

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure this afternoon to rise in the House to present a petition on behalf of a number of people in the communities of Gull Lake and Tompkins who have expressed their concern with the implications of the Saskatchewan EMS (emergency medical services) development project report.

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 not implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and to affirm its intent to work to improve community-based ambulance services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so present.

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to not implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and to affirm its intent to work to improve community-based ambulance services.

The people that have signed this petition are all from Naicam, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of people in Swift Current and southwest Saskatchewan concerned about their regional hospital.

The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to carefully consider Swift Current's request for a new hospital.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from the city of Swift Current, from Waldeck, from Shaunavon, and from Gull Lake.

I so present.

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are

concerned about ambulance service.

And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to not implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and affirm its intent to work to improve community-based ambulance services.

And this is signed by the good citizens of Gladmar and Minton.

I so present.

**READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS**

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

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly on the following matters:

Oposing the centralization of ambulance services;

Requesting a new hospital for Swift Current;

Setting aside plans to revert highways to gravel.

**NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS**

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Friday next move first reading of The Justice System Review Act.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Friday next move first reading of The Sex Offender Registry Act.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday next I wish to move first reading of The Recall of Members of the Legislative Assembly Act.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet I also give notice that I shall on Friday next move first reading of The Balanced Budget Act, 2001. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Friday next move first reading of The Health Care Commissioner Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Friday next move first reading of The Children's Law Amendment Act, 2001.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Friday next move first reading of The Fire-fighter Protection from Liability Act.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Friday next move first reading of The

Saskatchewan Property Rights Act.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Friday next move first reading of The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 2001.

**Mr. Wakefield:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Friday next move first reading of The Regulatory Reform Act.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have notice of a written question. I give notice I shall on day no. 12 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation: how much money did SaskPower give to Ducks Unlimited in the 2000 fiscal year.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 12 ask the government the following question:

In the past fiscal year has SaskEnergy president, Ron Clark, and/or any other SaskEnergy officials attended any conferences in the Middle East on behalf of SaskEnergy; if so, which conferences did they attend and what was the total cost to SaskEnergy including: airfare, accommodation, meals, conference registration fees, and any other costs related to attending the conferences.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I should like to draw your attention and that of the members to a group of visitors who are seated in the west gallery. These visitors are grade 4 students from St. Andrew School in the constituency of Regina Victoria. I look forward to meeting with them after the question period.

I do hope that their visit will be an enjoyable and an informative one. And I want to thank St. Andrew School for encouraging these visits to the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask all members to please join me in welcoming the students and their teachers here today. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a number of people I would like to introduce this morning . . . or this afternoon, if I could. First of all, in your gallery, Dr. Bill Silver, who is an orthopedic surgeon here in the city of Regina and also a member of the Saskatchewan Medical Association Board of Directors.

I notice in the gallery opposite here a number of individuals that I recognized. Lily Krause is the president of the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, and Donna Brunskill is the executive director, as well as Rosalee Longmoore of SUN is over there.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, back in your gallery. I'd like to acknowledge Carol Carson who is the former mayor of Melfort and member of the Legislative Assembly who is also visiting

here today.

And I'd like the Assembly to welcome all these people

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

**Hon. Mr. Melenchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce Mr. Michael Tymchak who is seated in your gallery, accompanied by my ministerial assistant, Marv Shulz.

Dr. Tymchak is Chair of the provincial task force on public dialogue on the role of the school, since its establishment in 1999. He is currently a professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina. He completed an eight-year term as dean of the faculty in June, 2000. Prior to that he was director of the northern teacher education program, (NORTEP) for many years.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Tymchak and the task force he chaired recently completed a review of the role of the school. The task force's final report was publicly released this morning and I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming Dr. Tymchak to the Assembly.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming Dr. Tymchak to the Assembly, recognizing that he's had many accomplishments in his life. But I'm sure that this latest one, being the Chair of the task force on the role of the school, will have the biggest impact on the people in this province of anything that he's done. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the member from Melfort in welcoming back to this Assembly, Carol Carson. No stranger to this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, as members will well know, Carol served with great distinction in government serving as, for a period of time, Minister of the Environment and for a longer period of time as our Minister of Municipal Government, and is held in wide regard throughout Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, with Carol today I'm also very pleased to be introducing Carol's son, Paul, and his wife, Marion, and their two daughters — Carol's granddaughters — Tiffy and Becci. These four are currently from Berlin, Mr. Speaker, but we are very pleased to announce today that they are returning to make their home in Saskatchewan. Welcome back.

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

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like for us to welcome two members from Prince Albert — Steve Smith and Wayne Roznowsky. They're here from Weyerhaeuser. And I'd like all members of the Assembly to welcome them here to view the proceedings.

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure

to also add my welcome to the members of the nursing profession who are here. And it's Lily Krause, who's the president of the SRNA (Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association), and Donna Brunskill, who's the executive director of the SRNA; Rosalee Longmoore from SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses); as well as Cecile Hunt from the North Central Health District, and Joyce Still and Lois Berry. They're all here today to be part of the first reading of The Registered Nurses Amendment Act.

And while I'm on my feet I'd also like to welcome my constituent, Dr. Bill Silver. Welcome to the Assembly and I know that he has made many contributions to the medical community of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to rise this afternoon to welcome Mr. Steve Smith and Mr. Wayne Roznowsky to this afternoon's proceedings.

Mr. Speaker, as you're probably well aware the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers is highly dependent upon the success of Weyerhaeuser. And we surely hope they enjoy the proceedings this afternoon.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm also on my feet there's someone else I'd like to ask the Assembly to welcome this afternoon and that would be Mr. Ray Funk. Now some of you maybe know Ray fairly well. Ray has had quite an illustrious career. Many of you may know he has served as a Member of Parliament for the Prince Albert constituency for five years and he is now a constituent of mine, and a very good constituent I might add. Welcome Ray, and all members please welcome these gentlemen.

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

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join my colleague from Regina Victoria in welcoming the students from St. Andrew School and in particular to welcome the son of a good friend, Blair Therian who . . . maybe he'll just stand up and take a little bow and embarrass himself a little.

And also to join in welcoming my former colleague in the House of Commons, Ray Funk. We shared . . . we spent five years together fighting the good fight. Ray Funk was a terrific MP (Member of Parliament) for the constituency of Prince Albert-Churchill River and continues to do great work for, for in fact the whole north of this province, Mr. Speaker.

So I'd ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming Ray Funk.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with my colleagues in the legislature in welcoming Steve Smith and Wayne Roznowsky to the legislature. We had the opportunity — along with a number of my colleagues this morning — had the opportunity to meet with them.

We talked about the future of forestry, some of the pressures

that are on with respect to the American actions as it may result to Canadian lumber. But I'm sure that we have all a good understanding of the opportunities of the future of the forest industry. Weyerhaeuser is such a big player in our community and I want to take an opportunity to welcome them here today.

I also want to make mention of former MP and my friend, Ray Funk. Welcome Ray.

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

(13:45)

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to join with other members in welcoming two friends to the Assembly. Lois Berry, who in addition to her contribution to the health field also makes a very active contribution to the Caswell neighbourhood in Saskatoon. And Ray Funk, who I've had the pleasure of working with on very many environmental issues over the years, has made a great contribution to this province.

And I want to ask all members to join with me in welcoming these two very fine people to the Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Speaker, I too would like to give a strong northern Saskatchewan welcome and to say Ta wow to these people, including a former colleague, Carol Carson. But also Steve Smith and Wayne Roznowsky in regards to forestry development in the North, and throughout this province. And also to Ray Funk, in regards to being an outstanding member, MP, for northern region.

I would also like to say thank you to Dr. Michael Tymchak. What a lot of people don't know about Michael is that he also wrote the history of northern Saskatchewan on the schools in relation to the time that he worked with the department in the '70s, and as well, has done a lot of work with them in the development of the northern teacher education program.

So welcome Mike and a special Ta wow to you as well.

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

**Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, along with the students from St. Andrew School is their teacher Heather Leask, who is a member of the congregation that I used to serve, and also has been a very active part of youth parliament. And one day, if she keeps up with her interest in politics, may end up sitting in this House and representing a constituency.

So I'd like all members to welcome Heather to this gathering.

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

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Comments on Agriculture Assistance

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

Saskatchewan's Agriculture minister is looking through NDP (New Democratic Party) rose-coloured glasses.

He is quoted in *The Leader-Post* on Tuesday as saying, there are a lot more than let on that have received benefits from AIDA (Agriculture Income Disaster Assistance). Mr. Speaker, the minister goes on to say that his office is flooded with calls from farmers that have received AIDA benefits.

Mr. Speaker, here are the facts, and by the way, if the minister would know . . . would know this if he went and checked out his high-speed Internet connection in his office. The facts, straight from AIDA's head office, state that less than 30 per cent of Saskatchewan producers have received some sort of . . . (inaudible) . . . from AIDA. Maybe the minister has been spending too much time living on a cloud with the member from Melville, where everything seems to be going just peachy.

Mr. Speaker, the numbers from AIDA also show that Saskatchewan producers received almost the lowest average payment in all of Canada. The members on this side of the House feel that our province is a great place to live with great potential filled with many bright and talented people, but we are run by bad government.

If the minister's officers would get off their clouds or executive butts for five minutes they would know that there are serious challenges that the people of Saskatchewan are facing.

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

#### **Business Builder Awards**

**Hon. Ms. Lorjé:** — Last night in one of the best cities of definitely the best province of indisputably the best county in the world, the North Saskatoon Business Association hosted its fourth Business Builder Awards banquet attended by over 600 people. Our handsome minister in charge of Crown Investments Corporations attended on behalf of the government.

And I wish to point out how entirely appropriate that is because our Crown sector is such a major player in the thriving economy our province is experiencing at the moment.

Mr. Speaker, the NSBA (North Saskatoon Business Association) consists of more than 650 companies — companies, I remind the members opposite, that are staying and growing here in Saskatchewan.

In fact in a recent survey of businesses in Saskatoon, 40 per cent said they intended to expand and more than 60 per cent said that their business is stable. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon is filled with business builders.

I want to congratulate both the winners and nominees for the awards presented tonight: Northland Properties for the Job Creation Award; Healthserv Sask for the New Directions Award; Canada West Truck Centre, for the Team Building Award; Kocsis Transport for the Management Quality Award; Centennial Plumbing, Heating, Electrical for the Business Builder Award; Ecol Laser for the Small Business Award; and finally, Mr. Wayne Wilson, of Business Furnishings was named Member of the Year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Health Facility Opens in Davidson**

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to speak about the new health facility that was just officially opened on March 5 in the town of Davidson. It replaced the old Davidson Union Hospital, which was a hospital in its truest sense: babies were born there and surgeries were performed there.

The new health care centre now provides . . . includes some emergency, X-ray and some laboratory service, plus a community care wing and residential care services. This new centre goes to the hard work and dedication of area residents who along with local municipal government contributed \$1.4 million to this project.

Opening day was very successful with many Davidson area residents coming out to see the grand opening. The dignitaries included the hon. minister for Saskatchewan Health, as well as the Davidson mayor, Jim Cross.

I want to personally thank the organizers of the grand opening ceremony whose warm hospitality was greatly appreciated. On behalf of the citizens of the Arm River constituency, I want to offer my best wishes to the community of Davidson on a fine accomplishment. Thank you.

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

#### **New Seniors' Housing Project in Shaunavon**

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are building this province from the roots up and a new seniors' housing project taking place in Shaunavon is a great example.

A group of dignitaries gathered at the site of the seniors' housing project in mid-March for a special sod-turning ceremony to kick off construction of this \$2.3 million project. Construction on this new 26-unit facility has already begun and the building is expected to be finished by this fall. The province's contribution to this project is approximately \$1.8 million, Mr. Speaker.

As Shaunavon mayor, Sharon Dickie, said, I believe we have an obligation to provide safe and comfortable housing for those who wish to retire in our community.

Our government agrees, Mr. Speaker. This project is another example of our government's commitment to working together with communities to provide better housing and standards of living for the people of Saskatchewan.

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

#### **Theatre Production in Alida**

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Act One Productions of Alida, my hometown, on another very successful theatre run. Their play

this year was *How the West was Fun*. Their show dates were March 8, 9, 10, and 11.

And reading the news release, Mr. Speaker . . . or the news report of it, it says that guests dined strictly by candlelight on Saturday night due to the SaskPower power outage. I'm told it was very romantic though, Mr. Speaker, with just the candles to light the room, the theatre. But thankfully, SaskPower managed to get their act together to turn the lights back on again for the actual play.

The reviews, Mr. Speaker, were very good for this act. In fact, Mr. Jeff Heil of Burlington, North Dakota stated, I've attended the drama for the last three years; it just keeps getting better and better. This year was spectacular. We were served like kings and queens — what hospitality.

Congratulations again, Mr. Speaker, to the actors and to the community of Alida for putting on another excellent theatre season.

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

#### Regina Food Security Project

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning, a very significant celebration took place in Regina to celebrate March as Nutrition Month and, more importantly, to highlight an innovative and important project in Regina.

The Regina Food Security Project promotes nutrition and food security for Regina residents who might otherwise have to depend on emergency food programs. Now it's been doing so since 1998 and, this morning, there was a celebration and our Minister of Social Services took part, as did Regina's mayor.

Mr. Speaker, the Regina Food Security Project has four partners of which I don't think any of the members opposite are one of, but it's the Regina Education and Action on Child Hunger, the Regina District Food Bank, the City Social Development Division, and Saskatchewan Social Services.

Now this project is not charity. It provides an opportunity to purchase a good food box and purchasers help in this way to provide food security for their families.

And I have to tell you, I've seen these food boxes, Mr. Speaker. They are just brimming with the most delicious, fresh food. You just want to start eating right out of the bin there.

