community of Moosomin. Mr. Speaker, here again this event would not take place in a small community if it wasn't for the efforts not only

of the curling club but the many volunteers who have given of their time and efforts.

And I can attest to you that the community of Moosomin certainly has observed some very keen and competitive curling. And I would like to again commend individuals who give of their time and efforts so that functions like this can be held in our small communities. And communities certainly benefit from these efforts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Saskatoon Girl Rescued from River

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to commend the quick thinking and unselfish actions of Gordon Doell from Saskatoon. While crossing the railway bridge late on Sunday afternoon, Mr. Doell and some friends noticed two young girls had strayed onto the South Saskatchewan River. The ice broke and one of the girls fell in. Her companion held onto her arm but she was in danger of being pulled in under the current. Mr. Doell acted quickly and managed to drag the nearly submerged girl back onto solid ice.

In an instant, life can change. In an instant, Gordon Doell made a decision and became a hero. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Meadow Lake Welcomes Newest Physicians

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I wish to extend a welcome to Meadow Lake's newest doctors, Dr. Anton Nel and Dr. Janna Van Tonder. Their arrival brings Meadow Lake's total number of physicians to nine.

Doctors Nel and Van Tonder are husband and wife duo from South Africa. Prior to taking up residence and practice in Meadow Lake, they served temporary short terms in Loon Lake and Maidstone for a total of nine months. Such was their appreciation of our friendly, hospitable Saskatchewan people and of our universal health care system that they have chosen to return to our province with their young family and practice medicine here.

These two young doctors have first-hand experience of two-tier health care. South Africa's health system consists of private and public facilities. As a result, proper health care is sometimes denied to people in the public system.

Doctors Nel and Van Tonder have returned to Canada, returned specifically to Saskatchewan, because here with our health care reforms, they say, and ongoing changes to improvements of our needs-based universal system their current and future patients have good access to medical care.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to reiterate my welcome and also to wish them every success in their practice. Thank you very much.

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

### Education Week

**Mr. Jess:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week is Education Week in Saskatchewan. And today I would like to congratulate

SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) Kelsey campus automotive service technicians program, and its partners on receiving the first national Canadian Auto Repair and Service, or CARS, motive power accreditation.

This accreditation confirms that SIAST is on the leading edge of automotive industry training. This is exactly the kind of training that employers are looking for in prospective employees. And the program is popular. It is filled to capacity at 218, and more students are interested.

The program has become a model for others like it across Canada. Saskatchewan is setting future directions for post-secondary education, and other provinces are following our lead. More importantly, we are improving interprovincial mobility and job opportunities for students.

We're providing high quality, relevant, economically and socially responsive post-secondary training and SIAST will continue to play a major role in *The Saskatchewan Training Strategy*.

The accreditation further boosts SIAST's reputation. So once again congratulations, your achievement is one of which we can all be proud.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Contract for Asbestos Removal at Plains Health Centre

**Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, my questions this morning are for the Minister responsible for SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation). Madam Minister, a story in today's paper talks about some of the problems with the asbestos removal project at the Plains hospital. The Saskatchewan Party has learned that the problems with this project extend far beyond the bankruptcy of I.E.S. Contracting. You have mismanaged this project since day one.

Madam Minister, the Saskatchewan Party has been told that the original contractor was not bonded. You went to this Alberta company even though you had several bonded Saskatchewan companies bid on the job. Why would you award a million dollar contract, multi-million dollar contract to an unbonded company. It's no wonder they went bankrupt and couldn't meet their payroll.

Madam Minister, would you confirm that you awarded the original contract to an unbonded Alberta company?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. I'd like to take this opportunity to assure the people of Saskatchewan that the SIAST redevelopment project remains on budget and on schedule.

The government's investment and taxpayers' interest are fully protected as this project is fully insured, Mr. Speaker, and fully bonded. The project budget remains unchanged at \$29 million with the work to be completed by September 2000. All

deadlines are being met.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to our own requirements for bonding the company, the bonding people themselves assured themselves at the time that this contract was awarded that due diligence on this company was being done and at the time that company was solvent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Madam Minister, you have now awarded the contract to Vision Industrial Group, which is simply the original contractor under a new name.

Madam Minister, your SPMC spokesman says that the project is now fully insured and bonded. However, we have been informed that Vision Industrial is unbonded and does not have pollution liability insurance. We've also learned that the project consultants strongly recommended against hiring this company to finish the job.

Madam Minister, why didn't you simply re-tender this project. Will you confirm that your consultant recommended against hiring Vision Industrial and will you release that consultant's report today? And will you also release a copy of Vision Industrial's bonding and insurance contracts?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm having difficulty following the issue the member is trying to get at. At one point, he says, that there is no bonding happening and there's no insurance on this project.

The original contract was fully insured and fully bonded. The bonding company themselves did due diligence on the original company. And SPMC follows the same guidelines and will continue to follow those guidelines.

But, Mr. Speaker, SPMC does not have responsibility on the subtrades once the general contractor, PCL, a Saskatchewan company, assumes the project. They themselves have to be assured that the company now working is fully bonded and fully insured.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to say that we have the same qualified workers on site because of this change; the same wage rates will apply; the same guarantee of employment and payment is in place. And that is 90 per cent of the project has Saskatchewan people working on asbestos removal at this time.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Madam Minister, your SPMC spokesman said that the asbestos removal project is on time and on budget, and that's what you say here this morning. On time and on budget — where have we heard that one before from your administration?

The Saskatchewan Party has obtained a copy of the instructions to bidders, including the projection . . . or the projected completion schedule. In it, it says that the entire project was to be completed by February 28, 1999. February 28, Madam Minister, not September as you suggest now. Doesn't sound like you're on time at all. The deadline was later revised to March, then to June, and now this morning now you say September. The fact is this project is now only about 20 to 25

per cent complete and you're not going to meet any one of your deadlines.

Madam Minister, will you confirm and will you admit that this project is way behind schedule because of your NDP mismanagement?

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This project is an exciting project for the province of Saskatchewan. The members opposite probably will have students from their area wanting to take the opportunity to be a part of a knowledge corridor in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the project in its entirety remains unchanged with a budget of \$29 million, with the work to be completed by September 2000.

You can take information and say, well this part or that part is always changing within the deadlines and time frames, but our people are on site to make sure that that project continues to meet those deadlines.

SPMC is making sure that the contractor, PCL, which is a Saskatchewan firm, is fully insured and fully bonded. Mr. Speaker, we have qualified people employed at that project; 90 per cent of the workers there are Saskatchewan people receiving employment opportunities, and the remainder of the project will have a hundred per cent Saskatchewan content.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, the Saskatchewan Party has also learned that there have been serious problems with this project right from the outset. The SPMC project consultant is Bersch & Associates, and they have issued reports citing numerous project infractions.

Madam Minister, will you release the SPMC consultants' report today?

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

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, SPMC took over the responsibility of changing the building to the redevelopment of the SIAST campus — eight campuses being amalgamated at that location that will be close to proximity of the University of Saskatchewan and provide opportunities for young people to be well trained in technical trades in this province. Probably the students from their constituencies will be excited about an opportunity to attend at this campus and the prospect of having the opportunity that that whole development involves.

Mr. Speaker, SPMC has a general contractor on site, PCL-Maxam. The company is a Saskatchewan company. Once they're on-site, the subcontractor is the responsibility of the construction manager, who will assume full responsibility for all subtrades. I am told that the project remains unchanged. It's a good project. I don't know why the members opposite can't see the possibilities for future students in this province.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Next question.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, simply, will you release the Bersch & Associates consultant report? That was the question. Will you please respond to that?

And at the same time, will you also respond to the following question. The Saskatchewan Party has also learned that occupational health and safety has serious problems with this project. They have issued a report citing various infractions that put workers' safety at risk. For instance, the negative air pressure levels in this building are not being properly maintained. That means workers could be breathing in the asbestos that they're trying to remove.

Madam Minister, will you release the occupational health and safety reports for this project as well as the Bersch and Associates' consultant report?

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

**Hon. Ms. Hamilton:** — I thank the member opposite for that question, Mr. Speaker. On a project, a positive project of this magnitude, Mr. Speaker, we have many reports that are developed on many issues. We have and the reason why we have occupational health and safety at work in this province is to assure that those guidelines are being met.

With regard to this project all due diligence on the safety of workers would be assured to the workers that are there, Mr. Speaker. To this date I haven't heard one person bring forward this issue of concern. But if it's brought to the attention of officials at SPMC, all due diligence would be met, and the safety of the workers is uppermost in our minds.

Mr. Speaker, I can't understand why the opposition can't see how well we're progressing on this project and that we are employing Saskatchewan people to look forward to the future for students and technical trades in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Tax Reduction Proposals**

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Minister, thanks to the NDP government Saskatchewan families struggle under the weight of the second highest taxes in Canada. Saskatchewan people are paying \$1 billion more in provincial taxes today than they were in 1991.

Mr. Speaker, this government has raised taxes by \$1 billion in just seven years — no wonder people are leaving.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party is committed to easing the tax burden on Saskatchewan families by cutting the provincial sales tax from 7 per cent to 5 per cent and cutting the provincial income tax by 20 per cent. And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government's own economic advisors, WEFA Canada tell us we can make these tax cuts within a balanced budget.

And what does the Finance minister say? It can't be done.

Mr. Minister, will you support our platform and reduce taxes in your budget?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, you know I always get a little bit nervous when I hear the words balanced budget coming out of the mouth of the Tories because as everyone in this province knows, Mr. Speaker, they have never balanced the budget provincially and they have never balanced the budget federally. We had them in the '80s at both levels of government, Mr. Speaker.

But I'm pleased to get up on my feet and answer the member's question, Mr. Speaker, because I'm proud to stand on the record of this government which record is this: 1994-95 we balanced the budget, Mr. Speaker, and then what did we do? We committed . . . we met our commitment of cutting taxes, Mr. Speaker.

In 1995-96 we cut income taxes. In 1997 we reduced the provincial sales tax by 2 per cent, in '97. In 1998 we cut the income tax by 2 points. And you know, Mr. Speaker, we're going to keep doing more of the same as we can afford it in a responsible, reasonable, sustainable way. That's the record of this government and that's the plan of this government.

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

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, another question for the Minister of Finance. Does the minister really think that cutting the PST (provincial sales tax) from 7 per cent to 5 per cent so that we can compete with our sales tax free neighbours in Alberta, is irresponsible? Do you really think that cutting provincial income tax by 20 per cent so we can be competitive is irresponsible? Why is it irresponsible for the government to put money back into the hands of Saskatchewan taxpayers?

Mr. Minister, what really is irresponsible is taking . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order. Now the Chair . . . the hon. members will recognize that the member who is asking the question is not far from the Chair and the Chair is having difficulty being able to hear the question being put because of interventions from both sides of the House. Order. Now I'll ask for the co-operation of all members.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what really is irresponsible is this NDP government ignoring these realities and forcing our businesses and young people and retired people to leave our province for opportunities that they can't find here under this high tax regime.

Mr. Minister, will you deal with this issue before there are no taxpayers left in this province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, in answer to the member's question, I want to remind the member that when his fellow Tories were in office in the 1980s, we had record out-migration from Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — 15,000

people a year — 15,000 people a year. The member asks what's wrong with tax reduction, Mr. Speaker. Nothing is wrong with tax reduction.

But there is something wrong with the platform of the Tories which does not add up, and I'll tell you why. Because they are going to pay for the tax reduction that they proposed by freezing health care spending and freezing education spending. And if I was them, I'd be running away from that platform too, Mr. Speaker.

And speaking of that platform, Mr. Speaker, these are not my words. These are words from the Regina *Leader-Post* of December 15, 1998 talking about the Tory platform. Listen to this. This is six weeks after they released their platform:

According to Statistics Canada, the Saskatchewan Party platform overstated Saskatchewan's 1997-98 revenues by \$392 million.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — And do you know what . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Next question.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another question for the minister. Mr. Minister, your NDP government is the proud owner of the worst job . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Now once again the Chair is having difficulty being able to hear the question being put, and quite frankly I was having difficulty being able to hear the answer being provided. And I'll ask — Order! — for the co-operation of all members of the House.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, your NDP government is the proud owner of the worst job creation record in all of Canada. The worst. Last. Bottom of the barrel. Last year Saskatchewan actually lost jobs, 4,100 of them.

In the meantime Alberta created 54,000 new jobs; and Manitoba created 10,400 new jobs; even Newfoundland created more jobs than ever before.