And at the gathering this morning, the Canadian Pacific Foundation donated a five-ton refrigerated truck which will be a great assist in the delivery of the new program and it'll see meals delivered to seniors, shut-ins, and discharged hospital patients.

And I also understand that a group calling themselves Culture Kidz donated a mural.

Mr. Speaker, it's these acts, great and small, that contribute to the success.

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

#### Regina AA Bandits

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, three accomplished young ladies from the community of Hodgeville in my constituency — Chelsea Ebel, Kirby Ebel, and Kyla Deobald — play ringette for the Regina AA Bandits.

The Bandits have won the provincials in Saskatchewan and will be advancing to the nationals in a month, and in fact I think they're leaving tomorrow morning.

I hope all members will offer Chelsea, Kirby, Kyla, and the Regina Bandits their congratulations for their efforts in the provincials and best wishes in the nationals.

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

#### Saskatchewan Hotels Association Annual Convention

**Mr. Kasperski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the 70th Annual Convention of the Hotels Association of Saskatchewan took place earlier this week.

This association has about 500 members accounting for almost 85 per cent of the hotels and motels in the province. That makes the Hotels Association a major stakeholder and partner in our economic development, Mr. Speaker.

The Hotels Association took in 160 million in room rental rates in the year 2000 and another 120 million in food and beverage sales. This sector, Mr. Speaker, employs 4,000 people and paid wages and salaries exceeding \$58 million.

A strong Hotels Association, Mr. Speaker, equals healthy tourism spending. This spending in the year 1999 was estimated to be 1.2 billion in Saskatchewan.

Hotels are important actors in our economy and our communities. They provide food, shelter, entertainment, and hospitality.

Congratulations, Mr. Speaker, to the Hotels Association and their members for their contribution to our hospitality and tourism industry.

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

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Utility Rate Increases

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, even more confusion in the ranks of the NDP. The Minister of Health doesn't know how many nurses there are, the Minister of Gaming doesn't know how much SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) owes, and the Minister of Agriculture doesn't know if he's in or out of the Canadian Farm Income Program. And now the minister responsible for SaskPower doesn't know how much SaskPower's rate hike is.

Yesterday the minister told reporters that the SaskPower rate hike was only \$27 a year so the \$25 rebate would almost cover it. But it turns out, the rate hike is actually anywhere from \$36

for urban customers to \$96 for farm customers. Once again, Mr. Speaker, we have a minister that doesn't seem to know what's going on in his own department.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister confused or is he trying to fool the people of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Oh, Mr. Speaker, this is going to be fun. Mr. Speaker, the average increase, Mr. Speaker, is \$3 a month, Mr. Speaker. And this is going to show how the opposition does calculations when it comes to math — \$3 a month. The increase, Mr. Speaker, starts April 1, and April 1, if you figure it out, there's nine months — nine times three is 27, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Mr. Speaker . . .

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Mr. Speaker, not only are they confused with all these issues, they think in Saskatchewan a year is only nine months long. What's wrong with these guys?

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Mr. Speaker, it's now clear that the NDP's measly \$25 a year energy rebate is long gone and so is their so-called historic tax cut. It's all been eaten up by higher SaskPower bills and higher SaskEnergy bills. And, Mr. Speaker, there's more on the way.

(14:00)

Yesterday the Minister of Finance nearly dislocated his arm patting himself on the back for cutting taxes. But the fact is any tax relief for Saskatchewan families will be wiped out by higher SaskPower and SaskEnergy rates. Saskatchewan families will wind up with less money in their pockets, not more money in their pockets, and all the NDP is offering is the \$25 one-time energy rebate.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Finance put more money in the . . . back of the hands of Saskatchewan families by either cutting taxes or increasing the energy rebate in Friday's budget?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, the only confusion in this House, Mr. Speaker, is over there. And I want to tell the House and I want to tell the people of the province, Mr. Speaker, that I attended a meeting of the Regina Chamber of Commerce on January 29, 2001, and the Leader of the Opposition was there too.

And the incoming president of the Regina Chamber of Commerce had this to say, Mr. Speaker. He said that the tax reduction plan of this government was a good plan that would mean lower taxes for Saskatchewan people and would add to the growth and prosperity of Saskatchewan.

That's what the Regina Chamber of Commerce said and you know what the Leader of the Opposition did, Mr. Speaker? He sat on his hands and he said nothing, Mr. Speaker, because he knows it's true, he knows we're headed in the right direction. And taxes in Saskatchewan are only going in one direction and that's down, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If we handed out Oscars, the Minister of Finance would get an award for that wild performance.

Mr. Speaker, on one hand the NDP is moaning about the high energy prices driving up SaskPower and SaskEnergy rates. But on the other hand, this government is also reaping the benefits of high energy prices. In the mid-term financial report, resource revenue was up nearly \$400 million over budget. That's a \$400 million windfall, a direct result of high energy prices.

And how much is the NDP giving back to the people of Saskatchewan? \$10 million. \$400 million for the government and \$25 for Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP is benefiting from higher energy prices and at the same time families are being hurt by higher energy prices. What relief will the Minister of Finance be providing to Saskatchewan families in his budget?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the provincial budget will be delivered in this House on Friday and I know the member opposite will be interested to listen to what will be presented in the provincial budget. But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that in addition to what is in the provincial budget, we introduced a plan for personal income tax reductions in this House last year which, Mr. Speaker, for a one income family with two children and two adults will by 2003 cut their provincial income taxes by \$1,974, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — And I want to say to the House and to the people of the province, Mr. Speaker, that what we will not do when it comes to increasing their costs is what the member opposite would do which would be to privatize the Crown utilities — SaskPower, SaskTel, SaskEnergy — deregulate and let happen what has happened in their fantasyland of Alberta where utility prices have doubled, Mr. Speaker. We're not going to adopt that agenda, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Mr. Speaker, I could tell you that a minister that doesn't even know there's 12 months in the year has no idea what a Saskatchewan Party government's going to do.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP family of Crown corporations got their increase covered and the NDP has sheltered them, but Saskatchewan families are left on their own. Mr. Speaker, according to last year's budget the net effect of last year's tax

changes will be about \$107 million. But the SaskPower rate hike was \$14 million, the SaskEnergy rate hike was about \$90 million, and now SaskEnergy says it will be looking for at least that much of an increase again, and probably more.

Mr. Speaker, the tax cut is gone, snatched away from the people of Saskatchewan. Meanwhile the NDP is sitting on hundreds of millions of dollars of windfall revenues but they refuse to share this with Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, why doesn't the NDP provide some meaningful relief to families who are hurt by these high energy costs?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's very odd to listen to the Leader of the Opposition because today he's saying that the tax cuts will be gone. Yesterday he was in the House saying that there were no tax cuts, Mr. Speaker. So I think the Leader of the Opposition is a little bit confused, Mr. Speaker. We know that this is not a new allegation coming from the Leader of the Opposition. This is the sort of snake oil that he peddles all across the province, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that these are the largest tax cuts in the history of our province. And by 2003 personal income taxes in Saskatchewan are going down by \$430 million, Mr. Speaker, which even taking PST (provincial sales tax) expansion into account, is a tax cut to the people of Saskatchewan of approximately \$260 million, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Health Care Staffing

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Yesterday the minister stood in the House and bragged about hiring 800 new health care administrators. And, Mr. Speaker, the minister said that that's what the NDP meant when they promised to hire 500 new health care workers during the 1999 election platform.

Mr. Minister, is this the NDP's plan for rebuilding the failing health care system — to hire 800 more administrators while doctors and nurses are leaving the province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I think I want to reiterate a very important point. All of the workers in the health system are part of the health team.

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — They're all crucial to what happens in the health care system, whether it's in an acute care setting or whether it's in health promotion or prevention of disease. All of those kinds of work are very important.

We know, for example, that the laundry in Regina processes 6 million pounds of laundry a year for the health system. All of

that is crucial. But we also know that we have a big task in recruiting people to come and work in Saskatchewan, in training people in Saskatchewan — all of those things are important.

And the kinds of questions, the kinds of perception that the people across the floor bring to this, just bring all of it into negativity, and that does not help us at all. So I would ask them to lighten up a bit and see what they can do to help us.

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

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, another question for the Minister of Health.

It's a little difficult to lighten up on asking the questions of the minister when in fact there's not a single new position that has actually been filled by nurses.

According to the Registered Nurses' Association, there are 160 fewer registered nurses practising in Saskatchewan now than in 1999. According to the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association, there are 147 fewer psychiatric nurses practising in Saskatchewan. And on top of it all today, Mr. Speaker, we hear that there are two doctors leaving the Saskatoon cancer clinic.

Get the picture, Mr. Minister? How in the world can we lighten up when in the last two years you have hired 800 administrators instead of front-care workers that are needed so badly in this province?

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

**The Speaker:** — I would ask the member to state his question through the Chair to the Chair.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, we are working together with the nursing profession. Some of them are here today because we are bringing some legislation forward which will assist in providing new ways of providing medical care, nursing care within our province.

These are things that we do together with the people who are working in this area. We know that there's a demand for nurses right across North America and we're part of that market and we're working together with the people in the nursing profession so that we can have good jobs for people here, we can train more people to work here, and we can also make sure that we have the best care possible for all of the people who require medical care in Saskatchewan.

And so what I would say is, let's all do this together. I would appreciate some of the . . . I appreciate some of the comments that the member opposite has made around this issue but what we don't need is the kind of negative atmosphere that seems to exude from that side. It just doesn't help us at all.

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

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again for the Minister of Health. Yesterday the minister confirmed what everybody in Saskatchewan has been saying for years. The NDP's health reform plan has resulted in more

administration and less front-line workers in this province.

The nurses' associations have clearly shown that there are fewer nurses practising in Saskatchewan now than in 1999, but the minister stands up in the House and brags about the fact that the bureaucracy has increased by 800 administrators. Meanwhile, we have hospital beds closing in regional centres across this province. We have the cities of Saskatoon and Regina health districts struggling to cope, and nurses on the wards are exhausted.

Mr. Speaker, today we hear that the Saskatoon cancer clinic is losing physicians. Yesterday Dr. Pierson complained about the future of the College of Medicine. Mr. Speaker, does the minister not understand the gravity of the decisions he's making? And asking us for help is not going to get him out of his responsibility.

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I think that this government has a good record of looking at all of these issues and dealing with them in a very reasonable fashion, working together with those people who are within the system and attempting to solve some of their problems.

This Friday we have a budget coming forward and I think you'll see that health care continues to be a very high priority of this government.

Probably a few weeks after that we're going to be getting a report from Mr. Fyke around the whole situation and trying to give us advice on where we go from here.

I know that we're all going to be part of a discussion at that point and I look forward to comments from all of the people in Saskatchewan, but specifically the people within the whole health system because we all have to work on this together. If we don't, we're going to lose something that is very valuable for our people and we will continue to fight for what we have, which is a publicly funded and run system. Thank you.

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

#### Assiniboia Seniors' Home

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the minister . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, Pioneer Lodge is a long-term care facility in Assiniboia that's home to 30 senior citizens. Actually, Mr. Speaker, there used to be 60 there until the NDP closed half the beds. Now the NDP is closing the rest of the long-term beds and booting out the seniors who live there.

And what do they plan to do with the space? They're going to turn it into office space for health district bureaucrats. That's the NDP priority. Seniors forced out of their homes to make

room for office space for bureaucrats.

Mr. Speaker, tonight in Assiniboia there'll be a town meeting to discuss the NDP's closure of this facility. I'm going to that meeting. The minister has already said he would work with people. Will the Minister of Health join me at this meeting? Will he come to Assiniboia and explain why he is converting senior beds into office space?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, the people who work in that area, who work with the health district, are working with all of the people in the community to look and see what is the most appropriate use of the dollars in that area for the best service for all of the people. And what we know is that the health district down there has been looking at a number of choices. And so what they do is actually meet with the people and see what their plans are.

(14:15)

What we have to do is also recognize that the whole issue of providing care on a province-wide basis is part of what Mr. Fyke is going to review. And we know that over the last year there have been a number of discussions around various facilities and all of those discussions have been put on hold until we hear what Mr. Fyke has to say. We assume that that district will also be waiting for Mr. Fyke's recommendations and a response before they make any decisions.

So we thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Mr. Speaker, since the minister obviously has no intentions of coming to Assiniboia to listen to the speaker . . . to the people tonight, I'd like to ask the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, this is the Premier who was going to get in touch with rural Saskatchewan. He was going to get himself a bus, load up the cabinet, and tour around Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's about time the Premier saddled up the bus, loaded up the Minister of Health, loaded up the Minister of Rural Revitalization, anyone else on that side who's interested in rural Saskatchewan, anybody he can find, come to Assiniboia and listen to the people. And explain why the NDP is turning their seniors' home into office space.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier come to the meeting tonight in Assiniboia?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a very rarely that I quote from a document provided by the official opposition, but I'd like to quote from a document submitted by the official opposition to the Fyke Commission. This document is dated February 15, 2001. One of the key points made by the critic for Health across the way, in his brief, after talking to all of his caucus members, when he talked about health district reform, was to say:



Provincial micromanagement of health district operations must be avoided.

What we're saying on this side of the House is, we are going to work with the districts. We don't want to step in and make their decisions but we also reserve the right, in this particular situation that relates to the response to the Fyke Commission, we've told the districts that various operations should continue until we have made an official plan for the whole province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Forestry Plan for Northern Saskatchewan

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic Development. Two years ago the NDP went to Saskatoon and announced a new forestry plan for northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, then NDP Premier Roy Romanow proclaimed it would be, and I quote:

The biggest single announcement of job creation in the history of the province.

Mr. Romanow bragged the NDP's forestry plan would double the size of forestry industry and create 25,000 new jobs. Mr. Speaker, here's a headline that ran in the Prince Albert paper a few weeks ago. And it says:

Promises dying in the forestry.