Mr. Speaker, the reason the NDP's brutal job record is happening in Saskatchewan is because we have the second highest taxes in Canada. Mr. Speaker, the NDP government increased taxes on businesses and people of this province by \$1 billion.

Mr. Minister, will you deal with this issue and provide meaningful tax relief in next week's budget?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, they're not even in office yet and already they're trying to cook the books.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — And, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that never between 1992 . . .

**The Speaker:** — Now the hon. members don't even need the

Chair to intervene to know what the message is here. Order, order, order.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, between 1992 and 1997 Saskatchewan enjoyed the highest economic growth in Canada. And you know we have been hit hard in 1998. We have been hit by low prices on the farm and we've been hit by low prices in the oil patch, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that we have been hit very hard in Saskatchewan, our economy is still growing, the number of jobs is still growing, and that is because our economy is more diversified than it's ever been before. There are more people working in Saskatchewan in 1998, Mr. Speaker, than there ever were before in the history of the province notwithstanding those problems. The employment numbers are the highest in 16 years.

And I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the people of the province, the employment numbers are a lot better than when the member and his colleagues were in office in 1980s when people were leaving the province in droves and job numbers were going down, Mr. Speaker. Job numbers today are going in the right direction, which is up, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Long-term Care Beds**

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Health, this province is sick of wellness. Yesterday the minister admitted there is a serious shortage of acute care beds in the province. According to the Barriers to Access Report which the minister commissioned but is apparently unaware of, patients in the Regina Health District need access to home care, mental health, and long-term care in order to ease the pressure on our acute care facilities.

In other words long-term care patients are being kept in hospital because we don't have sufficient resources in mental health, home care, and long-term care. When acute care beds are full that means longer waiting lists for surgery. With the aging of our population we know we need more long-term care facilities now and will need more in the future. Your waiting list report says nothing about reducing the waiting list for long-term care.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, order, order, order. Now the hon. member has been extremely lengthy in his preamble, and I'll ask him to go directly to his question now.

**Mr. Hillson:** — What is the plan to deal with the crisis not just in acute care but in long-term care as well?

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member may know the province of Saskatchewan is undergoing a change within our health care system. And we are moving away from a system that we relied heavily upon people providing services in long-term care facilities. For instance, in the province of Saskatchewan we find about 9,200 nursing home beds.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we have begun to put significant amount of money into home care in the province of

Saskatchewan, which allows people to stay in their own homes as long as possible.

Mr. Speaker, we know from senior citizens that they wish to remain in their own homes with the support of home care for as long as they can. And we also know that there are those senior citizens that require more intensive nursing home care. And that's why we've seen over the years a number of commitments and capital projects where we've seen a rejuvenation of nursing home beds across the province.

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

**Mr. Hillson:** — Mr. Speaker, we will not correct the shortage in acute care beds unless we also address the crisis in long-term care in mental health and home care. How does this minister expect to deal with these problems if she ignores her own commissioned report to deal with the long-term care problem.

I know the minister was caught off guard over the nursing shortage. It came out of the blue; she didn't know it was coming. I know she was caught off guard by the Barriers to Access Report. What is the plan?

In the North Battleford by-election there was a promise of a \$25 million long-term care facility for the Battlefords, never to be heard of again after election day. What is the plan? Are you going to ignore your own report saying we can't correct the problems in acute care unless we correct the long-term care facility shortage with the aging of our population?

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

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, I think these are important questions. But I also think the Liberal Party has to realize that we began to see reduced funding to health care and post-secondary education in this country starting in the late 1970s.

And then we saw a major change in how we fund post-secondary education and health care in the 1980s under the Tory Party of Mr. Mulroney.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have just recently received a commitment from the federal government to begin to put back, on the part of the federal government, funds into health care of the provinces.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that every government in this country has had to deal with debt and deficit. There is no question. We got ours started as soon as we came to government. As soon as we balanced the budget, what did the federal government do? They began to take out about \$200 million per year for funding of health care and post-secondary education. Mr. Speaker, this has not been easy but we have begun the transformation of health in the province of Saskatchewan and we are building long-term nursing home beds, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to build more.

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

**Mr. Hillson:** — Mr. Speaker, next year is the year of the senior. This year we're getting more funds from the federal



government, 65 to \$85 million for health care. Now is the time to address the serious shortage we have got. Otherwise seniors will either have to suffer at home or occupy an acute care bed which will mean longer waiting lists.

I haven't heard anything yet from the minister that will deal with the fact that we have eight health districts reporting roughly 150 people waiting for placement right now in long-term care facilities — 53 in Moose Mountain alone; Gabriel Springs, 12; South Central, 20; East Central, 30; Pasquia, 15; and the list goes on and on. This is the current waiting list.

We know that it's going to get worse with the aging of our population, the aging of the baby boomers. What are you going to do? What is the specific plan to deal with these issues?

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

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I remember being the NDP Health critic in the 1980s. And at that time, Mr. Speaker, there were people that were waiting for nursing home care beds in the province of Saskatchewan, but we didn't have a very sophisticated home care system in the province of Saskatchewan. We have seen a tremendous increase in funding to home care.

And what home care does, Mr. Speaker, it allows people to receive nursing services in their own home, personal care in their own home, and for those people that need it, the support of housekeeping and cleaning and maintenance. Mr. Speaker, that's what senior citizens want. They want to be able to stay in their own home for as long as possible.

Mr. Speaker, people who are in nursing homes are there because they require that kind of intensive care. And, Mr. Speaker, there are people who are in their homes that require intensive care, but that's where they want to be. And home care allows them to be where they want to be, in their own homes.

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

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### **Bill No. 2 — The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 1999**

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 2, The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 1999 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

### **Bill No. 3 — The Intestate Succession Amendment Act, 1999/Loi de 1999 modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur les successions non testamentaires**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 3, The Intestate Succession Amendment Act, 1999 be now introduced and read the first time.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a first time and ordered to be

read a second time at the next sitting.

### **Bill No. 4 — The Securities Amendment Act, 1999**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 4, The Securities Amendment Act, 1999 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

### **Bill No. 5 — The Municipal Hail Insurance Amendment Act, 1999**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 5, The Municipal Hail Insurance Amendment Act, 1999 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

### **Bill No. 6 — The Coroners Act, 1999**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 6, The Coroners Act, 1999 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

### **Bill No. 232 — The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 1999**

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 232, an Act to amend The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Jess, seconded by Ms. Murrell, and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. Krawetz.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure today to stand in this Assembly and to make a few comments and to address the Assembly in regards to the Throne Speech that was recently brought forward by the current NDP government of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to begin by just noting a few comments in some of the headlines that we've seen in the papers recently in regards to Saskatchewan and the dilemma this province is facing on many issues, certainly health care, highways, whether it's education, our welfare system, or judicial system. Many of the areas that, Mr. Speaker, I think

you will realize even as the leader in this Assembly and the overseer of the Bills that are presently before the Assembly — Bills that my colleagues and I have presented — we look forward to debating in the upcoming session of the Legislative Assembly here in the province of Saskatchewan.

But when we look at this upcoming session, the interesting thing about the Throne Speech that has been presented, that the Premier of this province and this NDP government have presented to the province of Saskatchewan, as we note in many of the editorials, the comments have been basically nothing new in this legislative session.

In fact you have to ask yourself, why are we sitting in the Assembly here today?

Maybe it's time, rather than sitting here, Mr. Speaker, maybe we should be out going to the people of the province of Saskatchewan right now and asking for their opinion.

Those are some of the things that I'm hearing from the public. In fact even over the past couple of days when I . . . whether it's in the community of Maryfield where we're recognizing the hard work of volunteers for Sask Housing authority . . . or whether it's in the community of Moosomin where they're currently hosting the Saskatchewan mixed curling championships. Or as even yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the regional college in our area has integrated with the local school, both in the communities of Moosomin and Whitewood to provide a facility to provide expanded educational opportunities. Something that I've believed in and spoken about for many, many years.

And I'm pleased to see that we're expanding the use of the current educational facilities rather than building other office space while we see in rural Saskatchewan specifically, lower numbers which means it's been difficult for local school boards or area school boards to even keep the facilities open.

And you know the interesting thing, no matter where I go, Mr. Speaker, what I find is that people are coming up to me and the question is, when is the next provincial election? Well that is something that I don't have knowledge of, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if you have knowledge of. But certainly, there's one person that does know in this province, at least on one if not two or three on the government side, and that's the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we note from the Throne Speech debate that took place the other day, and that has been delivered and the debate that's been going on this Assembly, we can see that a provincial election is not far on the horizon.

Whether it's in April — the possibility still exists for it to come this spring; it's certainly there. And we acknowledge that. That's why the Saskatchewan Party is going full bore to make sure that it has the adequate candidates in place, quality candidates in place to fight the next provincial election, whether it's in June or even, Mr. Speaker, whether or not the Premier gets cold feet all of a sudden and decides he's got to wait till fall.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, I believe there was a sincere

possibility of an election last fall if it wasn't for the fact that the Plains health care centre was just such a big issue, that the government decided that we've got to close this facility immediately in order to get it out of the way before we get into the next provincial election. And in a lot of ways, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad they made that move.

Because if there's anything that has really created a lot of animosity and anger and has really turned people off in regards to the NDP Party right now it's the closure of the Plains Health Centre. It's the turmoil surrounding the access to health care services, whether it's the Regina General Hospital here in Regina or the Pasqua or other facilities in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, those issues are burning on the hearts and minds of individuals on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, just last week before . . . or pardon me, on Monday after the Throne Speech debate and after visiting with some of the visitors that had come in for the Throne Speech, I took a moment to go visit a constituent in the Regina General Hospital. And before I left I had the privilege of talking to six other individuals.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, if I had had the time to go up and down all the corridors of that facility, who knows? I might have had the privilege of meeting a number of constituents and doing a fair bit of constituency work — a lot easier than driving from one community to the next, even though it wasn't just going up a floor and walking for a few feet. You had those long corridors and trying to find your way around the General Hospital.

It was very interesting just hearing of who was in the hospital, finding out somebody else was in, and walking over and just having . . . spending a few moments to comment and just to sit down and visit and chat.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will say this, that many of the individuals I talked to, actually when they finally had the chance to get to the hospital they were pleased with the service they were getting from the caregivers.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, we need to acknowledge . . . and just chatting with some of the nurses across our province in the past few weeks, while they are becoming distressed with the amount of hours they're asked to put in, they're distressed with the fact that in many cases they feel they are not given the opportunity to really provide the type of care that they would like to provide. At the same time they are showing compassion and doing their best to reach out to meet the needs of the patients that are in their care.

And that's what I heard from a number of patients, that they were pleased with the type of care they were receiving despite the turmoil it took and the anxiety that they faced in finally getting the opportunity for the bed and having the operational procedure, whatever procedure they were facing.

(1100)

So, Mr. Speaker, health care is definitely a major concern. And despite what the NDP rhetoric is, despite what the letters to the

editor are saying, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has laid out a plan for health care. The Saskatchewan Party has made a commitment to funding of health care. The Saskatchewan Party has also indicated, more so than the NDP have, that they would certainly go after the federal government for its commitment to health care in the province of Saskatchewan, not only Saskatchewan but all of Canada.

And while the NDP, the Premier of this province, and the Health ministers and the associate ministers would like the people of Saskatchewan to believe that the Saskatchewan Party does not have a plan, Mr. Speaker, people across Canada are seeing that plan. Because the Saskatchewan Party has released a document that is indicating the direction that it would take if given the opportunity at the next provincial election call which we are looking forward to, which if the Premier wants he could call today. He can call an election today. We're ready to go to bat; we're ready to take on the New Democratic Party in a provincial election. I'm not sure the New Democratic Party are really prepared to do that right now.

But talking about some of the comments. I read here when you talk about the fact that a provincial election is on the horizon, it's . . . I quote from a recent *LeaderPost* article that says it's easy.

How can you tell a provincial election is coming? (It says), It's easy.

Premier Roy Romanow is admitting the government has made mistakes in health care.

The interesting thing about that comment, Mr. Speaker, when you look at it, is that the writer goes on to say:

Of course, the mistakes had nothing to do with closing 52 rural hospitals without having adequate home care or long-term care in place. The mistake had nothing to do with the hundreds of bed closures in larger health districts that were incapacitated by huge debt loads. They had nothing to do with gutting the provincial drug plan or the children's dental plan.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at it the article basically goes on to say, we're back where we were in 1995. The Premier now is saying, we've made mistakes. Why is he acknowledging or trying to admit he's made mistakes? He's going back to 1994 when he realized even before he had completed his first full term in government they were already facing some unhappy electorate, and the Premier said we've made mistakes and tried to cover up or cover over the mistakes.