It's the *Herald's* obituary for the NDP's forestry plan.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister admit the NDP's forestry plan is a failure and that it is actually driving jobs and businesses out of the province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to preface my remarks by saying I will not admit that the forestry plan is a failure. It is going to create thousands of jobs in this province. It will be creating opportunities for Saskatchewan people in sawmills, in OSB (oriented strand board) plants, in tree harvesting, in support, technological support to that industry.

Mr. Speaker, there will be hundreds of millions of dollars of investment. It will take place in Prince Albert. It will take place in Meadow Lake. It will take place in Hudson Bay. And it will take place across the northern part of the province, Mr. Speaker. It's a sound program that will work for all of the people in Saskatchewan in spite of the fact that that member would choose to believe that this province can't do anything.

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

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a failure — a pure failure.

Mr. Speaker, what we just heard from the Economic Development minister is the same thing we've been hearing for a number of years from this NDP government. This is pure hogwash.

Mr. Speaker, maybe the minister would be interested in what one of the constituents thinks about the NDP's failure for forestry plan.

Here's what Peter Zuck of Prince Albert wrote in a letter to the local newspaper on March 23. And I quote:

Only government and its flacks would have the nerve to try and spin the story . . . (that's) driving away up-and-running forestry businesses with proven track records . . . as a success story.

Mr. Speaker, that's what the people of the NDP forestry plan thinks. And it stinks.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister come clean with Saskatchewan people and admit the NDP's forestry plan has been a dismal failure? And will the minister explain to the House what he plans to do to fix the mess the NDP government has created in the forestry industry?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, let me say that the forestry plan that has been put together by the people of this province working with their government is one that is inclusive of Aboriginal people, and it will create job opportunities for many people who otherwise would not.

Mr. Speaker, my response to that member opposite is that when this government and members of this government travel to the northwest corner of this province in a few days, we're going to bring back some crow and we're going to send it across to him on a silver platter and he should eat it.

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

### Government Support for Small Business

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Economic Development minister.

The minister's performance in the House today says it all when it comes to this NDP government — pure arrogance, disdain for small businesses, no concern for the jobs of Saskatchewan people, and absolutely no plan for how to fix the mess the NDP has made for the forest industry.

Mr. Speaker, the president of Ainsworth Lumber says his company is pulling out of Saskatchewan because, and I quote, Mr. Speaker: "It's too difficult to do business in Saskatchewan."

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain why the NDP so-called historic job creation plan for forestry is actually chasing jobs and forestry businesses out of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, let me respond by saying that there are businesses who find Saskatchewan a very good environment to do business. And I want to say that in spite of the fact that the member opposite quotes from a senior official in Ainsworth, the fact is that that company is having some difficulties in other areas doing business as well, Mr. Speaker, but I won't comment on that.

I want to say that if that member is interested in looking at what is actually going on around this province, just read a few of the headlines: "Home markets strong," "Saskatoon job prospects bloom for spring," "Wholesale rises," "Retail sales up."

Mr. Speaker, this province has led this country in the last 10 years with respect to GDP (gross domestic product). We have created more wealth per person in this province than any other jurisdiction in Canada and it is a record, Mr. Speaker, that we are — and should be — proud of.

Mr. Speaker, this province is moving forward. We're creating jobs and we're creating opportunity for Saskatchewan people.

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

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Role of Schools Task Force

**Hon. Mr. Melenchuk:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise in the House this afternoon in my capacity as Minister of Education.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I publicly released the Role of the School Task Force final report.

Chaired by Dr. Michael Tymchak, the 12-member task force represented a cross-section of the province geographically from rural, urban, and northern areas and professionally from backgrounds in social services, health, farming, First Nations government, police service, parent groups, post-secondary and K to 12 education.

I want to thank Dr. Tymchak, Chair, and the Role of the School Task Force members for their tremendous dedication.

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

**Hon. Mr. Melenchuk:** — Their efforts for a thorough dialogue on the issue of the changing role of schools took them to over 60 communities all across this province. The result, Mr. Speaker, is a report that provides us with inspirational challenges that are the very heart of our education system.

Our schools in Saskatchewan have served us very well and continue to serve us very well, but the role of the school has indeed changed. Teachers and boards of education are increasingly being challenged to meet society's growing expectations for our schools.

Guided by the spirit of this report and in keeping with the vision of the Role of the School Task Force, we are very excited that we will be able to respond on budget day with a significant expansion of the community schools program as indicated in

the Throne Speech.

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

**Hon. Mr. Melenchuk:** — A community school is a school that involves and provides additional support to students, families, and communities that work together to overcome obstacles. But we recognize more needs to be done.

We are distributing the report widely and will continue to seek input and feedback from all stakeholders and citizens of this province. Mr. Speaker, we will work closely with other government departments, education stakeholders, and communities to develop a collaborative response to the task force recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, the report stimulates action and signals an exciting transformation of our education system for the new millennium.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to thank Dr. Tymchak and his Role of the School Task Force for their dedication to the future well-being of Saskatchewan children and youth. Thank you very much.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to be at the presentation of the Role of the Schools Committee final report and its recommendations. At this time I would like to take this opportunity to commend Dr. Michael Tymchak, Chair of the committee, and the rest of the task force members for providing an open forum to debate and discuss the many issues and concerns that came forward.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan schools are facing enormous challenges and increasing pressures. With the release of this report, the Minister of Education and his department now have a plan — a comprehensive, concise, and well-documented plan that tells them the direction education should take in Saskatchewan; a direction that has been clearly indicated to them by the residents of this province.

There are a hundred recommendations in the task committee's final report. The major change, Mr. Speaker, will require the Department of Education to implement integrated services, an initiative that has not only been discussed by educators but also by many other government departments.

Open collaboration between departments is the key to success. Doing so, quite simply, will allow teachers to once and again become teachers. Health, justice, and social services issues will also be dealt with inside the integrated system.

Other recommendations from the report include making family involvement in education a priority and addressing the vast, cultural diversity and community issues facing our education system.

This is the future of our province that we're talking about. The gauntlet has been dropped at the feet of the Education minister. All of Saskatchewan will be waiting and watching to see if he takes up the challenge.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

(14:30)

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### **Bill No. 4 — The Registered Nurses Amendment Act, 2001**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 4, The Registered Nurses Amendment Act, 2001 be now introduced and read for 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 Dietitians Act**

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 5, The Dietitians Act, 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.

### 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 Ms. Jones, seconded by Mr. McCall, and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. Hermanson.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And you didn't get a chance to know that I congratulated you yesterday on your new position and certainly urged you to do, as I'm sure you will, continue the excellent program in the schools; visiting and teaching the young people of the province about democracy.

And I'll just create a bit of a separation there because I wouldn't want to involve you in this next comment, Mr. Speaker. But it's too bad that the members opposite didn't have the benefit of these kind of programs when they were in school because they are so afraid of honest debate and an honest exchange of ideas that they continually misstate the facts.

Today, 800 new health care providers were turned into 800 administrators. Now the member knew that that wasn't accurate but accuracy doesn't matter when your only goal is power. And accuracy doesn't matter when you have no ideas to put forward. All you're trying to do is tear down the work of others.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday at the close of my marks . . . my remarks, I mentioned that they had been citing an election promise that we made where there would be 500 new nurses provided. Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm reading from original text here. It says:

We will hire another 500 health care providers.

And I would have to say that, again, I don't know why the opposition would continue to do this when clearly it said health care providers. It didn't say nurses. And I would urge the members opposite to get on the high road of democratic debate in this House based on fact, based on giving voters the choice in the future between two different visions for this province. And I hope that they're ashamed of themselves for their conduct in this regard.

But on to happier notes, Mr. Speaker.

I want to talk a little bit about economic planning and prosperity in the province, because this is a record-setting province in a number of regards. And in our Partnership for Prosperity document, we have set out targets to increase the average disposable income for Saskatchewan families by 25 per cent. We set out targets to make sure that Saskatchewan has a well-educated workforce by increasing the number of people that have a post-secondary education by 5 per cent. We've set targets of a 20 per cent increase in research and development, including to value-added exports by 20 per cent. And an increase in 40 per cent of the families and businesses connected to the Internet.

And certainly the Throne Speech, and the budget that we'll be seeing in the next couple of days, certainly will take us in those directions.

But I do want to spend just a little bit of time on the Alberta comparison because we often hear about the surpluses. Now we know that through no good skill of the government in that province that they have an oil bonus that actually exceeds our total provincial budget. And this is certainly easy money from the perspective of what that province has to do to receive that oil benefit. And I don't begrudge our neighbours their success; I think it's wonderful that they are able to do the things that they do.

But I do want to point out a little bit of fact again. I know it's troubling to have to deal with facts. And even through Alberta has no sales tax, they do have an annual health premium of 816 per family, which is more . . . it's more than the yearly tax paid by Saskatchewan families on the sales tax. So what's the difference? They pay more in their health premium than people here pay in sales tax.

Automobile insurance rates. I presume that most of the folks there drive cars. Well they're nearly double the rates in Regina. A 1998 Taurus is considerably . . . it's almost double the insurance rates in Alberta that it is in Saskatchewan. And a new house in Calgary is 188,000 compared to one in Regina at 150. Well, I say, Mr. Speaker, that those increased mortgage payments again are eating in to whatever benefit people think might be available.

And when you add all of those things together, a family earning 75,000 in Saskatoon has \$17,010 that goes towards the support of all the services they receive, and in Calgary it's more. So what we have to say that in Alberta the only advantage there is there is for the privileged. It's more expensive for students to go to university there. And they spend less per capita on important

social programs including health care than we do in Saskatchewan.

So I just want to say that the low-end jobs in Alberta pay less than they do in Saskatchewan. Their minimum wage is less. And I don't know, Mr. Speaker, why a wealthy province wouldn't share some of that wealth with the young people that it employs in its service industry jobs.

Women fare better in Saskatchewan. The wages of women in Saskatchewan are generally at a higher level. And, again, I don't know why they don't share some of that wealth with the women of their province.

And I'll just say in closing on this point, Mr. Speaker, that child poverty is also higher there.

So I guess it depends on what you want to measure. But by the things that I measure, Mr. Speaker, and the things I consider important, I have to say that I think they could do a little better job at distributing some of that oil bonus that they have in that province.

The next thing I want to just mention, you may know, Mr. Speaker, that I get quite involved in music and because of that have a chance to meet a lot of young people.

And I encountered a bit of a phenomenon last summer where there was young people moving back from BC (British Columbia), moving here from Ontario. And I said to them, I said, well, I'm kind of curious. I know why I like Saskatchewan, but I'm curious why you've chosen to come to Saskatchewan.

And one of the young people said well, you can afford to live here and I have some money left over to pursue your interests. He said it's so expensive to live in these other places that there's no way that I can pursue my other interests, my whole income goes just to living in these places.

I met a young person recently who is an urban young person who grew up right in the heart of Vancouver and he's chosen to get involved in agriculture in Saskatchewan, which I found very interesting. He's made a career choice to do that. But the area he's interested in is new generation co-ops and the ability of farmers to group together to provide value-added products. And the area he's particularly interested in is he's part of a company that's been making things like lotions and whatnot from hemp. And he feels that there's an opportunity for people to get together to produce the raw materials needed for the product that his company produces.

So I think that when you look at people who have been elsewhere, have seen what's going on, they see there's a lot of opportunities.

I apologize — it escapes me — but there's a young person in Gravelbourg who talks about all the business opportunities that are there for people in rural Saskatchewan because of the affordable investments. And certainly, Gravelbourg is one of those communities that's moving along the same path that Moose Jaw has in terms of building on its natural advantages. And there's a young restaurateur there who has recently put his

grubstake into a small restaurant in Gravelbourg. And if it's successful — who knows — he may decide to continue there or he may decide to buy a larger restaurant. But the fact of the matter is that enabled that person to use their talent to get a start in an affordable way in Saskatchewan. So I think that those are the kind of people we want to be spending our time with. People who understand that there is opportunity.

Now there is one problem that Saskatchewan faces. And part of that is that agricultural employment in this province represents 10 per cent of our workforce. In other provinces it's as low as 3.5 per cent to a high of 4.9 per cent. So double the people in Saskatchewan depend on agriculture for employment than they do in other areas, and this is of course why we've spent so much effort on diversification and value added. And again, by all reports from various financial houses they feel that the diversification needs to continue but has been going well and making a difference in the stability of our economy overall.

Now I just want to reiterate a few facts from yesterday about our record-setting province. We had 485,000 people working in Saskatchewan in the year 2000, which was 5,000 more than the previous record. The year 2000 was a record year for potash, a record year for drilling natural gas wells, a record year for oil production, and overall in Canada 80 per cent of our wild rice comes from Saskatchewan. We have award-winning musicians, filmmakers, athletes, writers.

But it's not enough for the opposition, Mr. Speaker. It's not enough to set records in debt reduction and credit rating improvements and reduction in child poverty. I'm not quite sure what would be enough but I think power is the only thing that will satisfy those guys because most other things are getting done quite nicely without them thank you.

I want to speak briefly about the role of the Internet in our rural economy. Many provinces across Canada are understanding the role that the Net will play in provision of services to rural and remote areas for many reasons. If you think, for example, of a farmer who's looking for technical information how much simpler to get on the Internet to look for that information and having to drive miles to a library where they may or may not have the up-to-date technical information that that farmer requires. In this instance they could connect directly with the agricultural college, with the most up to date research institutes that are doing research on the particular matter that they're interested in.

The fact of the matter is recently at Agribition they were talking about being able to sell breed stock on the Internet. I think you can actually dial up and have a look at your bull there and see if that's the bull that you want to buy, and ... (inaudible interjection) ... I think the Sask Party has a Web site that enables you to do that as well.

But I also want to mention the strong role it plays in education. A couple of years ago when I visited the agricultural college in Saskatoon, nine of their students were taking their agricultural program at a distance from the campus through use of information technology — whether it's medical information, educational, whether it's e-business.

We have people like the Saskatoon berry farm who are selling

their products over the Internet. This is a huge new opportunity. And I think we may even see opportunities for some of our public sector work to be done through telework in the future, which will give people the choice of being able to live in affordable communities throughout this province rather than being confined to urban centres merely for the receipt of services.

There was one critique by one of the members opposite that I want to speak directly to about medium-speed Internet access in Saskatchewan. And I know that they have a thirst for facts, Mr. Speaker, so I'm going to just explain a bit — and the member who raised this question will know who they are. But they asked, why does northern Saskatchewan receive medium-speed Internet access today.

Well today the fact is that the vast majority of northern Saskatchewan schools receive their Internet access from DirecPC, which is a satellite service provided nationally through Telesat Canada. The service has proven to be unsatisfactory — it's slow, it's got difficulty in dial-up, it's unreliable. And under CommunityNet, northern Saskatchewan schools will be provided with satellite services through the Saskatchewan Communications Network. The SCN service will be ten times faster than what's currently delivered by DirecPC.

Now it's very inescapable to get around the fact of having to deliver some services in the North through satellite. I know that the members opposite would have us dig through the Canadian Shield, but this is more difficult than they understand apparently, not having tried to dig a trench through the Canadian Shield. But we thought that satellite would be a good solution to this. And due to the forward-looking planning of the government we do have the SCN network that provides us with these facilities.

(14:45)

And soon we'll see high speed Internet spreading out to communities around the province because of the way we've co-operated on bringing all of our sectors together in Saskatchewan around broadband Internet service. The fact of the matter is, is that we're managing to deliver this service at a higher level of service for a smaller cost per capita than any other province in Canada.

And I think what we'll see is a huge expansion of the opportunities that communities have to participate both in the knowledge economy but also to pursue whatever area of interest it is that they have once this is all in place. And we have a fairly short time horizon to put this in place — over the next two to three years we'll see a very rapid expansion in this area.

I'm going to also spend just a minute talking about tax reform in the province. I don't know if you know, Mr. Speaker, but Saskatchewan's personal income tax rates had been going up since the introduction of the flat tax in 1985. And I might mention that of course we weren't the government in 1985 when this happened.

And if I can just digress for a moment, Mr. Speaker, one of the things I note about the members opposite is that money burns a hole in their pocket. They remind me of the kid that found 10

bucks on the street and just can't wait to get to the candy store to spend it. No thought for the future. And that's why under their previous administration we had programs that gave away cheap gas and then had to raise taxes to recoup the money they lost on the cheap gas.

We're not going to do that, Mr. Speaker. Whatever tax cuts you get from this government will be permanent. We will not have to follow the kind of feast and famine policies that were followed by the members opposite.

In 1992 an average family was paying the highest income tax in all of Canada, but this is no longer the case. Our income tax rates have come down four times in the last seven years and they're coming down again in 2002 and 2003. So that's six times that there will have been income tax reductions. And the fact of the matter is, that reduction will reach an estimated 442 million per year by 2003.

At 6 per cent, Saskatchewan's rate is the lowest of the nine provinces with a sales tax. And we know anyway that Alberta cheats, because instead of charging a sales tax they charge you health care premiums. So I guess if you want to play that game you can do that, but a little more transparent here.

In 1992 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I would ask the member opposite what it is about 6 per cent he doesn't understand, but anyway. In 1992 the total tax bill for an average Saskatchewan family was the second highest. By 2000 it was the fourth lowest.

And I just say, Mr. Speaker, as we enter the budget debate, I urge the members opposite to look at the long term and not just want to run out and spend everything in one year, leaving no ability to continue to add improvements in the out years .

I want to mention just a little bit, some of the people who are a little more supportive of Saskatchewan. For example, the president of Bridon Cordage — a twine manufacturer based in Alberta . . . Albert Lea, Minnesota, pardon me — Tim Mason stood up in front of the Canada-Minnesota Business Council to extol the virtues of doing business in Saskatoon where Bridon Cordage has a branch plant. The key factors for Bridon Cordage were transportation and the availability of a quality labour force, said Fraser.

Now these are people from outside the province who have chosen this country and this province as the place to do business because of what they see as being the very positive qualities. And perhaps we can arrange for the members opposite to sit down with these folks and understand what's going on here.

The other — and I apologize to my Regina colleagues that a couple of the examples I picked today are both Saskatoon; I don't know how that could be but here we are — but this is a comment about Tourism Saskatoon developing an e-commerce portal. And this should be very exciting to people interested in cultural tourism because whether it's festivals, annual events — anything that people book tickets for — signature events that take place in the province, they'll be able to provide people with event calendars, audio and video downloads, archive photos, maps, weather information. And they are planning to add a central reservation system in the future.

So these are people who are taking what we've got and are working hard to build it into some new areas of economic development for the province.

But you know I can say whatever I want, Mr. Speaker, but what's important is what the communities say about our Throne Speech. And I just want to read a few quotes. SaskCulture sent out this press release after the Throne Speech.

By creating a new Department of Youth, Culture and Recreation, the Premier acknowledged that Saskatchewan has a rich, cultural diversity and that culture is a central component of community life throughout Saskatchewan.

They were pleased to hear that the Throne Speech recognized the important economic contribution cultural industries make to the province's economy.

As well they eagerly anticipate the release of the Partnership for Prosperity report where the initial consultation document named culture among Saskatchewan's key economic growth areas.

As well Gilks noted that other good news for the cultural community was found in the commitment to extend high-speed Internet through rural Saskatchewan over the next six years. With the Internet being such an important way to showcase Saskatchewan culture around the world, it's vital that all the residents have a chance to access on-line resources.

There's one community viewpoint. We have another one here from the Saskatchewan Association of Recreation Professionals. The members of the association know that a focus on recreation will benefit individuals, families, and communities, and look forward to working with the new minister in the newly created Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation, as well as the related departments such as Health and Justice.

The association endorses the following statements. Recreation and active living are essential to personal health. Recreation is key to balanced human development. Recreation and parks are essential to our quality of life. Recreation reduces self-destructive and anti-social behaviour. Recreation and parks build strong families and healthy communities. Pay now or pay later — recreation reduces health care, social service, police, and justice costs. Recreation and parks are significant economic generators in your community. Parks, open space, and natural areas are essential to ecological survival.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker. I have other quotes from many other people who have written in since the new portfolio was set up, but the point I'm making is although the opposition has difficulty understanding the importance of culture, youth, and recreation, the community has no difficulty understanding it and have been very forthcoming in their positive remarks.

This e-mail that I got the other day was particularly interesting, and it says here, forward-looking communities and their leaders are looking for leadership in feel-good, pragmatic action to celebrate the vitality of their community and, at the same time, look to the future potential of that community. I haven't yet encountered anyone, Mr. Speaker, who's looking for feel-bad support in their communities, and I would say that I certainly welcome optimistic people being on board.

One of the things that this person referred to is that 50 years ago when the government said it would electrify every home in the province, that electrification created all kinds of spinoff opportunities for business in the province. And today that same opportunity exists with information technology, Mr. Speaker. It'll provide our rural communities with a huge advantage in the kind of choices they will be able to make.

But, there's no question that Canadian values are in flux. We sometimes have a situation where people decide to retreat into their own personal foxhole and pull the dirt in over them. But the fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is anything really worthwhile that's happened in this society has happened because we've worked together.

And one of the programs I just want to comment on — and I thank the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood for mentioning this one and understanding what it was all about — when Premier Lorne Calvert announced that . . . Excuse me.

**The Speaker:** — Order. I would just remind the member if they're referring to another member they should do by his riding or by title only. Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I was quoting the news clipping, so I apologize for that.

But the Premier iterated that the province needs to start building its future by helping young children before they enter school. And we will be devoting \$73 million over the next five years to early childhood development, and that will include targeting money at strengthening families, curbing fetal alcohol syndrome, but also knowing that when we build strong children we build a strong future. And the Saskatchewan school trustees as well were encouraged to hear that this is going to be the forward-looking focus of the government.

So in summary, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that in our Throne Speech . . . It was a very forward-looking speech about connecting people to the future of prosperity; a thriving economy; healthy citizens, families and communities; responsive and effective government. And there will be large investments in technology for government, for business, for educational institutions, for health care. In community infrastructure we'll see new investments through the Canada-Saskatchewan infrastructure program. And rural Saskatchewan will see increased spending on agricultural research and development to help farmers take advantage of new opportunities. Transportation will see the largest investment in highway renewal that we've ever seen. And in economic planning we'll see the province moving forward with its economic blueprint for prosperity.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that I'm excited about this. And, Mr. Speaker, clearly the bus is rolling and I, for one, am excited about our journey under our new leader and Premier. And in closing, Mr. Speaker, I say to the opposition, get on the bus, Gus.

And I will be supporting the Throne Speech but not the amendment. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to enter the debate this afternoon and to say that at the conclusion of my remarks I have an announcement to make about my personal political future.

But I am pleased to rise in the debate this afternoon. And first of all to offer my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on your election. I also want to mention two former members who have left us since the end of the last session. And I want to extend my own personal best wishes to former Premier Romanow and former Deputy Premier Lingenfelter in all their future endeavours.

I want to pay tribute too, to my constituents of North Battleford. The city of North Battleford, including the communities Meota, Cochin, Prince, and the First Nations reserves of Saulteaux and Moosomin, comprise one of the most scenic and historic parts of our province. And I'm proud to represent this beautiful region and the fine people who live in it.

I want to congratulate the government on the decision to proceed with the construction of a second bridge across the North Saskatchewan River this year.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the twinning of the Yellowhead, like the twinning of the Trans-Canada, is a top priority which will give this province a modern, safe highway system that will pay for itself in saved lives and fewer accidents. I am pleased that the government has decided to twin the Yellowhead along the existing route rather than to bypass the Battlefords, as several prominent members of the Saskatchewan Party are advocating.

Fortunately the government has not listened to a number of Saskatchewan Party activists in the Battlefords who are determined to bypass the Battlefords. Instead the government has listened to the elected people of the Battlefords — the city council, the town council, the chamber of commerce, and myself as MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) — who have said that the route should go through the Battlefords rather than bypass us. The Saskatchewan Party activists who are determined to bypass the Battlefords have not and never will be elected there.

Another local issue of importance to the Battlefords I want to touch on is that of old Government House. Mr. Speaker, in 1874 Battleford was chosen as the capital of the then Northwest Territories. Under Governor Laird three-quarters of the land mass of present day Canada was ruled from Battleford.

Unfortunately a few years later, Governor Dewdney purchased a large tract of land in the Pile of Bones area and promptly decided that the capital should be moved there.

The former capital building at Battleford overlooks the forks of the Battle and Saskatchewan River from an impressive hill. And I can think of no more important project with which to mark the centennial of Saskatchewan in 2005 than the preservation and refurbishment of old Government House in Battleford.

(15:00)

I want to congratulate the Provincial Secretary on the new

Historic Properties Foundation Act that will aid in raising money for the Government House project.

Before I leave the very important task of advising members of this House of all the advantages and features of my home constituency, I want to also inform hon. members that North Battleford will be bidding to host the 2004 Saskatchewan Summer Games. I've been asked by the city council in North Battleford to chair the bid committee, and I encourage all members of the House to join with me in supporting the North Battleford bid to host this important event that will give all members and, indeed, all citizens of our province a reason to visit the Battlefords in 2004.

I now want to discuss the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. A first Throne Speech is an opportunity to set out a new vision for the province. I listened carefully for some words of hope, some words of hope for the 13,000 fewer people working in this province than a year ago. I instead heard that the province is booming. In the debate, I actually heard one government member claim that our growth is outstripping that of Alberta.

I listened for some hope for our grain producers caught in the grip of rising input costs and the collapse of commodity prices. Instead the only grain industry I heard mentioned was the boom in wild rice.

I listened for hope for our young people who want an opportunity to live and work, a strategy to re-energize this province, a strategy for young people who want to stay here. Instead the only measure I heard for our young people was the creation of a new government department.

Mr. Speaker, when I was first running in the North Battleford by-election, the then Social Services minister and now Premier visited the Battlefords to announce a number of initiatives for our constituency. What we heard at that time was a recitation of several government grants for various organizations, many of which dated back literally for years and included grants that had expired two years before.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech was very much in that vein, as a series of government programs that had been announced months ago were re-announced. Even some federal programs were re-announced in the apparent belief that Saskatchewan voters are so gullible they would think that they were NDP initiatives. Mr. Speaker, we desperately need renewal and fresh ideas and energy. Sadly we did not get it from a Throne Speech that was a tired recitation of old announcements; so stale that some of them had been made by myself when I was a minister.

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

**Mr. Hillson:** — I also want to register my objections, in the strongest terms, to the tendency of government members to accuse opposition MLAs of disloyalty for saying this province is not doing well enough.

Mr. Speaker, last year we lost 13,000 jobs; yet the government says we're booming and only traitors would suggest otherwise. No one — no one — is being disloyal to this province when they say we're not satisfied with a loss of 13,000 of our

brightest and best young people who have had to leave this province to find work and opportunity elsewhere.

The NDP say they are proud of the fact that we are the only province that saw a decrease in child poverty last year. They less frequently mention that we still have the highest poverty rate of any province in Canada. We have the highest percentage of senior citizens and the second highest percentage of children in the country. Unfortunately the number of working and economically active citizens form a smaller percentage of our population than that of any other province in Canada.

We have the highest crime . . . youth crime rate in Canada. We have the highest youth crime rate in Canada. Is it unpatriotic to point that out or is it unpatriotic to stick your head in the sand and say we don't need to deal with this problem, we don't need to give our young people new hope? Yet the NDP says everything is great and only unpatriotic individuals would express disappointment with some of the statistics we face.