And as the current article is indicating, we're seeing the same scenario coming into being. The Premier of this province, the NDP Premier of this province, is telling the people of Saskatchewan yes, we made mistakes. We're sorry we made mistakes.

As the article says at the end:

But if (the New Democrats) want voters to believe they've learned from past mistakes, they'll (first) have to demonstrate they recognize a mistake when they see (it).

Mr. Speaker, that's what we're asking of. We're asking of the Health minister; we're of the associate Health minister; we're asking of the Minister of Agriculture — will you finally recognize your mistakes? Rather than just saying we're sorry, we're sorry for what? Recognize where the mistakes have been made and acknowledge those facts rather than blaming somebody else. We've seen in the past that the NDP have found it very convenient to always blame somebody else.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Finance minister this morning again resorted to his blame the other guy. Blame the government of the 1980s or blame the federal Liberal government for the problems that this province is facing. Or blame the United States of America, the lending institutions, for the problems we're facing, or the low dollar in oil.

Mr. Speaker, that in my mind is not acknowledging your mistakes. You say we've made mistakes, we're sorry, but the mistakes we made are as a result of somebody else's problems that have been laid at our feet.

Mr. Speaker, it's time that the Premier of this province and this NDP government finally grew up and recognized the fact that when you make a mistake you acknowledge that. And you say yes, here's an area that we certainly fell short in, and while we're asking you to give us the benefit of the doubt, here's how we're going to address that problem. Here's how we're going to address that concern. Here's how we're going to meet the challenges of the Year 2000 and the high tax load in the province of Saskatchewan.

Here's how we're going to by . . . as a result of addressing the high tax load, we're going to take a serious bite into the problems of job creation in the province of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, has the distinction of being the worst job creator in all of Canada — the worst jurisdiction. In fact in the Throne Speech I believe, the Throne Speech as presented by the Lieutenant Governor, was a lot more . . . well closer to the reality of the number of jobs created than what was actually on paper.

But, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the job creation, this government says they created 30,000 jobs. According to the statistics we have . . . 30,000 jobs is just extending the number. Really it isn't even close. They're not really being honest. Why doesn't the government say, based on . . . looking at the stats, looking at the real jobs that have been created, here's the reality. Don't just fudge the numbers as we've seen them do in the past and say more jobs have been created than actually have been created.

Why doesn't the government basically say . . . acknowledge the fact that yes we did lose some jobs. We've lost 4,900 jobs between January of '98 to January of 1999. And when we talk about job creation, a recent letter to the editor in the *Whitewood Herald* basically talks about we see the number of job advertisements throughout the paper which seems to indicate that there are . . . a sign that the economy is doing well.

The unfortunate part in regards to this letter to the editor in the *Whitewood Herald* talking about job creation, I just drove down to Whitewood yesterday evening when I was in the community for the regional college expansion, the move to the integrated

facility, and I was surprised at some of the businesses that I saw that are actually almost closing the doors. There's very little in the front, in the businesses there, and you have to ask yourself if the economy is doing well, why are businesses closing the doors in rural Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, part of the problem we have in rural Saskatchewan — the minister knows it, the Premier knows it, his government officials, his MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) know it — is a fact that this province is driven by agriculture. In fact I believe the Minister of Agriculture, at the rally in Regina, acknowledged that 40 per cent or just over 40 per cent of the economy of this province, economic wheel of this province, is agricultural based. Our small communities rely on agriculture.

And, Mr. Speaker, once we look at the Throne Speech that was presented to us, what commitment did the government really make to its rural economy, the economic engines of this province that they need to rely on in order to provide a good, sound government for the province of Saskatchewan? To provide good, sound government, not just for rural communities but larger centres like Regina and Saskatoon as well.

Mr. Speaker, what we've seen so far we see again, the government, the Premier, or the Agriculture minister, or the Minister of Finance blaming somebody else for their problems. It's time they took their heads out of the sand and recognized that yes, we've all made mistakes. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the former premier of this province would also admit that he made mistakes during the '80s. I haven't seen anyone, including myself as an individual grown-up, I don't know of anyone who has not made mistakes in their lifetime. Hopefully we learn from our mistakes.

But as I just indicated earlier in the quote in the *Leader-Post* back in . . . or the *Star-Phoenix*, pardon me, Friday, March 19, as the writer said, hopefully the government begins to acknowledge and learn from and recognize its mistakes rather than saying we've made mistakes.

Mr. Speaker, the reason we're looking forward to this session of the Legislative Assembly is because we believe as a party that we have and are prepared and are going to present to the people of this province a clear alternative to the New Democratic Party, saying to the people of Saskatchewan, here's what the Saskatchewan Party is willing to do for you. Here, we're willing to go to bat for you.

And rather than just standing up and saying we reduced the provincial tax . . . and I guess that's another thing that comes from this letter in the *Whitewood Herald*. The letter writer talks about the MLA — the MLA for Moosomin, which is myself, Mr. Speaker — forgot that the government reduced the provincial sales tax. Mr. Speaker, I haven't forgotten that but the fact is the impression is given that the government reduced a provincial sales tax that somebody else had raised, when the realities were all the government did was reduce the provincial sales tax to the level that it was when they started, when they formed government.

And I hear the member from Regina South . . .

**The Speaker:** — Now all hon. members know that shouting across the floor is not permitted and accepted during debate and I'll ask for the co-operation of all members of the House to allow the hon. member for Moosomin to be heard.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate input from other members. And as I recall, when you hear other members entering the debate, I think, Mr. Speaker, what it indicates is you're striking a nerve. And certainly when you try to bring to the attention of the people of this province . . . when a government or the Finance minister tells you they've reduced the provincial sales tax and leave the impression, as the Premier did at the recent SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention, that his government was the government that had put \$85 million into the NISA (Net Income Stabilization Account) program rather than that it was a federal-provincial program, and this government only put \$10 million in. The federal government actually put \$75 million in.

Or when they talk about reducing the provincial sales tax. Look, they say, look at what we did: we've removed two per cent of the provincial sales tax. Mr. Speaker, it's important for the people of this province to recognize the fact that all they did was took back what they had taken in . . . or added in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to taxes in the province of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan is the second worst taxed province in this country. And we don't have to look too far, Mr. Speaker.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to note some recent documentaries on TV of individuals, individuals who . . . in fact one family who used to live in the city of Regina, and looked to Alberta . . . went to Alberta to check things out and just to see what they would have, whether there was an advantage for them to look at Alberta. They'd been hearing all these rumours of the prosperity in Alberta.

But on the other hand they were told, but you'd be paying a health-care premium, your insurance on your vehicles would be higher, and all these negatives. In the end they made the move. What did they find? They found, Mr. Speaker, after everything was said and done, they had, I believe, about \$3500 more in their pocket. That was even after they paid their health-care premium. That was even after they paid for their car insurance, which they said was less than it was in the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, for this government to continue to mislead the people of this province is unfortunate. Mr. Speaker, it's time this government recognized the fact that when they . . . and this Premier, when he says, we know we made mistakes. Well then acknowledge where you made the mistakes, and then let the people know what you plan to do as a result of those mistakes, as a result of what you've learned.

Mr. Speaker, that's why the Saskatchewan Party, almost a year — well I guess it's about seven months ago now — presented a document for the people of Saskatchewan to peruse, a document that basically says, this is the plan for the next coming election for the Saskatchewan Party. This is what we

plan to do. And we've done this after careful discussion and debate and thought in regards to whether or not it's achievable.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're pleased to say that after consultation with the WEFA Group, in fact an economic forecasting agency that the government uses on an ongoing basis, they have said yes, these programs are achievable. Yes, it is possible over the next two years to reduce the provincial sales tax by 1 per cent a year for the next two years. Yes, it is possible to reduce the personal income tax by 20 per cent over the next four years. Mr. Speaker, that's responsible.

It's not responsible to go to the public and say we're going to reduce the provincial sales tax by two points or the personal income tax by 20 per cent and just leave it at that, leaving the impression that the night after the election or the night of the election if the . . . when the people of Saskatchewan elect a Sask Party government, they're going to expect 2 per cent. No, that's irresponsible.

But it's responsible to say that you can over two years reduce the provincial sales tax to a level . . . to 5 per cent. Or 20 per cent over four years. Or over the next period of next five years of adding so many more dollars to the provincial Highway's budget, another \$40 million to the Highway's budget, and \$10 million to SARM . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Fifty million for Highways.

**Mr. Toth:** — Or \$50 million as my colleague corrects me on that.

Because, Mr. Speaker, that is another concern on the province of Saskatchewan. I mean when you look at whether it's health care, we look at our key economy, highways have a major impact and play a major role in the trade of this province. And so far this government has not shown a very clear commitment to highway reconstruction in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we realize, we realize that this province has the largest highways base in the province . . . in all of Canada. But it's imperative that the government make a commitment to highway maintenance and repair in the province of Saskatchewan.

Why do I say that, Mr. Speaker? Not just because the people have to travel up and down those roads. Not just because we're hoping to bring tourists into the province of Saskatchewan. But as well, Mr. Speaker, what we find, we find that ambulance drivers are complaining to us about the conditions of highways. In fact patients that I've talked to just recently, individuals who were brought into the city of Regina in an ambulance complained about the terrible ride that they had to endure, oh, for an hour, an hour and a half, two hours — in some cases three hours — as a result of the problems in our highway system and the need to address that situation.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has presented and people are looking at our plan. And people are saying yes, that looks like it's an achievable plan. Yes, we're looking at in fact many . . . as I found the other day an individual who delivers mail for Canada Post said to me I'm going to, I need to buy a membership from you; it's time we got rid of the New

Democratic government in this province and got a real government in the province of Saskatchewan. I hear that on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many areas that I could delve into; there's so many areas that I could talk about. I could talk about welfare and I could talk about the welfare numbers. And I'm looking forward to the opportunity to debate some of the issues in regards to welfare and its implementation, in fact with the current new minister of welfare in regards to the program that was introduced last spring regarding helping low income families.

Because I've had families come to me who've asked what do I do? And we've gone to the department and it just seems the answers we've been getting are totally contradictory to what the former Health minister had spoken of — his vision for health care reform and giving people an opportunity to not only provide for themselves but to really remove themselves from the grips of welfare and give them that real opportunity to get into the workforce.

(1115)

We find, Mr. Speaker, just from the people that have come into my office, they feel that welfare is letting them down; that it's not giving them that opportunity. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, another area we feel it's imperative that we help people, whether it's through educational programs . . . And, Mr. Speaker, let me correct you. Educational programs will not do anything unless there is not a job ready for that individual to enter into.

And those are some of the things that Saskatchewan Party wants to address and bring forward as we enter the debate in this session of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just take a moment to talk about agriculture. Coming back to agriculture again and the recent federally announced program or joint federal program. It's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that it took so long for the province and for this NDP Premier to recognize the difficulty that agriculture is facing today.

And as a result of that difficulty small businesses, main street businesses in our small communities . . . in fact one individual . . . Yesterday I stopped at a equipment dealer and he made a comment about a person who'd been in his office the day before. And his comment was, in one community if you shot a gun down main street you wouldn't have to worry because there was nobody on the street it was so quiet. That's how quiet it was.

People aren't used to seeing streets where you can drive into town and basically there's nobody in town. Small communities, usually you have people milling around downtown whether they're doing a lot of business or in town. But it's just a reflection, Mr. Speaker, of the difficult days we're facing in agriculture.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that this Premier didn't take the time to call the federal Prime Minister and really demand

assistance and really bring to the attention of the federal Prime Minister that there is a real need in agriculture.

And the need — and we acknowledge it, Mr. Speaker — the need comes as a result of international trade problems that have arisen, and trade negotiations, and some of the tariff barriers and the subsidies that we're facing.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's imperative that we have a government in this province that takes to task a federal government that does not accept its responsibility. But at the same time we need to have a government that will recognize the importance of agriculture and will begin to lead the way in bringing forward a program that is fair and equitable.