The attitude of the government reminds me of the old western song, "I've Been Down So Long (It Looks Like Up To Me)."

Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker . . . the hon. member for Regina Centre, I'm coming to you. I'm coming to you. Okay.

Over the next 15 years Alberta expects \$40 billion in new energy and thermal projects — \$40 billion in investment. Just think of that, Mr. Speaker. Think what even a fraction of that amount would mean to the Saskatchewan economy. The projected investment in Saskatchewan at present is zero.

Mr. Speaker, it is not just disloyal people who are leaving our province. It is not just Saskatchewan Party MLAs who will envy the opportunities to the west of us. May I say it is not just former NDP MLAs who are leaving for the bright lights of Calgary.

Mr. Speaker, it's our Crown corporations which are choosing to invest in Alberta instead of Saskatchewan. SaskPower is building a coal generation plant in Fort McMurray. Despite the fact we're facing energy shortages here in Saskatchewan, SaskPower wants to build in Fort McMurray, Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, we can be and should be a world leader in clean coal electricity generation. We should aggressively pursue ethanol generation, and we should selectively reduce the provincial fuel tax on ethanol blended fuels in order to ensure that ethanol blended fuels are economically viable.

It is not unpatriotic to say things need to change. It is not disloyal to give our people a new sense of hope. Perhaps the truly disloyal people are those who look at our present state of affairs and say it's good enough for them, it's good enough for Saskatchewan. Well it's not good enough for Saskatchewan, it's not good enough for me, it's not good enough for Liberals, and it's certainly not good enough for the young people of this province.

I want to talk for a minute, if I may, Mr. Speaker, about the farm crisis. As we all know, agriculture was the cornerstone of our province when it was created and it remains so today.

AIDA was a very flawed program. I had hoped that the provincial government would have been in on the early planning of its replacement so that we would have a program that was less bureaucratic and more responsive to the needs of producers.

Well our farmers are under enormous pressure as a result of circumstances totally beyond their control. And despite their best efforts to diversify and modernize, they have been let down by their governments. The governments of both Canada and Saskatchewan seem more interested in their own positioning and squabbling than in helping farmers deal with the crisis.

I find it totally unacceptable that the federal Minister of Agriculture has said that Saskatchewan producers will not get their fair share of the new program unless the provincial government follows through and does participate. If the Saskatchewan government does not participate in the new program, he says, Saskatchewan producers will be disintegrated their share of a national program.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan producers cannot be deprived of their rights as Canadians because their provincial government is squabbling.

I am also concerned that the Government of Saskatchewan agreed to participate under the CFIP (Canada Farm Income Program) when this agreement was made by former Agriculture minister and Deputy Premier Dwain Lingenfelter. Now with his resignation, the new minister claims that he is in no way bound by that commitment.

Mr. Speaker, how would we function and what chaos would we be in if every time we changed ministers, all previous commitments were cancelled?

I also ask: what happens to the \$75 million of Saskatchewan's share of the Canada Farm Income Program? Will that money still be dedicated to the farm crisis or will it be funnelled off into other areas?

I also want to say, however, that I agree with the NDP government commitment of SaskTel to provide high-speed Internet throughout the province. It baffles me that the Saskatchewan Party is opposed.

Mr. Speaker, if our farmers are going to diversify, going to be part of the global economy, and if they are going to operate without the Canadian Wheat Board as the Saskatchewan Party advocates, then they will need up-to-the-minute market information.

The Internet allows rural people to be just as connected with the modern world and economy as someone living in Toronto. I think that the Internet is vital for the survival of farming and other business in rural Saskatchewan. It is an example of the perversity and lack of forward thinking on the part of the Saskatchewan Party that they ridicule the idea.

I now want to talk about the position of our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.

Last November the Leader of the Opposition stated in a speech



that the government, through the Crown corporations, plans to invest 500 million — one-half a billion dollars — outside the province of Saskatchewan. The government refuses to confirm or deny that figure.

May I first of all say, Mr. Speaker, I find it incomprehensibly arrogant for the government to refuse to tell the people of Saskatchewan — the shareholders of these Crown corporations — what is going to be done with their money.

The question is not whether it is a good investment to buy an energy distribution company in Chicago, an insurance company in Prince Edward Island, a home security system in Winnipeg, an energy company in Concepción, a telephone company in the Philippines, a cable company in Australia, or a power plant in Alberta — that province above Alberta that the NDP are forever telling us only traitors consort with or look to.

The question, the question, Mr. Speaker, is whether using half a billion dollars outside this province is the best use of our resources.

Mr. Speaker, half a billion dollars would go a long way to hiring those 500 nurses the NDP promised in the last election. Half a billion dollars would go a long way to fixing up our highways, instead of turning some of them back to gravel. Half a billion dollars would allow us to have a tax rate competitive with our neighbours. And half a billion dollars would go a long way to reducing the burden of property tax in this province.

I'm confident that if our population were to be asked what priority they place on foreign investments by their Crown corporations, they would overwhelmingly say, little to none.

If the government thinks I am wrong in this, then I challenge the Premier to set out his foreign investment plans before the people of Saskatchewan, before the shareholders of the Crown corporations. Tell them how much money he plans to invest external to Saskatchewan. Tell them if it is half a billion dollars, and see what response he gets from the people of this province.

The final subject I would like to deal with this afternoon is the state of the Liberal Party.

(15:15)

Mr. Speaker, the founding convention of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party was held in August of 1905. The significance of this is that the province of Saskatchewan did not come in to being until September of 1905, two weeks after the Liberal convention.

Walter Scott, the leader of the Liberal Party, became the first premier and, later that year, the Liberals won the first provincial election. It was that Liberal government which laid the foundations of the new province by building the roads, the schools, the university and this legislature.

Later it was the Liberal Party under Jimmy Gardiner that fought against the rising tide of bigotry, threatening the social peace of this province in the 1920s when the Orange Lodge and the Ku Klux Klan were active. Our Liberal forbearers built well.

For my part, I'm convinced that not all the contributions of the Liberal Party to the development of this province are in the past. I am persuaded that never before in our history has there been a greater need for a progressive centrist party committed to bringing us together and moving us forward.

My decision to resign from cabinet is well-known and the reasons need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that I became convinced that our Liberal membership was so overwhelmingly opposed to our participation in the coalition that we, as MLAs, would have to make a choice between our participation in government and our membership in the Liberal Party.

The Liberal Leader told me he had no faith in the future of our party and, accordingly, we would be best advised to remain in cabinet. I respect his decision. I respect it, but I do not agree.

Instead, I say we must respect the decision of the Liberal membership who want an independent future for our party. Liberals are not prepared to accept that we can do nothing more than be an adjunct of another party. Nor do I personally accept that I have no role to play in the public life of this province other than to enjoy a cabinet position as long as fate may allow.

Yesterday, I listened with interest as the hon. member for Regina Centre paid tribute to the Liberal coalition. May I say I appreciated being her seatmate and I appreciated her generous comments. Nonetheless I must point out the obvious — the fact that our party in the coalition had become invisible with no recognizable identity and practically no measurable support was not something to concern her as a loyal member of the NDP.

I say to my elected colleagues, the membership of the Liberal Party has spoken clearly and unequivocally. They do not want us in the coalition. They want a strong, independent Liberal Party. Mr. Speaker, this is not a dispute between elected Liberal MLAs. The question is simply whether we will listen to Liberal members throughout the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member from Regina-Qu'Appelle, I say that I do not accept that I had anything more than a marginal role in the vote which occurred in Prince Albert recently for a leadership convention. The motion to demand a leadership convention had already been placed on the Liberal agenda before I resigned from cabinet and would unquestionably have been cast regardless of where I was presently sitting in the Saskatchewan legislature. To suggest that the vote would have been different had I not resigned from cabinet is giving me far too much credit or blame, depending on one's point of view.

May I also say before closing this subject that I appreciated the support, advice, and kind words from so many of my constituents in North Battleford as I struggled with my decision. I regretted that I had joined the government without consultation. I regretted that I did not talk to my constituents before I accepted cabinet appointment. And I'm pleased that before I resigned from cabinet, I was able to do the correct thing and talk widely with my constituents.

Hon. members will recall that after I announced my decision, TV news cameras visited the Battlefords to assess local

reaction. They were unable to find anyone who disagreed with my decision. Later at our Liberal convention, the North Battleford *News-Optimist* was incorrectly quoted at the convention as having expressed opposition and disappointment with my move.

I know that many members and some of the viewers who may be watching this afternoon wonder what lies in store for me. With that in mind, I wish to make an announcement. I don't know. I do not know what the future holds, but I want to say I am committed to continuing to serve my constituents, my province, and my party with integrity and to the best of my ability. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I go into my reply to the Throne Speech, I'd like to congratulate the member from Prince Albert Carlton, and also the Deputy Speaker, Regina Sherwood, on their election as Speaker and Deputy Speaker. And I look forward to working with you throughout the rest of this sitting.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech unfortunately lacks vision. It's a Throne Speech from a tired, old government without any new ideas, just rehashed ideas and announcements from past . . . last year's Throne Speech.

*The Leader-Post*, Regina, Wednesday, March 21, Mr. Speaker, it reads:

Calvert missed an opportunity.

And it goes on to read that the Premier:

. . . already suffering from a less-than-dynamic image and criticism that his premiership is devoid of ideas and innovation — didn't take this opportunity to make some bold signature of announcement is puzzling. A throne speech (Mr. Speaker) is one of those rare opportunities to tell the world what you are about.

And the new Premier and the Liberal-NDP coalition missed the mark, Mr. Speaker.

It goes on to say:

Consider the purported highlights of this address:

The \$170 million during the next five years to create 6,000 seasonal jobs is (just) an extension of an announcement made (a few weeks ago by the Premier) . . .

Another one:

The new initiatives to create 10,000 jobs in the forestry industry by 2005 through an integrated forestry development plan.

And again, Mr. Speaker:

(Ironically, Ainsworth Lumber of B.C. announced just (that) Monday that it was pulling out of three deals worth

\$210 million because, according to the company's president, it's just too difficult to do business in this province.)

Another proposal:

. . . amendments to The Labours Standard Act during this session to increase both maternal and parental leave to 50 . . . from 30 weeks (was another previous announcement) . . .

Devoting approximately \$73 million (was another announcement) during the next five years to Early Childhood Development (also another previously announcement) . . .

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne had nothing to say about job growth, nothing to say about health care reform, and nothing on the agriculture crisis. It lacked a vision; it lacked a plan. There are no plans in the Throne Speech to create new jobs. No plans for a stronger safety net. No plans to strengthen regional hospitals, and no plans to reduce hospital waiting lists.

No commitment, Mr. Speaker, to follow through on the promises made in last year's Throne Speech. Last year the NDP promised to create jobs in Saskatchewan. But Saskatchewan has lost 13,000 jobs in the past 12 months. They had promised 30,000 new jobs in the previous Throne Speech.

Last year the NDP promised to reduce high input costs facing farm families. They promised a long-term farm safety net program, but that never happened either. Last year, Mr. Speaker, the NDP promised to reduce surgical waiting lists in Saskatchewan, but the surgical waiting list times are growing, and today Saskatchewan has the longest waiting list in Canada.

Both the NDP and the Liberals promised to strengthen regional hospitals, Mr. Speaker. But in the Throne Speech we heard nothing about regional hospitals, while beds are closing and surgeries are being cancelled in Prince Albert and Swift Current. Once again the NDP made a promise and then failed to deliver.

The NDP-Liberal coalition failed to deliver on any of its key election promises in the area of job creation, agriculture, and health care. The government is lacking leadership in government that Saskatchewan so desperately needs to stop the decline in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read a couple of resolutions from the Knights of Columbus of Saskatchewan. They're going to debate these resolutions at their annual convention coming up in April.

The Knights of Columbus in Saskatchewan have 11,000 members, Mr. Speaker, and they are a Catholic men's Christian fraternal organization. They hope to pass these resolutions and also to recommend to other councils and state councils in Canada to present them to the federal government as a united force.

And I'd like to just to read them into the record, if I may, Mr. Speaker. The first one reads:

Whereas the low commodity prices presently being received by Canadian farmers are beyond their control; whereas the current commodity prices are being set due to heavy subsidies by the European and United States . . . whereas the state of the family farm is now being eroded; whereas many Canadian farmers are forced to leave the land; whereas many Canadian farmers are forced to seek employment to help support their farming endeavours and their livelihood; whereas the farming economy is still a major backbone of the provinces and that of Canada.

Therefore be it resolved that the State Board of the Knights of Columbus of Saskatchewan make it known to all levels of government, and particularly the federal government, that an injection of cash payments greater than was recently announced be implemented by the federal government immediately.

Be it known that the Knights of Columbus of Saskatchewan seek implementation of a fair and equal subsidized program that sustains the farming economy by remaining competitive with that of other countries.

The second resolution, Mr. Speaker, reads:

Whereas current farm input costs are out of control and out of line with that of farming commodities; whereas much of the input costs are directly related to provincial and federal government programs as related to taxation and royalties.

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus call on all levels of government, especially the provincial and federal governments, to review their current practices as they pertain to farming inputs in relation to taxation and royalties in view of obtaining a farm program for farmers.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to go on and speak a bit about the news release concerning the Conservation Cover Program that was announced. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this program is of little value to farmers in Saskatchewan. This is the opportunity that the government missed to really help with the diversification of this province into livestock. A minimum of 5 acres and a maximum of 50 acres at \$50 an acre is just not adequate.