And I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, as our caucus we talked about an acreage payment basically . . . while we use the word acreage payment, it's unfortunate we couldn't do like the Americans. Just recently the Americans announced that the floor price for durum will be, I believe it's 5.35 or \$5.65 American. And how are they implementing that program? They're using the crop insurance program to do that. And they're using the crop insurance program so that it gets around the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) rules and some of the other trade rules.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's time that even as . . . in a province where we are so strongly tied to agriculture that we starting looking at and coming up with ideas and presenting them to our federal governments and saying, these are some of the issues that we believe you can take to the international trade table and say if you're going to work . . . if you're going to apply programs in this manner, then our country will respond likewise.

And I realize that when I say that, Mr. Speaker, that we do not have the populace base, that we do not have the population to consume the ability of the farm products that we produce.

But I believe, Mr. Speaker, we need to go to the international trade table with an argument — not only an argument — but a plan that says here's how we plan to address current situations unless you start to respond to some of the grievance we've done in the past. Rather than leaving our farmers out in the cold as we've seen.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I are looking forward with great anticipation to the ongoing debate that will take place in this Assembly. But I would have to say this, while we're looking forward to taking our place in this Assembly and speaking out on behalf of our constituents and the constituency of this province, we're looking forward even with greater debate . . . greater anticipation of the upcoming election that we anticipate will be announced in the very near future. Who knows whether it's announced after a few days after the delivery of the budget, next Friday.

I don't know, Mr. Speaker, but we have already laid out a plan. We are continuing to present that plan so the people of this province can see what the Saskatchewan Party is going to present to this province. And, Mr. Speaker, we take great delight in being here as a voice for the constituency that we represent.

I take great delight in being here to represent the constituency of Moosomin. To bring forward the areas of concern and care whether it's in agriculture; whether it's in our small communities and business communities; whether it's in the area of health care, welfare reform, or highways.

Mr. Speaker, it is certainly an honour — I count it an honour — to be here as a member of the Saskatchewan Party, to be an elected representative in the province of Saskatchewan to speak out and to offer ideas.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think you will be pleased to note as well that not only will we be critical of the government in areas, we will be putting forward ideas that we believe that if the government implemented some of these ideas they could really be of benefit to the people in the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's with great pleasure that I have had this opportunity to stand here and to address some of the concerns we have, to bring to the attention of the electorate of the province many of the shortfalls we see in the Throne Speech before us. I thank you for your time.

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise to give my first speech to the Assembly on behalf of my constituents in Saskatoon Eastview.

Mr. Speaker, let me say a few words about Saskatoon Eastview. It is a very special constituency. It is blessed with a great mix of families, businesses, schools, and services. I'm very thrilled that I'm representing a constituency that has the highest concentration of seniors in Canada. It is a great honour to be able to represent a constituency of people and I take this task very seriously.

I've been happy to meet with many people, both in the campaign and since my election. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who supported me and worked hard on my behalf after I made the decision to change directions and become a member of this Legislative Assembly.

I want to thank my colleagues on this side of the House for their support, and also my cabinet colleagues for their support and encouragement. It has been very much appreciated while I have been on this steep learning curve during the past six months. People helping people is the Saskatchewan way.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank my family for the support they have given me over the last year as I entered public office. I'd like to thank my husband Don, for his patience and understanding. Politics runs in our family: Don's father was a long-serving city councillor in Saskatoon and I am pleased to follow in his example of public service.

I'd also like to mention my son, Sean, who was just elected as president of the Students' Union at the University of Saskatchewan.

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Sean and I have had many interesting

political discussions over the last year and he was active in my campaign to get elected.

I would also like to thank my daughter Heather who has also supported me and worked on my campaign. I take this opportunity to welcome Heather to Regina, as she has taken a new job here in the city and become a proud homeowner.

My parents and my sisters as well as our extended family have also been very supportive and often phone me with advice and comments.

I'd also like to thank many of my previous colleagues in the nursing profession who supported me and who continue to support and encourage me. In my previous position, I had the honour of working on that constituency's behalf for five years.

As president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, I was able to bring forward the concerns of nurses across the province and ensure that they were taken into consideration. We worked to improve . . . to improve the working conditions and remuneration for our members and worked with other labour organizations to promote our issues.

Last year I decided that health care in Saskatchewan was so important that I wanted to try and influence its development from a different place, and that place is here, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Health and health care is so important to me that I changed directions and put my name forward in the Saskatoon Eastview by-election in the hopes that I could bring the experience of my career as a nurse and a health provider to the government decision-making process. I wanted to make a small contribution to the future of medicare.

I'd like to talk about what attracted me to run in the Eastview by-election. It was the record of this government and the commitment to continue to build on that record. This government embraces change, Mr. Speaker. This government has a forward vision. This government keeps its promises to manage government responsibly. Simply put, we are the best managers of government for the province of Saskatchewan.

Our programs are seen by the world, from Taiwan to Spain to South Africa to the Ukraine, as models and as the best there is. Our programs win awards and our civil servants are seen as innovative and dedicated in health care, in education, highways, social services, economic development, justice, and fiscal management. This is the government that the people trust. This government has balanced the budget, reduced the debt, and reduced taxes. Mr. Speaker, this is no small feat.

Mr. Speaker, I've walked in my nurse's shoes for many years. I understand clearly the issues in health both in the workplace and in the community. I wanted to serve the people of the Saskatoon Eastview constituency and Saskatchewan because I felt that as a nurse I could address those issues with this government to improve health services all over the province in both rural and urban areas, in large cities and small towns.

Improvements such as providing health services where they've

never been previously available by providing access to an expanded number and variety of services for the people across the province; by providing funding for the operation of new technology that better diagnoses the ailments of Saskatchewan people; and by working on new initiatives to improve the waiting times that people face when they need some types of surgery.

I know that this government will continue to work on improving services like home care, mental health, therapy, and rehabilitation services — services that in many places come to the people rather than the people going to them.

Kidney dialysis and chemotherapy now come to people and are available to them without them having to travel long distances. And services are now available in more convenient settings than ever before so that people can go to one place to receive their services rather than having to go all over town or into the city.

Our government's promise to move forward with enhancements to our health services, to care delivery, health promotion, and illness disease prevention, has validated my decision to join the government and continues to do so with the promises in the Throne Speech.

For example, our government has promised to decrease waiting times for surgical procedures, improve women's health with a multi-year plan to address the critical needs for women's health, make important improvements to cancer treatment in the province, improve working conditions for health care workers.

What gives me renewed hope and indeed excitement as we move into the new millennium is the fact that our government has built the best health care system in the world, and that Saskatchewan continues to lead in innovative health practices.

I have been across the country and can say with certainty and confidence that I am proud to be part of this government.

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The Minister of Health and I met last night with Shirley Douglas, health activist and daughter of Tommy Douglas, and Pat Armstrong, author and professor, both from Ontario. We discussed the totally privatized home care system in Ontario and the negative impact on the quality of services and the increased cost that has resulted from this. They told us about cases such as a woman with a double mastectomy who was sent home on the second day after surgery with no support and having to make her own arrangements.

Mr. Speaker, privatization is all around us. Most significantly in Ontario, but knocking at the door in Alberta and Manitoba. And the door is being pried open by these Tory governments. I am more convinced than ever that despite some mistakes, some false starts, we have the best health care system in the world. This is the only government that will keep the door shut.

It's very easy to criticize and finger point. That's the job of the opposition. But frankly, Mr. Speaker, I am appalled at the lack of real understanding about health and health care issues that are demonstrated by the questions and concerns that the opposition raises. I've been surprised at the genuine lack of

concern demonstrated by using people's stories to advance a political agenda.

(1130)

It would benefit all of the opposition to learn about health issues so that their constituents have the benefit of accurate information and thoughtful criticism that seeks to improve the health system. Let me give you an example, Mr. Speaker.

The current shortage of nurses is a national and international issue. There are many factors at work here. One of these . . . one of the major ones is the way we offer work to health workers. There has been a national trend towards casualizing the workforce in health instead of paying attention to workload and planning for change.

Mr. Speaker, people need permanent jobs. They need security to be able to plan and to be able to have time with their families. The kind of work atmosphere where people are secure and happy is the kind we want to have in Saskatchewan because that is one of the ways to improve services. I've been able to provide my thoughts on this issue as we work on a strategy to retain and recruit health professionals.

I'd like to talk for a few minutes about how I see the health systems of the future. We're always moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, when we began health reform we were governed by more than 400 separate boards which operated hospitals, nursing homes, home care, and other services. We now have 32 health districts and one health authority. We've come a long way. Administrative structures have been greatly reduced. Coordination has been greatly increased with health services now linked.

We have achieved much, but there is always more work to be done. We can always improve efficiency and coordination, we can always expand services to communities, we can always look at new ways to provide services.

Mr. Speaker, I always prefer to discuss the positive things that have happened and to think about ways to expand services according to needs assessment and continuing innovation. Mr. Speaker, since becoming the Associate Minister of Health, I have visited many places in Saskatchewan. I've visited Humboldt, Fort Qu'Appelle, Lestock, Borden, Weyburn, and Big River, Estevan, Indian Head, Redvers, Hafford, Nipawin, Tisdale, and Prince Albert.

I've been from Gull Lake to Black Lake. Mr. Speaker, I've eaten caribou in Black Lake and it was delicious.

In every place, people were very pleased to tell me about the innovative programs that they are providing to their patients and residents and to their greater community. People are eager to contribute their thoughts and ideas to the health system and are proud to be solving problems.

Mr. Speaker, we need to recognize that there is more to health than just treatment. We need to work towards moving towards a more preventative system. And in Saskatchewan, we have moved. More and more health providers, administrators, and

citizens are recognizing that we have a responsibility to try and prevent disease and accidents.

I'd like to talk about the determinants of health for a few moments; those things that determine how healthy we are. One of the greatest determinants, Mr. Speaker, is our level of education. That, more than almost anything else, determines how healthy we are for the rest of our lives. Our education influences our economic welfare.

Another very important determinant is how we experience our first few years of life. Yes, Mr. Speaker, those first few years of life are so important that Saskatchewan people work together and now once again lead the way with our child action plan. Our government has developed some very innovative programs such as the successful mothers' support program, the provincial parenting education project, six youth wellness centres, and school link services to children at risk of failure.

These are very important programs. They have a long-term focus, and once again, they are part of a collaborative process that involves people from all sectors and all parts of the province. We now have a council on children, a new Children's Advocate, and have regional action plan committees. I am proud to have joined a government with such accomplishments.

The child action plan received national recognition last fall in Ottawa, and our Premier received the award of Champion for Children on behalf of our province — another great achievement for the people of Saskatchewan, another example of Saskatchewan leading the way.

We also need to educate people about how maintaining a healthy lifestyle can prevent many diseases. And we need to make our youth aware of dangerous behaviours and risk-taking, on how doing something like catching some air on a skateboard or a trick bicycle, or diving into unknown waters, or driving without a seat belt, can have devastating effects on the rest of a teenager's life and the life of his family and friends. Reducing accidents and disease is one way to ensure that we have resources to do other things in health care.

And in the true Saskatchewan way — because when accidents happen, people require treatment and rehabilitation over many years — we have developed an innovative program called the acquired brain injury project that identifies people with brain injuries and works with them. This program, like so many programs in Saskatchewan, was the result of needs assessment, analysis, policy development and collaboration with the end result an exciting and innovative solution.

Mr. Speaker, identifying the problem and working collaboratively towards a solution is the Saskatchewan way. Developing programs based on strong science are always better than just throwing money at a problem.

Mr. Speaker, the introduction of seat belts and the later implementation of the mandatory use of seat belts was a major step in reducing the carnage and devastating injury associated with accidents. This is another example of how a problem was identified and a solution reached that helped us reduce accidents and injuries. We need to apply that scientific method to our problems and seek solutions.



We need a health system that meets the needs of all residents in the province through the provisions of the services that they need. We need tertiary hospitals that provide the best diagnostic and acute care that is available for treating people who have complex medical conditions that require the attention of specialists and subspecialists. We have those in Regina and Saskatoon. And we need to work hard to ensure that those facilities stay state-of-the-art.

We also need smaller hospitals around the province that provide surgical and acute services as well as provide a place for visiting services to come in and meet the needs of the residents. We need other types of centres and facilities that provide good emergency and acute services according to the needs of the local community.

And we need to continue to build on our system of emergency responders, ambulance services, air ambulances, and medical evacuation systems throughout the province. These kinds of initiatives will address many of the concerns of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the pioneers of this province were independent people. There are many seniors now who were with us in 1905 when this province joined the Dominion of Canada. Many of these same seniors have told us that they wish to remain independent as long as possible. And we have listened to them and have provided increased funding to home care. This helps people stay in their homes, come home from hospital early, or even in some cases have care at home that was previously only available in a hospital.

I'd like to see primary health services around the province of the kind which were so eloquently described by the CEO (chief executive officer) of the Prince Albert health district, Mr. Stan Rice, in the *Leader-Post* yesterday. The title of this article is called "Defining primary health care."

The federal/provincial/territorial ministers advisory committee on health services offers this definition (of primary health care): "primary health care is the foundation of our health system. It is the care provided at the first level of contact with the health system — where people first enter the health system and where all health services are mobilized and co-ordinated. It includes education and activities to maintain health, as well care for common illness, minor injury and management of ongoing problems."

Mr. Rice goes on to say that single client and client family needs are complicated. And that's the truth. Health needs are very complicated. Mr. Rice says that the formation of health districts helps coordinate health services. I think we know that now. And he reinforces many of the things I'm saying today, that co-operation and collaboration are essential to meet the needs of any person or group of people.

People have heard me talk about primary health services before, like Mr. Rice, and although this is not a new model I believe that this model is the wave of the future. And it will provide many services for Saskatchewan residents across the province, both in rural and urban settings, and will meet many needs that are currently unmet.

For many communities it will provide an enhancement to current services. A primary health centre can be located in a hospital, in a clinic, or in a variety of settings.

Primary health services will mean that many nurses with additional training as advanced clinical nurses, or ACNs, will work as a team with a doctor. There may also be nutritionists, dieticians, social workers, physiotherapists, and perhaps a dentist. People would have access to a wide variety of services in one location. Services could be much better coordinated. Now that's innovation.

While there are many programs we can provide, we also need to provide long-term care for people whose medical needs can no longer be met in the community.

We need to ensure we have the appropriate number of beds for those people of all ages, and that our facilities are flexible to also provide respite, palliative care, transition beds, special units for Alzheimer patients, and other groups of people of special needs.

Our system has to look to the future, while at the same time meeting the needs of our residents now. And that's a tall order. A goal like that can only be reached by working collaboratively with all interested sectors across the province.

Like I said before, Mr. Speaker, I am an optimist. And I believe that Saskatchewan people can achieve anything they set their minds to.

My experience in the health system has taught me that our health is of prime concern to each of us and it is my opinion that the concerns of our constituents merit better attention than having them used as a political football.

It is very difficult to design and implement a system that meets the health needs of our citizens balanced with what we can afford as taxpayers, given the constantly changing nature of technology and medical practices. The job of the government is to ensure that we are agents of this balanced change.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I decided to run for public office to contribute to the betterment of health services in our province. I felt that my experience would be of assistance and I was pleased to become a member of this New Democratic Party and this government.

Our government has a commitment to medicare and we have the people's mandate to continue to build a Saskatchewan that we and our grandchildren can afford and, most importantly, that not only meets our needs today but well into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to open my response to the Speech from the Throne by commenting and complimenting the member for Saskatoon Eastview on a very fine maiden speech, and a thoughtful speech it was.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — I know that that hon. member brings a great deal to this Legislative Assembly and to the Government of Saskatchewan and therefore to the people of Saskatchewan.

And I was listening with a great deal of interest to her remarks, particularly as they revolved around health care, health care being, simply put, the biggest issue certainly in the north end of Regina, in Regina Coronation Park, the area that I am honoured to continue to represent on behalf of the people there. Health care is huge. It's a concern and it's one that I'm delighted to say we have moved on and moved in very significant ways.

Not insignificantly is the recent report of the task team on surgical waiting lists. And the Minister of Health and Associate Minister of Health both have been commenting on that in the last couple of days. And I'm very pleased to see some of those positive moves that are going to be taking place so that we can reduce waiting lists for people. Because after all that's what health care is all about is how the system impacts on individuals, whoever they are, and particularly how it impacts on us and responds to our needs when we need it. And so I'm pleased with that.

I'm also more than a little bit pleased, now that the Regina General Hospital and the Pasqua Hospital are up and running in their renovated state, their built-on state, to say that I'm pleased that Regina has now got an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). It's the first time we've ever had that. And certainly I could argue that we should have had that some years ago but the hard truth is, this is when we got it. And I look forward to all of the wondrous things that that will do to help medical professionals deal with my constituents and all of the people of certainly southern Saskatchewan.

Also pleased, this should take some of the pressure off of the existing MRI in Saskatoon because currently Regina and southern Saskatchewan people have gone to Saskatoon for MRI tests.

As — I don't know whether to say as significantly because I'm not a medical doctor — but at the risk of being medically unsound, I'm going to say as significantly there's a number of other improvements that have taken place. One is we've got a spiral CAT (computerized axial tomography) scan in both the General and the Pasqua Hospital. CAT scan, in layman's terms, the old existing CAT scans, a person would lay out on the table and the machine would take pictures much like slicing a carrot. And I'm told that from start to finish it would take about an hour until your physician could see the images of your body, the X-rays if I could describe it that way, out, and then decide what is the appropriate method of treating.

Well, this is all fine and good except when you're in an emergency situation. The emergency could be caused by a vehicle accident or it could be something that comes in the normal course of our lives anyway. With the spiral CAT scan, the machine actually revolves around the person and takes pictures. I'm told it's less than 15 minutes from the time the patient gets on the table until the physician or surgeon can be looking at the X-rays and determining, and determining, what the course of action is.

Now we've got a spiral CAT scan in both hospitals in Regina

— both of the major ones — and that's a major, major improvement to health care particularly to emergency health care in southern Saskatchewan.

The other thing that I'm delighted with is that we've now got a second cath lab for open heart surgery. Again that doubles the effective capacity to do open heart surgery in southern Saskatchewan, from one to two. For years we had one cath lab; now there are two — both of them located at the Regina General Hospital.

(1145)

And I can't . . . I hear the Tory Party saying, is it up and running yet? And of course you know the answer to that, yes it is. Yes it is. Even the Conrad Black press couldn't ignore that the second cath lab is up and running. Even the Conrad Black, even the Conrad Black media couldn't ignore the fact that we've now got zero wait list with respect to open heart surgery or heart procedures in southern Saskatchewan.

This is part of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well now the question is, is the MRI up yet? You know I really look forward . . . I thought you had an opportunity to speak in this Throne Speech debate just the other day. And it's really, really interesting because I have already addressed the MRI and I invite the member to listen.

The MRI is being installed at the Regina General. It's a matter of a short period of time and the MRI will be up and running. And I very much, very much look forward to the wondrous things that that will do.

Something that I have not heard any of my colleagues mention is the two First Nations healing centres that are now built in to the two hospitals in Regina, Mr. Speaker. And it is very important because medical healing is more than simply injections or slice-and-dice surgery, if you'll have it that way.

There's also a mental health component to it, and mental health and spiritual health often fall very closely together. And it's really, really heartening to see that the Regina Health District and the Department of Health, the government have worked so diligently to make these two First Nations healing centres, Aboriginal healing centres a reality — one at the General and one at the Pasqua Hospital.

And I'm really pleased to tell you that these healing centres are, or spiritual healing centres, are being utilized and being used and it's just one more step in how health care has improved.

Just the other day, again in this report on the task team on surgical waiting lists, with that and attached to that there's going to be improvements in cancer treatment. One of the things that has been a problem is cancer treatments. The wait from the time of diagnosis until the start of treatment has been longer than we would like and the target is to reduce that time and get it to a more acceptable level.

I'm really pleased with that, and I'm really pleased, Mr. Speaker, with what is happening respecting home care in the province, where there has been a virtual doubling of the dollars, the funding. Because home care cannot exist without funding.

Any health procedure cannot exist without funding. And I'm delighted to tell you that the numbers of people utilizing home care has just risen dramatically.

And this allows, as the Minister of Health said in question period, what it allows is for people to spend much more time at home as opposed to being in a nursing home. Now I hear that the old Tory Party calling for . . . or crying for new nursing homes to be built. And I find it real interesting because I have an opportunity and make use of that opportunity to visit nursing homes from time to time.

Invariably what I find when I'm talking with families of people in a nursing home, invariably what they say is this nursing home — whether it's the William Booth nursing home in my constituency, whether it's Pioneer Village or the Santa Maria in other parts of Regina, it doesn't matter where — invariably what they say is this nursing home does a terrific job; they're really looking after mom or dad or grandma or grandpa, whoever, my neighbour, whoever it is. Really a good nursing home. That's universal.

And then the next comment is, you know, God willing, I won't have to spend any time in a nursing home. And I know that most of us feel that way, Mr. Speaker. Most of us do not wish to spend the twilight of our lives in a nursing home.

Home care helps enable people to live independently, to remain in their own homes, whether their home is a house or an apartment or a seniors' high-rise — that's immaterial. They can stay in their own homes much longer and maintain independence, which all of the health studies, all of the credible health studies in the universe say prolongs quality of life and the longevity of life. In other words, we'll live longer, we'll be healthier, we'll be happier, the more independence we can maintain.

So we've got the priorities basically correct. I'd love to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that there's never any problem in health care. It's just not based on any reality. Unfortunately there are some problems.

But what amazes me is that there are 35,000 Saskatchewan residents that deal with the health care system each and every day of the year — 35,000. And all that we can get is one or two — that's all the Conrad Black media can come up with — is one or two a week where there's a problem.

And what amazes me, Mr. Speaker, is as easy to get along with as I am, I can't look you in the eye or anyone else in the eye and say, you know of the last 35,000 individuals that I spoke to, there were no problems.

I've had disagreements with people. I'll bet you that there's people out there that would love to — I have to use parliamentary language — but would love to not say nice things about me, out of the 35,000 last people I spoke to. And I do maintain that one on one I'm a pretty reasonable guy to talk to.

Now why should it be hugely different in the health care field when we've got so many people in such a critical situation presenting themselves to the health care system, people who are in all states of health, from frankly dying to curable, and

somehow everyone has a different expectation of what the health system can do for them.

Sometimes communications are not as good as they should be and sometimes treatments go off the railway track, if I can use that metaphor. But it's amazing that there aren't a lot more problems with respect to health care than what the Tories and Conrad Black media can come with.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I have a note here under this. I wanted to talk a little bit about now, having addressed health care, at least my opening remarks on health care, I wanted to talk a little bit about a quote out of the newspaper, and it's a Murray Mandryk article. And what he says here, and I'll just quote, I'll quote one paragraph from Murray Mandryk, where Murray writes:

The unspoken message from the New Democrats here is one designed to malign the Saskatchewan Party as nothing more than a repeat of the evil, corrupt Tories of the 1980s.

He goes in brackets:

(Come to think of it, it hasn't even been all that unspoken . . .

Well that's what Murray Mandryk writes. We're not all that unspoken in our criticism of the Sask Party, the old Tories, the 1980 Devine Tories. And it's true. Why would we be unspoken about it, Mr. Speaker. Why would we be silent about the Saskatchewan Tories and their record.

This ragtag group of people, Mr. Speaker, that haven't had the decency to say we're sorry. That haven't had the decency, that haven't had the decency to cut the ties with the Tory Party — have not had the decency to cut the ties with the Tory Party. The financial support, the financial support of the Saskatchewan Party is the old metro fund of the Tory Party. Imagine that, Mr. Speaker. And they wonder why it is that we call them Tories.

I always thought if it looks like a dog, it barks like a dog, it probably is a dog . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, exactly. If you hit it with a stone and it yelps, that's a little extra confirmation, it's a dog.

How is it, how is it, how is it that all of this . . . and I'm going to outline a bit of this little problem to show that they're not the Tories. It seems to me that one of the things you'd want to do is not take Tory money. Cut the ties. Two things — apologize, but cut the financial ties, cut the financial ties.

I want to quote a few things here. The question is, what financial ties? And I'm coming to that. I'm coming to that.

I want to quote again from Mr. Mandryk who says, and I quote: "Of course interim leader" . . . I can't use the name. I guess I could because it's a quote, but I won't. Everyone knows who the leader of the . . . everyone who cares knows who the interim Leader of the Saskatchewan Party is. But he:

. . . said last August that the new party was not taking the PC (Progressive Conservative) metro fund with it. What's important to note though is that the interim leader's response

was in the present tense — not the future.

The member for Canora is your interim leader that made that quote — your seatmate, your seatmate actually. It's interesting that you would ask who made that statement when it's your seatmate that made the statement printed in the *Leader-Post*, November 13, 1997.