And we realize that diversification must take place in this province, and when you increase the amount of land that's seeded to grass will increase the number of cows and calves being raised in Saskatchewan, and the spinoffs there are tremendous, into feedlots and packing plants, hopefully a world-class packing plant in Saskatchewan, and in turn jobs and more taxpayers in this province which will put money in the government's coffers to put into health care and building our roads and our highways, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the government often says of the opposition that we have no plan. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read our plan; I'd like to speak about our plan — the Saskatchewan Party's plan — for agriculture.

(15:30)

The Saskatchewan Party's plan for agriculture is really based on

the emergency debate on agriculture that took place in the legislature on March 21. The NDP government proposed to write yet another letter to the Prime Minister of Canada calling for \$500 million in additional agricultural support for Canadian farmers.

Mr. Speaker, while the Saskatchewan Party strongly supports a significant increase in federal assistance for struggling farmers' family farms, we believe the provincial and federal governments have an obligation to do more. And this is the Saskatchewan Party plan as follows.

The governments of Saskatchewan and Canada must immediately begin negotiations on a long-term farm safety net program that would promote a strong and growing agricultural industry. This is something that has been promised to the Saskatchewan farmers for many, many years ever since the provincial government tore up the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program and took money out of the farmers' pockets. And ever since then the farmers have been waiting for this long-term safety net.

The second point, the Government of Canada must make the reduction of international grain subsidies a high priority because ending the subsidy war will strengthen the entire Canadian economy.

And again, Mr. Speaker, this is fundamental to the health of the Saskatchewan farmer that these subsidies be done away with at the international level. The European Treasury and the American Treasury subsidize their farmers to a much greater extent than the Canadian and the Saskatchewan government does for our farmers and the farmers are really fighting the treasuries of the Europeans and the Americans. And as we see, the Saskatchewan farmer cannot continue to do that on its own. They must receive support from the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Thirdly, the Government of Canada should increase its share of the Canadian Farm Income Program, or CFIP, from its current level of \$500 million to \$1 billion to address the immediate crisis threatening to destroy thousands of family operations in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, and the fourth item, all 58 members of the Saskatchewan legislature should take the unprecedented step of travelling to Ottawa to fight for the \$500 million increase in CFIP funding for family farms.

Mr. Speaker, the government turned down that request and we believe it would be very important to go as a united front to Ottawa to put forward our concerns to the federal government and to the Prime Minister to tell about the plight of the Saskatchewan farmer. Saskatchewan is struggling. Agriculture industry has negatively affected almost every other industry in the province and a weak agriculture industry impacts the jobs of people across Saskatchewan, including the cities of Saskatoon and Regina. The poor agriculture economy affects all of Saskatchewan — both urban and rural. And even by the Premier Calvert's own admission, the weakening farm . . . Sorry . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — . . . understands that we refer to other

hon. members by constituency or title.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry.

By the Premier's own admission, the weakening farm economy is costing Saskatchewan jobs and forcing people to leave our province to work elsewhere. Yet the NDP has refused to support family farms with anything more than a letter of complaint to an uninterested Prime Minister.

The Saskatchewan Party recognizes the importance of the agriculture industry to every family and business in Saskatchewan and we will continue to fight for the families and for the restoration of a profitable, sustainable agriculture industry in this province, Mr. Speaker. That's the Saskatchewan Party plan. I believe it's a good plan.

And when we talk about rural Saskatchewan and the farm economy, we must remember that it affects all of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. The spinoffs from the agriculture industry is very vital to the Saskatchewan economy. Such spinoffs as buying inputs, fertilizer, chemicals, oil, fuel, repairs, buying equipment — new and used equipment. And in a time of a financial crisis the farmers of Saskatchewan naturally cut back on their expenses which affect the dealerships in this province as well as the short-line manufacturers and mainline manufacturers in the province.

And when agriculture is struggling in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, it affects the whole economy in both urban and rural, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to read to you some of the initiatives that are taking place in Redberry Lake constituency which I am so honoured to represent. There's two groups. The first one is the Thick Hills Regional Business and Learning Centre. It takes in the communities of Blaine Lake, Marcelin communities. Access Program or CAP spearheaded the formation of the regional site, Thick Wood Hills Regional Business and Learning Centres.

They have four primary objectives, Mr. Speaker: to help raise awareness within our rural communities of the benefits and opportunities of using information, technologies, and services.

Number two, Mr. Speaker, to accelerate access to and the use of information highway related learning tools and services to help sustain jobs and growth in the rural communities.

Number three, Mr. Speaker, to promote training opportunities for local entrepreneurs, employees of local business, educators, students, and others interested in improving their computer information management and network skills.

Mr. Speaker, they are to foster conversion of existing government and other services to an electronic delivery as well as the development of a new service. They hope to provide public Internet access, e-mail services, adult education, community development, networking, business services. And the projects and other initiatives are creating business centres, income tax e-filing, student employment, job bank, tourism, community calendar, advertising, and building partnerships. The focus will be primarily on agriculture, tourism, community, and small businesses, Mr. Speaker.

The second group that is doing a lot of work in the Redberry Lake constituency, Mr. Speaker, is a committee set up which is a spinoff of the Redberry Lake pelican project, which is an internationally recognized bird sanctuary. Chairman Larry Hawrish, secretary Peter Kingsmill, and paint contractor Sherry Sian has been hired to do sustainable community planning.

And the committee plan in the Redberry Lake biosphere reserve has conducted a series of public workshops to discuss shared challenges to sustaining the local economy. The purpose of these workshops was to clarify local challenges and to identify a series of concrete community actions and strategies over the short-, medium-, and long-term to develop a sustainable community based on the principles of biosphere reserves.

Biosphere reserves, Mr. Speaker, are the special regions recognized by UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) for UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) for the commitment to pursuing sustainability. These special sites are essentially designed to serve three main functions: conservation, sustainability, development, logistics support for research, monitoring, education, and has a protective core area, but there is still much to be done to develop sustainable development options that meet the needs of the local people.

Mr. Speaker, biosphere reserves are the shared responsibility of local people. The ability of the site to provide a meaningful, high-quality of life to local people requires input and involvement of everyone working and living in the region. All the people of the committee should be involved in one way or another to provide opportunities for young people to remain in their communities through the development of a new economic sectors and develop sustainable approaches to agriculture, health, recreation, industry, tourism, and waste management.

Mr. Speaker, they held four meetings. The first one was to introduce the project to the community. The second saw speakers. They included the Ag Producers Association of Saskatchewan and the PFRA (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration), who did the mapping and work on the land cover and watershed. The third was a planning session and set up goals.

The fourth, Mr. Speaker, was to fuel people's points of view. There were speakers at that fourth meeting as well, Mr. Speaker. The first was Jean Morrison, CEO (chief executive officer) of Parkland Health District, who discussed health trends for the Parkland district.

Second speaker was from Tourism Saskatchewan who discussed various tourism options that are available in the area like agricultural diversification and attracting birdwatchers. And the third speaker was Leonard Piggott who spoke about holistic management as applied to agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, there was a number of common threads that came out of these two groups who are trying to get the economy going in their area and all of them needed and wanted the government to basically to get out of their way and to provide the basic services necessary in the area that governments should be responsible for. And naturally one of the highest areas of concern was the discussion about the need for lower taxes on all

areas in the Redberry Lake area, and improved infrastructure — as we all know, highways and roads, health care, services.

And of course one interesting development was the lack of proper cellphone services. These groups are trying to encourage tourism and it is vital that they have proper cellphone services in the area. I know very well by my travels through the constituency that it's very limited in that area, and everything from people living and working in the area to tourists going through that area rely on cellphone services.

And also of course that spins off into the Internet services which they are trying to provide and encourage, Mr. Speaker.

Just recently I had a phone call from the editor of *The Riverbend Review* — he also is a farmer; he and his wife farm near Blaine Lake/Hafford area — and he asked me to pass on a challenge to the Minister of Highways, and his challenge was for the Minister of Highways to come out to Hafford and Blaine Lake area and take a ride with him down Highway No. 40.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this particular individual and a number of other people in that area have had a number of problems on Highway No. 40. Last year this individual had a few thousand dollars worth of damage on his stock trailer and truck, driving from Hafford to Blaine Lake, because of the treacherous roads and potholes. This year the same individual has had another mishap — this time on the other side of Hafford, running from Hafford to North Battleford on Highway No. 40. And he would just like me to express his concerns about the highway and issue that challenge to the Minister of Highways.

Mr. Speaker, in that area they also have considerable concerns about health care. And a draft proposal that the biosphere committee has put together has two areas that is of concern. They're asking to have functional hospitals with adequate medical staff — doctors, nurses, and technicians to serve the needs of all people living in Redberry Lake biosphere reserve, especially the elderly. And also help the Parkland Health District to improve health care capacity throughout Redberry Lake biosphere reserve by establishing more personal care homes and attracting more nurses and doctors to the area, Mr. Speaker.

It's interesting, in the latest developments in the House and outside the House, the headline of *The Leader-Post*, Tuesday, March 27. The headline reads:

Nursing members a surprise to Nilson.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm just reading from the article. I hope I can do that.

There were fewer registered nurses in Saskatchewan in 2000 than the year before, despite (the) Health Minister's . . . assertion otherwise.

(In fact) It appears that the . . . (minister) didn't know this until the Saskatchewan Party Opposition informed him in Monday's question period.

And, Mr. Speaker, the minister goes on to say: what we do

know is that there are more nurses that are registered with the SRNA (Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association); that the Saskatchewan Party released information directly from the SRNA that showed that the numbers are down in 2000 from 1999. There was a total SRNA membership of 9,506, and 8,987 practising Saskatchewan registered nurses in 2000, both a decrease from the 9,552 membership and the 9,035 practising RNs in 1999.

One hundred and sixty fewer registered nurses, Mr. Speaker, and 147 fewer psychiatric nurses. And also a concern about two doctors leaving the Saskatoon cancer clinic.

(15:45)

Unfortunately, all we've seen is that the government has increased the administrators and today we have less front line medical services in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, last year the NDP promised to reduce surgical waiting times in Saskatchewan. But today surgical waiting times are growing and, today, Saskatchewan has the longest waiting list in Canada. Again, strengthen the regional hospitals. Today, nothing about regional hospitals in the Throne Speech, but bed closings and surgeries cancelled, Mr. Speaker.

A few comments on the economy as a whole. The agriculture crisis, as we know, is a concern to all of the province. And as we see, there's no plan for job creation in this province, no safety net, no plan to go to Ottawa to fight for our farmers' concerns, no plan to reduce world subsidies.

What we've seen, Mr. Speaker, is the government, which announced last year only to spend \$100 million a year, buying up and competing with businesses in Saskatchewan. That is not helping small businesses in this province whatsoever.

Also the government's labour laws, increasing the rules and regulations in that area, unfair labour laws concerning the freedom of speech, and the freedom of having a secret ballot in this province was a fundamental to our democracy.

And also, Mr. Speaker, the student summer employment program, which is only for the Crown corporations of this province, is really a slap in the face to the small-business people in this province who are desperately out there trying to make a living, trying to create jobs in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote some numbers from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business which, upon polling their members, fully 60 per cent of members said that government regulation of paper burden is a high priority with them; workmen's compensation is 58 per cent; provincial labour laws, 56 per cent; and also, shortage of qualified labour is up to 40 per cent.

Comparing that 40 per cent to back in July of 1992, when a shortage of qualified labour was only at 20.2 per cent, it has doubled in that period and that is becoming a serious concern and problem for small businesses in the province.

And also, Mr. Speaker, the provincial labour laws has gone from 40.3 per cent in July of last year to a concern of 56.2 per

cent in this year. And it just shows that the government is on the wrong track and needs to make some changes in their policies to make this more of a friendly business environment.

Small businesses is noted as the group that creates jobs in this province and we need to do more there to help them.

Also it goes on to say some of the most harmful tax in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker . . . personal income tax — the concern is 67 per cent of the respondents had that as a concern; provincial sales tax, 62 per cent; gasoline and fuel tax, nearly 58 per cent; and corporate income tax, 47.5 per cent. So taxes are definitely a problem with businesses in Saskatchewan and must be addressed.

Last year's budget, Mr. Speaker, there was a total cut of \$106.5 million in taxes. But unfortunately with the current rate hikes — SaskEnergy rate hike of \$100 million, SaskPower rate of \$14 million, and a slight in the \$25 rebate . . . energy rebate which totals \$10 million is a total rate hike of \$104 million, Mr. Speaker. So any decrease in taxes has been offset by an increase in rate hikes. And we understand there is more rate hikes to come in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this anti small-business philosophy hurts the provincial economy. Lost businesses means lost jobs; lost taxpayers means no money for health care, education, highways, and infrastructure.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will not support the motion but I will be supporting the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Rosetown-Biggan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to support the Throne Speech delivered by the Hon. Dr. Lynda Haverstock on March 20, 2001.

Before I begin the main thrust of my remarks I would, however, like to extend my congratulations to the Premier on his recent decisive win in the Riversdale by-election. And it's a pleasure and a privilege to serve with him as our leader. I also congratulate my colleague, the member from Elphinstone, on his election to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my congratulations to you on your election as Speaker of this House. You have already shown these first few days in the House your ability to be an excellent Speaker — fair and firm. My congratulations also to the member from Regina Sherwood on his election as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the people of Saskatoon Eastview and the Government of Saskatchewan. My constituency has the highest proportion of seniors in the country. There are nine special care homes and thirteen seniors' high-rises in Eastview. There are three high schools and many elementary schools in the riding. A variety of small businesses thrive in Eastview. This is a diverse constituency as you can see, Mr. Speaker.

The people of Eastview as well as all people in the province

will see a better life in Saskatchewan as a result of the direction that this Throne Speech lays out. The three broad themes of the Throne Speech — namely, a thriving economy, healthy citizens, families, communities, and responsive, effective government — commit our government to a path that will benefit all people of Saskatchewan.