Now the Sask Tories have done polling recently and there is media speculation about how that polling got paid for. There is considerable speculation that the metro fund paid for that polling. There is considerable speculation that the PC metro fund paid for that. There is considerable speculation in the media that that's what's happening.

You know, it's interesting isn't it? If it looks like a dog, if it runs like a dog, if it smells like a dog, and you throw a rock at it and it yelps, it's likely a dog.

I want to talk about the secret PC fund here for a minute. I want to talk . . . My goodness, lo and behold, I have actually one of my favourite reporters, Murray Mandryk, I'm quoting from again here. And amongst other things, I'm going to quote, I'm going to quote a paragraph here that says from Mr. Emsley, and he says, quote:

"It's a private fund," said Emsley, believed to be involved in the new Saskatchewan Party, although he would neither confirm nor deny his involvement when asked.

He said, (quote), "We're not obliged to talk about it."

Well that's interesting, that's interesting that Mr. Emsley wouldn't want to talk about it because here's something about Mr. Emsley, MLA accountability — and this is printed in the *Leader-Post* again, November 2, '98:

MLA accountability statements filed with the Speaker of the legislature offer another connection to the past. All eight members of the Saskatchewan Party hired a Regina company called Charlton Communications to provide advertising services during '97-98. The amounts ranged from \$500 in the case of . . . (the member for Saltcoats) to \$12,000 for . . . (the member for Souris-Cannington).

The officers of Charlton Communications all had close ties with the Devine government, Mr. Speaker. I want to repeat that because of the case that we're building, and why it is that we're not so silent about the opposition Tories. I repeat from the paper:

The officers of Charlton Communications all had close ties to the Devine government. Company president Mary Lynn Charlton was the executive assistant to former Finance minister, Lorne Hepworth.

Corporate secretary Doug Emsley — remember Doug Emsley? Remember Doug Emsley. He was the . . . Who was Doug Emsley? He was Devine's assistant principal secretary. And oh, he is also the keeper of the PC (Progressive Conservative) trust fund. Oh, did I read that right? Keeper of the PC trust fund. Oh. It seems to me there's some pretty close ties here. It seems to me that the Sask Tories have only run up a flag of convenience.

This is the difference. A flag of convenience.

**An Hon. Member:** — Step outside and say that.

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, the member for Cannington asked me to step outside and say that. I just want to share with the . . . I just want to share with the hon. member that I have been attending events around the province. And I have been saying it as loudly as I possibly can that the Tories are flying a flag of convenience. I say it at every opportunity I get and not because I want to just wail upon the Tories.

It is easy to do that, but what's fundamentally at stake here, Mr. Speaker, is we have to understand the past to understand where we're going. And what I mean by this is that when you look at a group of Tories that haven't said I'm sorry, that haven't cut their financial ties with their old ship of state, the Tory Party, that simply fly a flag of convenience. Why would we think that the Tory Party has changed at all?

And, Mr. Speaker, it is important, it is fundamentally important that the people of Saskatchewan at every opportunity understand that this is the same old, same old, tired, tired group.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we've got May 26, 1998. I've got a story. This one is in the *Leader-Star News* credited Mark Wyatt. "Tories got \$185,000 from big trust fund."

And it reads:

The Progressive Conservatives grabbed another \$185,000 out of a multimillion dollar trust fund before the party went into hibernation last year.

It goes on:

The Conservatives used the secret fund to amass over \$2 million while the party was in power during the 1980s. The party has been dipping into the fund, which is operated by an arms-length board of trustees, throughout the 1990s to fund election campaigns and ongoing operations.

Well I just want to finish this by reading the last paragraph of this "Tories got 185,000 from big trust fund."

The last paragraph says:

Former PC executive director Tom Lukiwski said the party executive received the money in two or three installments to help pay for operating expenses. The final installment of \$30,000 to \$40,000 was received during the final months of 1997, after the vote to put the party into . . . (hibernation).

Into "hiatus" is what the quote properly says, Mr. Speaker.

There's another story in the *Leader-Post*, Friday, November 14, that says, "Dissolve Tory trust fund." "Dissolve Tory trust fund."

There's another story Wednesday, November 12. "PC trust fund ignores party vote." Ignores party vote.

So Mr. Emsley runs the trust fund. Mr. Emsley, who does communication work for the Sask Tories. Isn't it interesting, Mr. Speaker.

I've heard some heckling from across the way, but I haven't heard not one member say, oh, we're different. Not one. Not one saying, oh, we're different. We've changed. We've seen . . . Not one has said we're sorry. Not one member has said we're sorry.

And in fact, I look and two of the members sitting there right now ran — when Grant Devine was leader — ran for the Tories. One is a former Tory leader . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It's three, is it?

**An Hon. Member:** — Yes.

**Mr. Trew:** — I thought so. Three. Change my two to three.

Mr. Speaker, we need people to understand that the new Saskatchewan Party that says it has no plans to dip into the two and a half million dollars of secret political donations, but that same one-time Tory is still in charge . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Where did the PC metro fund come from?

**An Hon. Member:** — Where did it come from?

**Mr. Trew:** — Yes, very, very interesting, and I can tell you that having been in opposition for the second and final term of the former Tory government, there is some very good question about where the PC fund came from.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, we've got — I can't stress this enough — we've got a Saskatchewan Party, Saskatchewan Tory Party that says: we're not the Tories; we're not the old PCs; we're a new party. And members opposite are kind of chuckling at this, Mr. Speaker, and they're laughing about this. They say, yes, well . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Where did you come from? Take a look in the 1998 Regina phone book. Take a look there — where did you come from. What do we have on page 642? Interestingly, at the top it says "Plumbing — Political." Plumbing, political. Well let's see what the plumbers did with the Saskatchewan Party.

Here we have "Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan" . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Their address, yes — 1637 Victoria Avenue. Okay. Then we have in the same book, same page, "The Saskatchewan Party." What's the address?

**An Hon. Member:** — Same address.

**Mr. Trew:** — Oh, must be a typo: 1637 Victoria Avenue. I thought that's the same address. Well. Maybe . . . well let's check the phone number. Maybe there's a difference there. Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan: 359 1055. The Saskatchewan Party: 359 1638. Yes, different phone number. Thank goodness you did that. At least had some decency. Same address, same head office, same people working there.

Isn't it interesting, isn't it interesting that the Saskatchewan Party formed in the dead of the night, first opportunity they had,

Mr. Speaker, in the morning, they had a press conference. What did we find out? Who was the chief of staff under the Tories? Who was the chief of staff under the Tories? Reg Downs, yes. Who's your chief of staff . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, same guy, Reg Downs. Who is your executive director? Who was the executive director of the . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. I must remind the hon. member from Regina Coronation Park to address his comments through the Chair and not across to the floor.

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the question is who is Tom Lukiwski? Former executive director of the Progressive Conservatives of Saskatchewan, now executive director of Saskatchewan Party.

Didn't change a thing. Didn't change a thing. They haven't changed a thing, Mr. Speaker. This phone book just blows me away — an interesting attempt at plumbing, plumbing up their failing political futures. Trying to stick a finger in the hole in the dike.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in question period earlier today I heard the member from Melfort-Tisdale was raising some question and saying that Alberta somehow was the place that we should be living. Alberta — a place that we should live. Can you imagine? Alberta? And he was holding up Alberta as a place that was somehow a better place to live.

Well he was arguing, the member from Melfort-Tisdale was arguing that Saskatchewan needs to reduce the E&H (health and education) tax from 7 to 5 cents and he was arguing for a 20 per cent reduction in income tax. And how is it that you would compare that . . . how do you square that with reality?

We had Grant Devine an ag economist — pardon me, an agriculture economist — was Leader of the Conservative Party. Grant Devine introduced tax cuts. What was the offshoot of that?

Let me put it another way, Mr. Speaker. If tax cuts were alone going to make any economy grow, Saskatchewan should have an economy three times the size it does, three times the size it does.

The Tories were in office from 1982, April 1982, to October 21, 1991. They had all kinds of opportunity to reduce taxes. It seems to me that the flat tax wasn't exactly a tax reduction. I know as I fill out my income tax now, I look at that flat tax and I remember where it came — from the Tories, from the Devine Tories, Mr. Speaker. That's where it came.

But they did, they eliminated the gas tax. If that was going to somehow get Saskatchewan going, surely we could have been going. Well eliminating the gas tax in the '80s did get things going because from 1987 to '89, in their second term of office, Saskatchewan lost 30,000 people. Moved out more than moved in — 30,000. Just incredible. People were not saying this was a good time.

Back to the member from Melfort-Tisdale, Mr. Speaker, who was arguing in question period for lower taxes. And my question is, if we have to compete with Alberta, I want Alberta

to try and compete with this. How is it that between 1992 and 1997 Saskatchewan had the highest rate of economic growth in all of Canada — higher than Alberta?

How is it that with respect to nominal gross domestic product, Mr. Speaker, in that same '92 to '97 period, nominal gross domestic product, Saskatchewan's GDP grew 30.9 per cent; Alberta's grew 26.3? Saskatchewan advantage.

How about real per capita, real per capita GDP? Why don't we . . . you want to talk real dollars, real per person GDP, real per person GDP, real gross domestic product per person. Well let's look at that. Saskatchewan's grew from '92 to '97 by 20.3 per cent; Alberta's grew by 13 per cent. Tick another Saskatchewan advantage, Mr. Speaker.

What about personal income growth? Personal income. I don't know how it gets any better than what goes into each person's pocket. Personal income '92 to '97 — Saskatchewan's personal income grew by 11 per cent. Alberta's grew by 9.3 per cent in that same time. Tick, Saskatchewan advantage. Average weekly earnings, Mr. Speaker? From 1992 to 1998 Saskatchewan's average weekly earnings grew by 14.5 per cent, Alberta's by 13 per cent. Tick, Saskatchewan advantage.

(1215)

Earlier today it was mentioned, earlier today it was mentioned . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I don't blame them for being touchy about it. Nobody likes to hear the truth.

Earlier today it was mentioned that Saskatchewan may not have a great job creation record, Mr. Speaker. And I want to just point out in Tory Manitoba . . . I'm looking for the youth employment numbers because it just struck me how different it was. What I'm looking for, it was something like 2,000 jobs created in Manitoba versus 7,000 here, and I'm not finding it in that. Maybe I was looking in the wrong place.

Youth employment growth — here we are, finally. I'm looking in the wrong place. Yes. Saskatchewan's youth employment increased, from 1992 to '98 our youth employment increased 7,100 jobs. In that same period Manitoba's youth employment increased by 2,300 jobs. I'm not arguing that 7,100 jobs is enough. I'm just saying that, Mr. Speaker, 7,100 jobs in NDP Saskatchewan versus 2,300 jobs in Conservative Manitoba, seems to speak, seems to speak volumes about the time frame of 1992 to 1998. That's a five- or six-year growth period.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is amazing we get the Tory job numbers, Mr. Speaker . . . the Tories would have us go back to the old days. The Tories would have us go back to those dark, dark Devine days in a nanosecond if they could, Mr. Speaker.

What's their record? What is their record after nine years? Eight deficit budgets. What happened with the ninth budget? Do you remember?

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the ninth budget we had to pass after we formed government October 21, in the fall of 1991. Why? Because the Tories ran . . . Why did we have to pass the budget in the fall? Because the Tories ran from this legislature. They prorogued the session without having passed the budget. It was

the first time, Mr. Speaker, in the history of Saskatchewan; first time that that had happened.

The Tories couldn't defend their legislative proposals, couldn't defend their budget, couldn't defend their Fair-Share Saskatchewan Program, could no longer garner the support from their own members on this government side of the legislature. That was 1991 and I remember it so well.

What a discredited and dispirited crew they were then. Just, Mr. Speaker, it was an interesting time to be in this House. It would not have been a great time to be in this House as a Conservative. But that's the reality. That's the reality.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the Chinese philosopher Confucius summed it up well for me. Confucius said: fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me. Mr. Speaker, that was Confucius.

A fortune cookie that I happened to have picked up just recently puts it in a different way. The fortune cookie says — for the member of Kindersley's benefit — the best prophet of the future is the past. The best way to see the future is look at the past.

*Cool Hand Luke*, — remember the show, *Cool Hand Luke*, Mr. Speaker — *Cool Hand Luke* was the story . . . Paul Newman starred in *Cool Hand Luke*. Paul Newman starred. And *Cool Hand Luke* was really all about the '60s and how there was discord, if you like. There was problems everywhere, people complaining, rebellion all over the place. There was through the '60s a generational problem.

Anyway in the scene that I think most of us would remember, *Cool Hand Luke*, Paul Newman was brought before the warden and he was just massively bloodied and he was bowed and he had been beaten within an inch of his life. The warden said: what we have here is a failure to communicate.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that what we have here is a failure to excommunicate the Saskatchewan Party from the Tory Party. That's what we have — is a failure to excommunicate.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, I started my debate talking about health care and how proud I was of some of the changes that we have here — the MRI; the two new spiral CAT scans; the second cath lab; the two First Nations spiritual healing centres, one at each of the hospitals in Regina. I talked about home care. I talked about the improvements in cancer treatment that are going to be coming; the improvements that are coming to the waiting list, the shortening of waiting lists. And I look forward to that with a great deal of optimism for the future.

I think that health care has been improving. The services have certainly been improving. Our government has tried to put, wherever possible, the money into the delivery of services as opposed to putting the money into the bricks and mortar. And I think that's our best hope in the short, medium, and long run for delivery of health services.

Didn't talk yet about social services. But I do want to say how very proud I am, Mr. Speaker, of the work that we've done particularly with the child action plan and some of the legislation that we're introducing in this legislature to deal with child abuse, prostitution. I'm pleased that our government is trying to do what we can in that troublesome area.

I think the best sort of a capsule I can put on this, is I've actually had a call from a social worker about two weeks ago in my constituency office. This social worker called, Mr. Speaker, to say thanks for our help. Never had that happen before in the Department of Social Services.

What we had was, one of my constituents is a client who has difficulty paying bills. And it's not just with paying the bills, but difficulty actually remembering to take the bill to the social worker so that the bill can be paid. And from time to time — not trying to cast aspersions on it — but it happened to be the city of Regina water department in this instance that after a considerable number of months decided it was time they got a little bit of payment for the water bill.

And anyway the constituent came into my office and was quite concerned about the water bill. We simply phoned over to the department — the social worker was grateful to get the heads-up that this water bill needed to be paid — made the arrangements, paid the bill. And the offshoot of it is, my constituent is happy; the water bill was paid so the city of Regina is happy; and the social worker, believe it or not, called us to say thank you.

I think this is . . . in some ways it's not typical of civil servants, but in many ways I think it is typical. I think that we've got a very dedicated group of civil servants, be it health care professionals, be it Social Services, be it Education, Highways workers, any department, Justice department. Throughout the piece, we've got a huge number of civil servants, Mr. Speaker, that do good work day in and day out. And it's really a tribute to them that Saskatchewan is what it is today. It's a tribute to these people that any of the systems work at all.

And so I want to, I guess, sort of publicly acknowledge those civil servants and specifically this social worker who really made our day by calling and saying thank you when the natural inclination of course for most of us would be no, don't call me, get out of my life, I've got other things more important to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, I think I've said just about everything I want to respecting this Speech from the Throne. It has been my honour and my pleasure to represent the good people of Regina Coronation Park. I should close by speaking a little bit about Coronation Park and just describing so people can understand where it is . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . yes, my constituency organization does wonderful medieval feasts.

Coronation Park is bordered by Albert Street on the east side. So we have the west side of Albert Street down to the Canadian National rail line and over to McIntosh Street. Incidentally on that rail line, we have a brand new underpass — Lewvan Drive and the CN (Canadian National) rail underpass. That's something that the city of Regina and the north end of Regina has wanted and needed since before I moved into the city in

1977, Mr. Speaker. It's a very, very welcome addition, as is the new pavement from there all the way to the north end of my constituency. Come up McIntosh on the west to the northern outskirts of the city, and that's my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I can see a great deal of jealousy from members opposite; jealousy at knowing what a great constituency Coronation Park is; knowing that it is full of working people. There are some retired people. There are some young people. It's just, just a fabulous part of Regina. It's a fabulous part of the province of Saskatchewan. And I know that we are doing what we can in Regina Coronation Park to pull our load at every, at every single turn.

Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to vote for this Throne Speech. I will of course be voting against the amendment and for the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You almost caught me off guard. I didn't think he was going to sit down there. He'd been going on and on and on for so long that we thought he was going to keep on going the rest of the day. He talked about a number of things that I want to speak to today; about jealousy is one of them, about jealousy about things like new pavement. Well, well, well. Yes, we are jealous of new pavement because we haven't seen new pavement out in rural Saskatchewan for so long we don't know what it is. Have no idea what it is . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It goes right by his house, he says from his seat.

We have no idea what new pavement is. There's no highway construction. Worst highways in all of the province in rural Saskatchewan — worst highways in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

(1230)

If you look at the NDP record. It's interesting that the member stands up and all they want to talk about is the past. All they want to talk about is the 1980s and all that kind of stuff. Everybody that stands up in the NDP, that's what they want to do. Where is your record, where is your record?

I'll indicate there's eight key areas in the economy of Saskatchewan that we are either bottom of the pack in Canada or second lowest in all of Canada: job creation, taxes, health care, welfare numbers, crime, highways, population growth, retail sales. Bottom of the pack or second from the bottom, each and every case, in each and every one of those areas of our economy — bottom of the pack.

Job creation. Let's start with that — job creation. Absolutely the worst in Canada in terms of creating jobs. Even the Lieutenant Governor couldn't even spit out the \$30,000 . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Now the hon. member will, as a veteran member, will recognize . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the hon. member will be advised that it is highly improper to draw the Lieutenant Governor into debate in the Assembly and I'm sure that he'll want to continue without that kind of reference.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Said 30,000 jobs has been created in Saskatchewan — 30,000 jobs. The fact of the matter is, is it isn't even anywhere close to that. About 6,400 less I think the number is, 6,400 jobs less than the 30,000 figure that they've been trotting out since they got into government. They were going to create jobs all over the place. We were going to have new industry, new everything. You haven't even lived up to the first promise you made, let alone the most recent ones in that area.

We're the only province in all of Canada that have actually lost jobs over the past year, Mr. Speaker — the only province in all of Canada. Whenever you look back in the history of this . . . or in the history of Canada, and want to look at an economic basket case, generally speaking you look to the East, unfortunately in places like Newfoundland and the Maritime provinces.

When you want to look to a poor job creation record in the 1990s, the late 1990s, 1999 primarily, where do you look to today? Where's the economic basket case of Canada? Saskatchewan. The least number of jobs created, the absolute worst job creation record in all of Canada belongs to you — the NDP. Even Glen Clark, even Glen Clark in BC (British Columbia) has a better record than you people, and we all know where he is today.

From January, 1998 to January of 1999, Mr. Speaker, there were actually . . . according to Statistics Canada, the only reliable source that we have because you can't believe their numbers any longer. They said 30,000, didn't happen. Statistics Canada says 4,900 fewer jobs in Saskatchewan. The only province, the only province in the whole Dominion of Canada to have less jobs than we do today is the economic basket case of this country. Saskatchewan NDP-ruled waste and mismanagement has created this problem.

In contrast, Mr. Speaker, they always say we want to talk about Alberta. Well let's talk about a couple of other places. Let's talk about a couple of other provinces. If you don't want to hear about Alberta — even though they created 38,600 jobs last year — let's talk about Manitoba. How many jobs were created in Manitoba versus Saskatchewan? Four thousand nine hundred less in Saskatchewan, 11,300 more in Manitoba.

Even Newfoundland . . . as I said if we always wanted to look back to the history of Canada, the unfortunate circumstances that Newfoundland has, living on the Rock, as they refer to it as, Mr. Speaker, they have a lot of problems there. They simply don't have the kind of resources or development that we have going for us here in Saskatchewan. They don't have 40 per cent of the arable farmland in the country. They have a resource, primarily the fishing resource, that is depleted. They had to shut down large numbers of their fishing industry and the packing plants there.

But even in Newfoundland — what was formerly known as the economic basket case of all of Canada — even in Newfoundland, how many jobs did they create last year? At the same time we were losing 4,900, Ms. Associate Minister of Health, the same time that we were losing 4,900 jobs, Newfoundland created 6,100 jobs — 6,100 jobs. If my math serves me correctly here, that's 11,000 net difference — 11,000.

Eleven thousand net difference even though they have a higher tax rate in Newfoundland than they do in this province — and half the population; even though all of those things are going against that province of Newfoundland. Even though they have all of those kinds of concerns, they still created more than NDP Saskatchewan. Still created more than NDP Saskatchewan.

An absolutely shameful record you people have in job creation. Shameful record when it comes to creating new wealth and new opportunity for the people of this province. Nothing comes even close to your record in this debate. Nothing comes even close to the economic basket case of Saskatchewan when it comes to job creation in this country.

When it comes to the second area that you guys seem to have a lot of difficulty taking responsibility for, and that's the whole area of taxes. Newfoundland, in spite of all its difficulties, has the highest record when it comes to taxes. Saskatchewan is running a close second now however.

Saskatchewan has the second latest tax freedom day in Canada, July 2 — July 2. The average Manitoba family of four, the average Manitoba family of four takes home 4,396 more dollars to their family in a year than a Saskatchewan family does.

**An Hon. Member:** — That's over a month's wages.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Over a month's wages — exactly — for every family. It's like working an extra month in Manitoba what they would get paid here in this province. A shameful record. A shameful record.

And you wonder why and you wonder why there isn't economic development in this province? And you wonder why there isn't economic development in this province? You know what's happening, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency these days? Business is literally draining out of this province into Alberta.

I'm on the west side. We're so close we can smell the money there. It's literally draining into Medicine Hat. Drive down to Medicine Hat some time — and I suspect most of you do to make some of your purchases anyway — drive to Medicine Hat one of these days and look at the parking lot, look at the parking lot at the Medicine Hat mall there. Just take a look there. Two-thirds of the people there are from Saskatchewan, and the other third wish they were. Because they're doing exactly the same thing there. There's just business draining to that community every day.

The chamber of commerce in Swift Current did a little study awhile ago to find out how much business they were losing from their community to Medicine Hat — \$20 million is what they came up with. The chamber of commerce in Swift Current says \$20 million of business activity on a yearly basis is transferred from their community to the community of Medicine Hat.

Do you think those people wouldn't like to make their purchases in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? Do you think they don't want to make their purchases there? Do you think they want to hop in their car and wheel over to Medicine Hat to buy something? No. The fact of the matter is, is they don't have a lot of choice, they feel. They feel that the barriers in terms of



the taxes here in Saskatchewan, they have to do something to try and balance them off.

And another phenomena that we're seeing . . . Your constituency is far enough away that they probably don't drive. You're right, Madam Minister. You're right, Madam Minister. You're right. Moose Jaw, they're close enough though.

The fact of the matter is, what also is happening in my constituency is something I've never seen before in the last long, long time. We're actually seeing farmers picking up, moving their farming operations and basing them in Alberta, paying taxes in Alberta, and still maintaining their farming operation in Saskatchewan to take advantage of the Alberta advantage. That's what's happening, Mr. Speaker. They're making their decision with their feet. They're making their decision with their car. They're making their decision with their home, their residence. They're picking up and they're moving to Alberta and they're saying, I can't stand to pay the taxes here. I don't want to be the last one in Saskatchewan to pay those taxes because I simply can't afford it any longer.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that's the reality that we're left with in this province — the second-highest taxes in all of Canada.

In health care — where's our record in health care? Let's examine some of the things in terms of health care. Saskatchewan has the longest waiting lists in the country to see a medical specialist or receive treatment.

Saskatchewan averages 17.1 weeks — 17.1 weeks — before you get in to see a specialist. That's 44 per cent longer than the national average of 11.5 weeks. The national average is 11.5; ours is 17.1 — 44 per cent difference. Thirty-eight per cent longer than in Alberta, 38 per cent longer than in Alberta; 49 per cent longer than in Manitoba; and 68, a staggering 68 per cent difference than in Ontario. Ten point two weeks in Ontario.

Saskatchewan has the dubious record of having the highest infant mortality rate in the entire country — 8.4 per 1,000 live births or 50 per cent higher than the national average. Fifty per cent higher than the national average — that's your record, Mr. Member from Albert South. That's your record, Mr. Member from Albert South.

I'll get to our record soon. I want to talk a little bit about your record first.