As we listen to people — and we have recently had three significant opportunities to do that, specifically a leadership contest and two by-elections — we have heard the people's priorities. These priorities are reflected throughout the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, we have a strong provincial economy and as a result of that economic growth, there were 485,000 people working in Saskatchewan in the year 2000. We continue to see more people joining the workforce as programs such as building independence reap results. Fewer families are on social assistance and we have seen a decline in child poverty in our province. Saskatchewan was the only province in Canada to achieve such an improvement.

We are building long-term solutions to address priority areas such as health care, which I will speak about at length in a moment. Healthy communities are not built on or around facilities or professionals or treatments or procedures or drugs. Our health is largely determined by a strong family unit, access to a good education, a decent job with a decent wage, security in our homes and our communities, peace of mind, and even joy in our lives.

When we talk about health care, most people immediately think it's a hospital or the clinic or the doctor, nurse, or technician, the prescription or the diagnostic equipment that we need to deal with accidents, illnesses, and disease. However our system can do so much more to make and keep us healthy.

Our government is taking the very broad determinants of health that I just mentioned and addressing them through coordinated programs like the early childhood development strategy. Components of such a program include early detection of problems that need early intervention to enable families to nurture strong, healthy children so that they become healthy, productive adults.

Many of the increasing pressures on the health, social services, justice, and education systems can be traced back to poverty, unemployment, substance abuse and/or dysfunctional families. By including the broad social determinants of health in the design of health services, we can put in place more than just short-term measures that do little to provide solutions to problems that will continue to grow as the root causes are not effectively addressed.

We heard the opposition health critic talk about their plan for health care that was submitted to the Fyke Commission, and I thank the member from Melfort-Tisdale for providing me with a copy of that submission.

Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to that member, as I read through their submission, I was struck by the lack of awareness of how much of their vision is already being done under the leadership of our government.

Primary health care is a good example. Eighteen sites are up and running and more are in the discussion stage. Our vision of primary health care has been recognized within Canada as well as internationally. Primary health care sites already serve rural, urban, and northern communities. There's no doubt in the minds of many health providers like nurses and countless others that appropriate services should be accessible as close to home as possible.

However, when we talk about what has the greatest impact on making and keeping people healthy, it is obvious that services should be available that contribute to those needs. As an example, we now have exercise classes offered in one primary care site. Nothing fancy and not costly, but it has been said that if you change your eating and exercise habits, even after the age of 60, you will live healthier longer and die quicker. And I think most people don't get that, but we do all want to live healthier longer and we do not want to linger in dying.

Mr. Speaker, we need to see more integrated programs that bring together Health, Justice, Social Services, and Education. With this approach we are addressing issues like fetal alcohol syndrome, partnering not only with our government departments but also with our counterparts in Alberta, Manitoba, Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and the Yukon. This not only expands our capacity to deliver quality services, but it brings together the broader community to develop solutions. Fetal alcohol syndrome isn't just a Saskatchewan problem, it is the same across the nation.

Mr. Speaker, it's a huge challenge to think of health in this new way as well as the more traditional bricks, mortar, equipment, and personnel terms. It entails an attitudinal shift for all of us — providers, governments, and consumers.

Mr. Speaker, another challenge our government is addressing in a major way is that of recruitment and retention of professionals. Again this is not a problem unique to Saskatchewan. This is a national, indeed, an international phenomenon. Discussions at the national level between all Health ministers and then all first ministers last year encouraged the federal government to start to restore the federal funding to health care to at least what it was in 1994. This will not stop the need for change in the system or how we need that change to continue to offer the people of Saskatchewan and Canada a universal, publicly funded, and administered health care system.

Mr. Speaker, our government has put significant recruitment and retention initiatives in place that are unique in many cases. For example, we have established the position of principal nursing adviser to work with our nursing groups and address some of the workplace issues.

The concept of magnet hospitals is being explored at the nursing council — another new initiative. Magnet hospitals create and support workplaces that recognize and value the level of responsibility and excellent practice of our health teams.

Our government has increased the educational opportunities for nurses by adding 80 more seats to the nursing education program and making it possible for students to obtain their nursing degree in three, three-and-a-half, or four years.

We've also added seats to other programs such as the licensed practical nurses program. We're providing bursaries for nurses re-entering nursing practice. We've established a provincial nursing council, as I said before, where all organizations representing nurses are working together towards solutions to the very challenges facing nurses in the ever changing system.

We've opened up opportunities for nurses to access advance practice in areas such as clinical specialties and geriatrics, pediatric intensive care, and cardiology, in primary care nursing, nurse first assist in the O.R. (operating room), and nurse anesthesiologist to mention a few.

I haven't even touched on the significant incentives for doctors to practice in Saskatchewan. Things such as the opportunities to learn, and financial assistance to set up practice in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our government has commissioned the emergency services review. As most of us are aware, the commission has submitted its recommendations for improved emergency services throughout Saskatchewan. Discussions are ongoing regarding the recommendations and their possible implementation. Many of those recommendations, such as centralized dispatch, improved equipment, specialized training for service providers, and standardized response times and costs would mean significant improvement in the access to quality emergency services for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Fyke Commission is due to report to government and the people of Saskatchewan in the next few weeks. I anticipate a thoughtful and provocative report that will engage the citizens of Saskatchewan in determining the future of our health care system.

We have the opportunity to redesign our system to deliver the most appropriate health care, by the most appropriate health provider, in the appropriate setting. These many and ongoing changes in the health system, not just in our province but across the country, have made it imperative for a cultural shift.

These changes are not easy to embrace and some changes will be ongoing. This won't be resolved quickly. This magnitude of change has been likened to turning a ship around by hand. It will take generations to see the benefits from some of the necessary changes and others may show results quicker. All will take that shift in how we think about health and health services.

Many people are inclined to circle the wagons when change is anticipated and sometimes they start firing inward. However, I firmly believe that if people have good information they make good decisions. We need to make sure that that quality of information is available to the public as we debate these issues.

Mr. Speaker, if we believe the opposition's version of our challenges, it really does seem pretty hopeless to even remain in the province. Nothing is good enough here, and nothing is ever enough here.

(16:00)

I recently heard an excellent analogy that pretty much sums up

our current situation in the health sector. If we had airline pilots on the news daily, reporting about the number of near misses in the air, the number of lost pieces of luggage, and the number of cancelled flights, how many people would continue to fly? We are very much at this point in Saskatchewan with our health system.

Constant negative reports and comments by the opposition and a focus on every bad experience that's carried by the media have begun to erode the confidence of Saskatchewan people in our health system. Pretty soon we start to believe our own rhetoric. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy and clearly destructive.

Last year I went to Buenos Aires and I spoke on primary health care to the ministers of Argentina and Brazil. And I got to see a two-tiered health system. It was a very sobering experience. The people in Buenos Aires and Argentina, 40 per cent don't pay income tax. They feel no obligation to support the public health system. This is what happens. When you can buy it for yourself you no longer feel obligated to buy it for someone else.

Mr. Speaker, this negativity is not just particular to the health sector. Chambers of commerce members are realizing that if we continue to talk the negative talk it turns away investment and that affects us all.

My husband is a partner in a small business so I have some insight and exposure to the interests of this sector. Many of the men and women I speak to have a keen interest in fiscal responsibility; however, I don't hear only tax cuts, tax cuts. It's an insult to the intelligence of a community to suggest that all of our problems would be solved by tax cuts.

Most people see the value of strong social programs, a quality education system, and a sustainable health system. A healthy community is built upon those services. A healthy community has educated people in good jobs, in secure homes and communities, and in strong families. A healthy community then has the financial resources to purchase goods and services and so the economy thrives.

I also hear a distinct weariness with the constant whining of the members of the opposition about how we fall short of the wonderful province of Alberta. It doesn't take good government to govern with a surplus of \$7 billion. Our total provincial budget is less than that.

It does take good government to govern when every decision is a delicate balance between reducing the tax burden and maintaining and enhancing our social programs and doing this under the shadow of an ever-present provincial debt. We cannot ignore the debt. We are reminded of it on a daily basis when we map out all of our financial endeavours. It is part of every decision as it limits our spending by the amount of interest we pay and the time we take to pay down the provincial debt.

Mr. Speaker when we have open-line programs that set up the discussion with very few facts about the real situation, it's no wonder that people phone in with negative responses. I can pretty much predict the calls when I hear the set up.

Mr. Speaker, we are, as someone quipped recently, on TV time.

We expect ever-quicker services, diagnosis and treatments. As on *ER* we think of helicopters, miracles, and one-hour resolution to all problems. We are definitely more informed consumers with Internet access to information about our particular interest or problem that rivals some medical professionals. This is a good thing, but our expectations are sometimes raised to an unreasonable level.

I use my own son as a prime example of this. He recently called me and complained about a 50 — that's 5, 0 — minute wait in emergency for treatment of a particularly virulent case of the flu. I reminded him of the time 16 years ago when he cut himself severely while horsing around with friends. I took him to emergency for stitches and we had to wait two hours before we were seen. My 10-year-old son was so disgusted with the wait that he declared loudly for all in the waiting room to hear that we should go home now as it was all healed.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier on in my remarks, if people have good information they make good decisions. It is disturbing to see the limited information the people of Saskatchewan have access to. Unless the government pays to promote Saskatchewan and its remarkable programs and progress, we seldom hear of these very positive stories.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite continue to ask for a value-for-money audit in the health sector. We do not need to look at paper clips and bedpans; what we need to do is base our decisions on evidence that what we do will benefit the people of this province, that our health will be improved.

When we have experts review certain aspects of the system and give us their recommendations, we need to leave behind our individual interests and make decisions for the good of the whole province. To make good decisions, we need to have good information, as I've said several times already. Nowhere is it more necessary than in the health system.

Unfortunately the health sector has been slow to enter the information age through no fault of the system itself. But as the Japanese say, fix the problem, not the blame.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent most of our energies in the last decade responding to a system that not only lost a dramatic amount of federal funding but was seeing an explosion in technology, new therapies, new surgical techniques, and new drugs. There was truly no energy or financial resources to invest in information systems. But we can no longer function in the realities of globalization and changing demographics without current and cutting-edge information and the systems to access that information.

Our government is leading the way and partnering with the federal government and our counterparts in other provinces to establish excellence in health information systems. Saskatchewan co-chairs the national committee — again recognition of our leadership in this area as evidenced by SHIN, the Saskatchewan Health Information Network.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the unique experience of being involved in the health sector for over 30 years as a registered nurse, a union activist, as president of a major union, as a government MLA, and Associate Minister of Health.



It is crystal clear to me that it is far easier to lobby than it is to govern. As government the daily issues that need attention take up a major amount of time and energy. However we also as governments step back and take a broader look at the issues as we plan for solutions that will address the very needs of the whole province, not only in the short term but for the future.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support the Throne Speech and its broad vision for the future of Saskatchewan and all of our citizens.

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

**Mr. Peters:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me join with my colleagues who spoke before me in wishing both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker the best of luck in your new roles. I'm sure the both of you can handle these important new responsibilities very well.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin my speech today by talking once again about some of the issues we are facing in my constituency of Battleford-Cut Knife. It's certainly an honour to once again reply to the Speech from the Throne on behalf of the people of Battleford-Cut Knife. It continues to be my honour to represent the people of Battleford-Cut Knife, unquestionably the finest constituency in the entire province. And let me just take this opportunity to talk about the constituency for a few moments.

All too often, like much of everything else outside of the cities, those members opposite seem to forget we exist. Not that they are listening to the people in the cities either — taking them for granted is more like it. That's why people . . . that's why the Saskatchewan Party support in larger cities in Saskatchewan has gone up by 60 per cent in the last year and a half.

That's a fact that should make a lot of members over on the other side very nervous. Like *The StarPhoenix* said recently, the cheering we hear coming from the NDP seems very much like someone whistling past the graveyard. And that's probably appropriate, Mr. Speaker, since the government, this group has been walking dead for the last few years. As we all know, the NDP is where good ideas go to die, and their recent Throne Speech proved it.

So give those members on the government . . . So given that most of the government members probably couldn't find my constituency on the map, I would think at least once a year I should take the opportunity to remind the members opposite about the good people of Battleford-Cut Knife and the issues they're concerned about.

Battleford-Cut Knife is a little unusual that it has both a large rural component and a large urban component. This gives us good cross-section of people and lots of viewpoint.

My constituency is also one steeped in the history of this province and I am proud to have the original territorial Legislative Assembly in my constituency. It's a bit rundown, Mr. Speaker and in need of restoration, but it still stands as a symbol of where this province has been and where we've been and where we're going. We continue to be proud of Government House and hope that the funding is obtained to fully restore it to its full glory.

Mr. Speaker, of course, like many other parts of this province, people in my constituency are dreadfully concerned about the ongoing agricultural crisis, and, Mr. Speaker, it is a crisis. One farm auctioneer in the Battleford area says he has a farm auction booked every day for the next two months. Now that's great for his business but it's not a good sign for the economy as a whole.

While the problems on the farms sometimes are thought of as rural Saskatchewan crisis, everyone knows by now that the problems are not limited to rural areas, because the downturn in the farm economy doesn't just affect rural people. There's not a man, woman or child in this province who does not feel the ill effects of a weak agricultural economy. It remains truer today than ever before.

Mr. Speaker, during hard times like we're going through right now in the farm economy, it is vitally important that this province stand together.

Division like we've seen growing during the lifetime of this NDP government is harmful. While they deny it, the NDP strives on this type of division and encourages it through their own policy decisions.

But, Mr. Speaker, more and more people from throughout Saskatchewan; rural and urban, men and women, rich and poor, are becoming more and more united in the opinion that the days of this current government are numbered.

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

**Mr. Peters:** — No matter what part of my constituency people are from — farm, village or town — there seems to be agreement on one thing: the current government's time has come and gone. The former premier realized this. The former deputy premier realized this. The former Finance and Economic Development minister has realized this.