At the same time, at the same time Saskatchewan is spending more per capita on health care than any other province, you have the worst record in terms of bed closures. You have the worst record in terms of infant mortality and you have the worst record by far — by far — in terms of waiting lists in this province in all of Canada

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Now the hon. member will recognize of course that in carrying on debate in the Chamber the appropriate direction for the debate is through the Chair, and I'm sure the hon. member will want to conduct his debate consistent with the rules and direct his comments to the Chair rather than to other hon. members.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

Let's talk about welfare in Saskatchewan. Let's talk about our welfare numbers in this province. From 1991 to 1997 the welfare rolls in Saskatchewan swelled from 53,400 to 79,700, an increase of nearly 50 per cent — 50 per cent. The national average was actually an increase of about 22 per cent.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, do you know, Mr. Speaker, that the single largest economic driving force in Saskatchewan is the farm economy? The single largest driving force of our economy in Saskatchewan is agriculture, Mr. Speaker — agriculture, Mr. Speaker. There are 55,000 farm families in Saskatchewan.

Unfortunately in NDP Saskatchewan, we have more people today on social services, unfortunately, than we do in the farm community. Is it any wonder we're having problems? Is it any wonder we're having problems in NDP Saskatchewan? In NDP Saskatchewan, what is our record? What is our record?

During the same period of time in other provinces they've decreased their numbers, Mr. Speaker — have decreased the number of people on social services.

I was down on a CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) tour this spring — last spring, pardon me — down to Ohio. We were talking to people about the welfare reforms. One of the conferences that we attended was about welfare reform. And they had implemented a welfare reform program of trying to encourage people to move from the welfare cycle to the job cycle. And I remember one Democrat senator standing up and saying, oh yes, but there's more people on the streets today.

The fact of the matter was, the member from the governing party got up and said yes, we do. We do have more people on the streets today, but you know what they're doing, Mr. Member? They're on their way to a job. That's the difference.

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

(1245)

**Mr. Boyd:** — They're on their way to a job. They're on their way to a meaningful employment. They're on their way to changing their lives and the lives of their families from one of dependency to one of security. From one of meaningless toil in a lot of cases to one of joy, to one of saying to their family members . . . The talk around their table no longer is subsistence; it's how we can provide more for our families.

Yes, the Saskatchewan Party — and I want to make this extremely clear, Mr. Speaker — yes, the Saskatchewan Party is not about just kicking people willy-nilly off of welfare. It's about providing hope. It's about providing a program for them that says to them, yes, we want you to be a productive member of society. Yes, we want you to be a meaningful part of this society in Saskatchewan. Yes, we want to provide you with hope and training for a meaningful job in Saskatchewan.

And yes, we will do that, and we'll do it with compassion. We're not about to kick people off who simply have no alternative. We're about providing them with hope, and where

is the hope today, Mr. Minister? Where is the hope today? I don't see the hope — 79,700 people unfortunately see no other alternative in NDP Saskatchewan than a social services cheque.

I've always heard it said that the kindest and most compassionate thing — and you go back to the Bible itself — the kindest and most compassionate thing you can do for a person that is down, that's having a hard time, Mr. Speaker, is just not simply hand them a cheque, but to teach them to go out and how to earn a cheque. That's the kindest and most compassionate thing you can do.

Yours is about holding them on the cycle. Yours is about maintaining them on that cycle. Yours is about trapping them on that cycle. Ours is about hope, Mr. Speaker. Ours is about changing that mentality that somehow or another, that somehow or another in NDP Saskatchewan their only alternative is a social services cheque. Ours is about employment. Ours is about hope. Ours is about dreams for their families and for themselves. That's the difference between NDP managed Saskatchewan and a Saskatchewan Party government.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — That even the Minister of Finance in question period today, Mr. Speaker, recognized that it's going to happen soon. Even the Minister of Finance recognized it too. He said you're not government yet. That's true. We're not government yet but we're soon to be government. As soon as you and your Premier screw up the courage to call the next election, the Saskatchewan Party are going to summarily boot you from office.

And I'll give you a little bit of evidence as to why I think that's happening. Not only is the polling showing that, but there's some interesting developments been happening in the last little while.

We've had occasion, Mr. Speaker, as you know, to attend a number of functions this week in the start-up and the run-up of a legislative session. There's lots of banquets; there's lots of public functions that all members attending and they recognize a really interesting phenomena. And I'm sure members that were elected in '91 when the turnover of the government, I'm sure they recognize exactly the same.

There were bureaucrats coming up to us. They're one of the first to smell the winds of change. I don't know what it is about people in the bureaucracy but they seem to have this sense when they know something is impending, when there's an impending change.

They're coming up to us at the functions in the last little while and they are saying to us, I hope when this government changes that you won't fire me. I hope, I hope you won't fire me, Mr. Speaker. That's what they were coming up to us and saying.

I even had at the Lieutenant Governor's . . . I even had at the Lieutenant Governor's banquet the mother of one of the employees come up and say, I hope you won't fire her. We're not about to just willy-nilly go around and boot everybody out of the bureaucracy here in Saskatchewan.

There are I believe lots of capable and lots of very, very qualified and very, very good people in the bureaucracy, but obviously they're a lit bit concerned. Obviously they know that there's some changes coming. And the minister, the minister smiles. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Minister, some of the people were from your office that were a little worried.

The other area that we have difficulty in Saskatchewan today, Mr. Speaker, under NDP- ruled Saskatchewan is crime — worst in all of Canada, worst in all of Canada. You know, Mr. Speaker, Regina has the worst crime rate of any major Canadian city in 1997. Saskatoon had the dubious record of coming in third. Regina has the highest property crime rate and second highest violent crime rate in all of Canada — shameful record.

Saskatoon has the highest homicide rate and the third highest property crime rate and the fourth highest violent crime rate. Almost exclusively, almost exclusively those two cities, those two cities are managed by NDP constituency offices. Almost to a person Saskatoon and Regina over that time period has NDP MLAs representing those constituencies.

Now unfortunately that's what we have — highest murder rate, highest rate of property crimes and violent crime in all of Canada belongs to the minister . . . or belongs to the Premier's constituency and the Deputy Premier's constituency — which neither of them happen to live in unfortunately.

Let's talk about highways here in Saskatchewan. The time is relatively short so I've got to move on. Let's talk about highways. Worst in all of Canada. Saskatchewan's highways, bar none, are the worst in all of Canada. The NDP spends about 58 per cent of the money collected on fuel taxes for maintenance, highway maintenance and construction — the second lowest in all of Canada.

The Alberta government spends 95 per cent; the Manitoba government spends 100 per cent of the money collected in fuel taxes for highway construction and maintenance. Undoubtedly if any of you have cared to take the time to drive around Saskatchewan in the last while you'll see the destruction, the absolute destruction, Mr. Speaker, of the highways in this province.

Population growth, Mr. Speaker, we're the second worst in all of Canada — unfortunately once again. Unfortunately once again the second worst in all of Canada. From 1991, when the NDP took office, Saskatchewan has the second lowest rate of population growth in the entire country. Only Newfoundland is lower. The second lowest population growth in all of Canada.

From '91 to '98 Saskatchewan population grew by 36,700 people. During the same period, during the same period, do you know what Alberta's growth was? Three hundred and sixty-seven thousand, eight hundred. Ten times — ten times the growth in Alberta. Ten times, Mr. Speaker.

What they have . . . they can't build houses, they can't add on to the cities of Alberta quick enough. Have you been out there recently, any of you members? Have you driven through Medicine Hat? Have you driven through Lethbridge? Have you driven through Taber? Have you driven through Red Deer? Have you driven through places like Hanna? Oyen?

Oyen, Alberta, Mr. Speaker, I remember Oyen, Alberta — we used to go quite frequently as young people out to Alberta. Oyen, Alberta used to be nothing more than a dot on the map — a couple of elevators, a few houses. Oyen, Alberta is going to rival Kindersley in a few years time in terms of population size. Oyen, Alberta is probably in as economic disadvantaged type of area of all Alberta as you can imagine, right in the middle of some of the most semi-arid land in all of Alberta; virtually no resources around there. They even have growth there. They even have growth there.

In all of Saskatchewan we don't have that kind of growth. Even in communities like Oyen, Alberta they're experiencing growth.

And the minister says the Alberta advantage. And unfortunately that Alberta advantage has contributed . . . has resulted in 10 times the population growth of Saskatchewan. When it comes to retail sales, Mr. Speaker, retail sales were the second worst in all of Canada. The second worst in all of Canada. Retail sales grew by .2 per cent in 1998, the second worst in the entire country.

Alberta's sales grew by 4.8 per cent, Mr. Speaker, 24 times higher than Saskatchewan's rate of growth. Manitoba's retail sales grew by 2.4, 12 times faster than Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, is it any wonder, is it any wonder that the people of Saskatchewan are looking for change? Is it any wonder that they're looking at the Saskatchewan Party and saying we need a way up? Instead of the Saskatchewan way, an NDP way, we need a way up in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We have to change some of these kinds of things. We have to change some of these kinds of things.

We put out *The Way Up* a few months ago as you recall, Mr. Speaker, as a road map for Saskatchewan for the future, for hope and for dreams and for opportunity. It says to the people of Saskatchewan that we don't have to be the worst any longer. We don't have to have the worst job creation. We don't have to have the worst health care. We don't have to have the worst highways. We don't have to have the worst population growth. We don't have to have the worst crime. We don't have to have the worst welfare numbers.

We want to have change, Mr. Speaker. We want to see . . . there is going to be meaningful change in the province of Saskatchewan. That's why we are talking about easing the taxation burden for each and every individual, each and every family, whether you're a farmer, whether you're a business person, whether you're a blue collar worker, whether you are a welfare recipient in Saskatchewan.

They want to see changes, Mr. Speaker. They want to see a hope. They want to see opportunity. They want to see dreams. They want to see at least some of the things that the rest of Canada is experiencing.

They want to see the kinds of things that are developing in other provinces. They want to see change. They want to see some change but what do they get from this government?

They get tired-out rhetoric, talking about everything that happened a decade ago. They aren't talking about the kinds of

agenda that you people have opposite. They are saying to us it's time to make some significant changes in Saskatchewan before we have nothing left in this province, Mr. Speaker. That's what they are saying to the people of this province.

They are saying that we need to have taxes reduced. They are saying that a 7 per cent PST, when our neighbour to the west of us has zero per cent, has to change.

They are saying — even the Finance minister is saying this a little bit these days — that we have got to reduce personal income taxes in this province or we are going to move so far out of adjustment compared to Alberta that there won't be a single soul left here pretty soon, Mr. Speaker, if we don't make some changes in that area.

They are saying to us, change the welfare mentality in this province to one of wanting to go to work each and every day and saying to them that yes, there is a different way of moving ahead in this province.

They are saying to us that we can no longer have the Brian Topp of this province running this legislature. We can no longer have the NSTs and the Channel Lakes and the Guyanas happening in Saskatchewan. They are saying we want to see meaningful change in that area.

Brian Topp. The members opposite will recognize that name. When it came time to analyzing and looking into the most scandalous affair in the last number of years here in Saskatchewan, Brian Topp, the Premier's right-hand man, wrote the report and the members opposite sat there and took it.

The message from Brian Topp was to them. And he said take it, move ahead with this or walk away. That was the message.

Is it any wonder, Mr. Speaker, is it any wonder in Saskatchewan people are saying no to this government. Is it any wonder in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that the changes that we are seeing are coming forward. Is it any wonder that the Saskatchewan Party is at 51 per cent in the polls in rural Saskatchewan and climbing.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Is it any wonder, is it any wonder that we are moving in on you faster and faster each and every day. Is it any wonder that you are going to be kicked from office. Is it any wonder that member after member after member there opposite is going to lose. Is it any wonder that that's what we're going to see.

The election is impending, Mr. Speaker. There's an election coming real soon. The Premier of this province says June. And I say to you that there will be such a massive change in June that the members opposite if they haven't woken up and realized it now, will . . . soon will.

The people of Saskatchewan are saying to us it's almost over. It's almost over for the NDP. We've only got a little while longer to wait. We've only got a little while longer to wait. June's going to spring up eternal in Saskatchewan. Just as every farmer knows that the new year brings new hope, the people of

Saskatchewan know that a new year, a new beginning for this province with the Saskatchewan Party at the helm will bring new hope for this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's lots more that I want to say about this subject in the next . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. The hour for adjournment having arrived, the debate will cease at this point. Order, order. And I want to . . . Order. Before adjourning I wish to extend to all members a welcome back to the Assembly and with the hope that you'll have an enjoyable weekend in your constituency, and to spend some time with your families.

Having said that, the House now stands adjourned until Monday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock.

The Assembly adjourned at 1:01 p.m.