The only ones who don't seem to realize this are the members opposite who continue to hum the old song, "Don't Worry, Be Happy."

With regards to the ag crisis, people in my area are expressing more and more frustration with all elected members over this situation — all members of this legislature, Mr. Speaker, as well as members of Parliament.

People in my area see everyone talking a lot about the situation but they don't see anything being done. I think all members of this legislature agree that the federal government's handling of this situation has been disgraceful, and that includes the Saskatchewan representatives in the Chrétien government.

Just the other day Ralph Goodale voted against Saskatchewan once again when he voted against a motion calling for an increase in farm aid to bridge us through this latest crisis brought on by an international trade war.

So I think we can agree that the feds have to do more, and we've expressed this view in the legislature the other day. Though I must say, Mr. Speaker, I was a bit confused. At the same time the government moves a motion speaking about the

ag crisis, nearly every speaker on that side of the House seemed determined to convince everyone listening, including the federal government, that there really wasn't much of a problem out there at all.

That's why I'm not overly confident that this latest, strongly worded letter from the Premier to the Prime Minister will suddenly make the likes of Mr. Chrétien and Mr. Goodale see the light.

But while we can all agree that the feds have totally abandoned their responsibility when it comes to farmers, members opposite have failed too. The province can do . . . the least the province can do during the crisis is to show the slightest bit of leadership. But we haven't seen this. Absolutely not. Oh yes, they're good at saying no, no, no to everything and every idea that comes before them; but when is the last time we've heard one single, solitary idea come from that side of the House when it comes to this ag crisis?

Better yet, when have we heard a single, new idea come from that side of the House on any matter? Certainly we haven't seen it in this Speech from the Throne that has nothing more than reheated versions of other speeches — except of course the commitment to a long-term ag safety net, something we desperately need if we're going to avoid this kind of crisis in the future.

(16:15)

I think it's a real shame that a year and a half can go by since the last election and they have no new ideas. I think it's a shame that both the Premier and the Deputy Premier are replaced and we still have no new ideas, no vision coming from the NDP. This Throne Speech appears to have nothing more than recycling the past NDP promises, promises they keep making but never seem to honour.

We've seen promises in agriculture simply disappear. We've seen commitments in health care quietly go away. We continue to watch as this tired, worn-out government simply lurches from one issue to another without seemingly any idea of which direction they're headed, Mr. Speaker.

We saw this just the other day when, on one hand, we saw the Minister of Highways tell us that the government was making a big, big commitment to highways and everyone will be happy. Then in literally the next breath she tells the government is not planning to put a decent highway in and around the Gravelbourg area even though not doing so will put several businesses and many, many jobs at risk.

This, Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Rural Revitalization, but it's typical of the government — no forward planning; zero vision. When you speak of highways, there's a number in my area that are virtually impassable: Highways 21 and 40.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the west side of Battleford-Cut Knife has a large oil industry. Just a week ago, an oil truck rolled on Highway 21. The driver lost control of the truck because of the highway's poor condition. The driver was removed from the truck with the Jaw of Life and he is still in very serious condition in hospital. That, Mr. Speaker, is the

condition of highways right across the province — poor to poorer.

And that's about this government's . . . And what about the government's job commitment, Mr. Speaker? They know the numbers as well as I do. They don't like to hear them. Saskatchewan has the worse job creation record in the entire country — 13,000 jobs were lost here in this last year while every other province was increasing their job numbers.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, 6,600 people moved from Saskatchewan to other provinces. We continue to lose our young people to other provinces.

And the members opposite would rather turn a blind eye than make any concrete proposals as to how to expand this economy and create jobs. Their only ideas come in the form of direct government intervention in the economy through CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) which has served notice, Mr. Speaker, that it intends to get into as many businesses as it can, using the public purse to compete against already established business.

If the history has taught us anything, Mr. Speaker, that is politicians should stay away as far from running businesses as possible. However, despite losses in NST (NST Network Services of Chicago), despite the embarrassment of SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company), despite the scandal of Channel Lake, the NDP is determined to plunge ahead and make the government become even more active in business than it already is, and in the process do its very best to drive away even more private investors. That is their vision and it's very short-sighted.

Mr. Speaker, you know as the opposition critic from SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation), I have listened with great interest to the remarks of the minister. And while the minister seems to have convinced herself that everything is fine, her department lacks as much vision as any other department.

She held up as one of SPMC's great achievements the new SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) facility here in Regina. And I'm sure it's a fine facility, Mr. Speaker, but it doesn't mean the people of Saskatchewan are going to forget the facility it replaced. I am sure many of SPMC minister's own constituency won't soon forget this government's ill-advised decision to close the Plains Health Centre, Mr. Speaker.

In my constituency we have another example of the short-sightedness of the government and SPMC. Even though my area has lost hospitals and schools and has watched highways turn into potholes and patches, do you know what one of the biggest capital projects in the Battlefords was? A new liquor board store.

And of course it had to be brand new despite empty government office space that existed in the Battlefords due to previous government service cutbacks. None of that space could be utilized for a liquor board store. Instead they had to start from scratch and the unused real estate still remains empty. That's their forward-looking vision, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, today we hear the current government talking about gloom and doom. It seems to be part of their strategy, Mr. Speaker — if you can call that strategy. But the members opposite should not confuse criticism of the failings of this tired, worn-out government that's bankrupt of ideas as criticism for the province. On the contrary, the Saskatchewan Party believes Saskatchewan can do much better with just a little vision and a whole lot better government.

The NDP seems to accept the fact that jobs cannot be created here. It is convinced that private investment will not come to Saskatchewan. The NDP believes that we cannot prosper here, that Saskatchewan's place at the bottom rung of the ladder was predetermined.

Well I don't agree with this. The Saskatchewan Party believes in this province and knows we can do even better — much better. The NDP believes that we can't and therefore should not even try. I'll leave it up to the people of Saskatchewan to decide what they believe.

I will be supporting the amended motion put forward by the member from Rosetown-Biggar.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to join in the debate on the Throne Speech on behalf of the constituents of Carrot River Valley.

But before going on with respect to my comments, Mr. Speaker, firstly I would like to congratulate you on your election as Speaker of this Assembly. And I would like to congratulate your colleague, the member from Regina Sherwood, on his election as Deputy Speaker. And I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that both of you will acquit yourself in a manner that is befitting of the long and honourable traditions of this House.

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Speech from the Throne and having listened to the debate over the last couple of days, I've been hearing the government members opposite refer to the official opposition and the way that they characterize our gloom and doom and the way that they think we are talking negatively about this province.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure you, there are no purveyors of gloom and doom on this side of the House; what we have, what we have is a group of individuals who believe very, very strongly in the province of Saskatchewan. A group of individuals who believe very strongly in the potential of this province.

The problem however, Mr. Speaker, is that with this government and virtually 50 years of uninterrupted socialist government, that potential has not been met.

So what they see, Mr. Speaker, is what we're reflecting on the part of our constituents — a very, very deep sense of frustration. We don't see a plan for the future. There appears to be no vision on the part of this government whatsoever.

And if they want specifics and they want to understand where those frustrations come from, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to do that, to explain that to them.

In the area of highways . . . And I know oftentimes it's our colleagues in the southwest that think that they have the worst highways in the province but I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that in northeastern Saskatchewan we have our share as well. And I think specifically of Highway No. 23.

Highway No. 23, Mr. Speaker, a highway that has fallen into a horrible state of disrepair over the last 10 years. This highway, Mr. Speaker, is a highway that the minister and all previous ministers have received many letters and many phone calls about. But what have we seen to date? Virtually no effort put into that highway whatsoever.

A couple of years ago I think there was about a four-mile stretch recapped, west of Porcupine Plain. But the rest of it, Mr. Speaker, is in the same state today as it has been for about the last seven or eight years.

And I want to just tell a little story, Mr. Speaker. I think when one experiences some of the things that can occur as a result of highways being in a sad state of repair and it becomes personal, then it becomes something that is of a far greater concern to you.

About three or four years ago my daughter, my second daughter, was riding in a vehicle, a private vehicle owned by an RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) officer who at the time, Mr. Speaker, lived with our family. About four miles out of Porcupine Plain they met a half-ton, a truck. A chunk of asphalt came up off of the highway, Mr. Speaker. It came through the windshield; it struck my daughter in the forehead. It then ricocheted up to the roof of the vehicle and back down onto the floor of the vehicle.

My daughter was very, very seriously injured. She was taken to hospital and, thankfully, she recovered, and without any long-term effects.

But the frustration around that, Mr. Speaker, is that everyone knew that something like that, and possibly something worse, could happen on that stretch of highway. But never at any point was there ever any indication of a plan of what was planned for that stretch of highway in the future. And I think that is where the root of the frustration is.

People understand that all cannot be repaired magically overnight. But I'm sure they would take a great deal of satisfaction, Mr. Speaker, if they understood that at least there was a plan; that over the course of a year, or two years, or three years, or four years, perhaps even longer, that they were looking at that particular area being repaired. Then they could at least take some satisfaction in the fact that at some point that would be repaired and those kinds of things wouldn't happen again.

Another deep sense of frustration, Mr. Speaker, on the part of some of the communities in my constituency — I think specifically about the town of Hudson Bay — I think about how very little respect this government has for the small communities out there.

When the Department of Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, Mr. Speaker, decided that they were going to decommission and demolish rec sites in northeast Saskatchewan, they did that without consulting any of the communities that were going to be affected.

And, Mr. Speaker, that was a particularly shocking surprise for me because last session the Minister of Environment and Resource Management took me aside and said, we're thinking about perhaps doing something with rec sites in the northeast, but before we do that we're going to give all of the communities a heads-up. We're going to let them all know what we're thinking of doing; we're going to give them all an opportunity to help us maybe find some options in terms of how they can be operated. Perhaps we can even make an arrangement whereby the communities could assume the operation of those sites.

**The Speaker:** — Order. I will invite the member to continue his remarks after this procedure.

I must inform the Assembly that under rule 14(3) it is my duty at this time to interrupt debate and put the question on the amendment.

The division bells rang from 16:31 until 16:36.

Amendment negated on the following recorded division.

#### Yeas — 27

Hermanson	Elhard	Heppner
Julé	Krawetz	Draude
Boyd	Gantefoer	Toth
Stewart	Eagles	Wall
Bakken	McMorris	D'Autremont
Bjornerud	Weekes	Kwiatkowski
Brkich	Harpauer	Wakefield
Wiberg	Hart	Allchurch
Peters	Huyghebaert	Hillson

#### Nays — 30

Calvert	Kasperski	Hagel
Lautermilch	Atkinson	Serby
Melenchuk	Cline	Sonntag
Goulet	Van Mulligen	MacKinnon
Wartman	Thomson	Prebble
Belanger	Crofford	Axworthy
Nilson	Hamilton	Junor
Addley	Jones	Higgins
Harper	Trew	Osika
Lorjé	Yates	McCall

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

#### SPECIAL ORDER

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in

reply which was moved by Ms. Jones, seconded by Mr. McCall.

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Why is the member on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, with thanks to the hon. member to take just a moment before renewing debate on the Speech from the Throne, I'd like to introduce to members of the House a group of students from the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, bachelor of admin program, who are with us here today in the west gallery.

Many of these people who are here today, Mr. Speaker, are here for the first time and several of them are going to be graduating just shortly. All of them graduating — I believe all of them — graduating this year. And I would ask all the members to show welcome to them and to express the greatest of enthusiasm that their careers will provide the rewards that they seek and that they will build their futures here in our province of Saskatchewan.

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

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood on his feet?

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By leave I'd like to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would, on behalf of the official opposition, I would like to join with the Minister of Post-Secondary Education in welcoming our guests in the west gallery. I hope that they'll find the proceedings that they see here today very interesting and informative.

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

#### SPECIAL ORDER

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm in such shock, Mr. Speaker, that the government didn't have the good sense to support that awfully excellent amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, that I may not have the strength to carry on at the length that I had intended to.

But just to go back to the point I was making prior to, Mr. Speaker, but I was talking about frustration and the sense of frustration that we feel on behalf of our constituents when it comes to the way this government treats them. And I've been talking about the recreation sites, Mr. Speaker.

When the Minister of Environment and Resource Management came to me last year and said, we're thinking about doing something different with recreation sites, but I assure you that what we will do is, we will talk to communities, we will talk to the urban and the rural councils. We will ask them if there are options that we can look at. We will ask them if perhaps they want to assume the operation of these sites.

I actually gave the minister the benefit of the doubt, Mr. Speaker. I thought, you know, at least the approach is right here. At least they are consulting with the communities. Well, in the end, Mr. Speaker, I found out about three or four months subsequent to that, that with absolutely no notice, without any consultation, they sent wrecking crews into a half a dozen rec sites in the Hudson Bay and northeast area, and just literally demolished — demolished them.

The communities very understandably, Mr. Speaker, were very, very upset. These rec sites had been part of the landscape for many, many years. Their families had used these rec sites. Visitors, tourists — these were very, very much a part of the fabric of those communities. And they were very upset about the fact that they could just be removed overnight in such a arbitrary destructive fashion.

But, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't until they realized that Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management had actually breached a partnership agreement that they have, and had, with the town of Hudson Bay and the RM (rural municipality) of Hudson Bay that called for any decisions that would be made by either party — Environment Resource Management and either of the municipalities — that through that agreement they would consult with each other on those decisions.

(16:45)

So, Mr. Speaker, they completely ignored their own partnership agreement that they had with those communities. And I think that that was what added insult to injury, in the sense that there was this agreement and they didn't feel, the communities didn't feel that the department respected that agreement with their communities now to at least abide by the conditions that they had all agreed to.

Mr. Speaker, there are probably a number of other issues that I could pursue, but I will perhaps leave that for a later date. At this point I would like to move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:46.