

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present again today from people who are concerned about the Wadena health care centre.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Wadena health care centre be maintained at its current level of service at minimum, with 24-hour acute care, emergency, and doctoral services available, as well as laboratory, public health, home care, and long-term care services for our users in our district and beyond.

The people that have signed this petition are from Wadena, Hendon, Rose Valley, and Fosston.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of citizens concerned about the ever-increasing energy costs. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to use a portion of its windfall oil and gas revenues to provide a more substantial energy rate rebate to Saskatchewan consumers.

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from my home community of Melfort and also from Kinistino, Weldon, and Cut Knife.

I so present.

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present on behalf of those who are concerned about the effects of smoking. And this comes from the citizens of Weyburn, Midale, and Moose Jaw. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to pass comprehensive provincial legislation to prevent children from starting to smoke, to protect all citizens from second-hand smoke in public places and workplaces, and to control youth access to tobacco products.

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present a petition this afternoon. The prayer of relief reads as follows:

That your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to call on the provincial and federal governments to provide immediate financial assistance to the city of North Battleford in order to facilitate necessary improvements to the North

Battleford water treatment plant.

Your petitioners come from Battleford and North Battleford.

I so present.

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the deplorable condition of Highway 339. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway 339 in order to facilitate economic development initiatives.

And this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Moose Jaw, Briercrest, Drinkwater, and Hearne.

I so present.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the citizens of Wadena. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Wadena health centre be maintained at its current level of service at minimum, with 24-hour acute care, emergency, and doctoral services available, as well as laboratory, physiotherapy, public health, home care, and long-term care services available to users from this district and beyond.

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

And this is signed by the good folks at Wadena and Quill Lake.

I so present. Thank you.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to present a petition today signed by Saskatchewan citizens who have expressed interest in maintaining and upgrading the Saskatchewan road network. And the prayer goes as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to ask the Government of Saskatchewan to continue with its foresight and vision of increasing the funding to \$900 million over the next three years to maintain and upgrade our thoroughfares of commerce.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Stenen and Hyas, Saskatchewan.

I so submit.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of petitioners concerned about the hospital in Swift Current. Mr. Speaker, the prayer, the petition reads as follows:

A request that the Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause

the provincial government to carefully consider Swift Current's request for a new hospital.

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

This particular petition is signed by residents of Swift Current, Webb, Neville, Pennant, Frontier, Eastend, Orkney, Val Marie, and Climax, and 36 residents of the Waldeck Hutterite Colony.

I so present.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are concerned about proposals put forward in the Fyke report that would be judgmental and devastating to health care in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to take the necessary steps to ensure that services are maintained at least at their current levels at Weyburn General Hospital, Bengough Health Centre, Radville Marian Health Centre, and Pangman Health Centre in order that accessible health care services are available to residents of the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency and beyond.

And this is signed by residents of Weyburn, Yellow Grass, Tribune, and Glasnevin.

I so present.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do have a petition to present on behalf of the citizens of the province regarding the EMS (emergency medical service) service. The petition reads as follows:

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 intention to work to improve community-based ambulance services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people in the Redvers and Alida areas.

I so present.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the use of tobacco, the effects of tobacco smoke, and especially as this pertains to younger children. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to pass comprehensive provincial legislation to prevent children from starting to smoke, to protect all citizens from second-hand smoke in public places and workplaces, and to control youth access to tobacco products.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

These citizens, Mr. Speaker, are from Weyburn, Radville, and Melville.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present on behalf of the people of the Redvers area. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Redvers Health Centre be maintained at its current level of service at minimum, with 24-hour acute care, emergency and doctoral services available, as well as laboratory, physiotherapy, public health, home care, long-term care services available to the users from our district, southeast Saskatchewan, southwest Manitoba, and beyond.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions come from the Redvers and Bellegarde areas.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to present a petition from citizens concerned about their cellular telephone coverage. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause government to provide reliable cellular telephone services in the districts of Rabbit Lake, Hafford, Blaine Lake, Leask, Radisson, Borden, Perdue, Maymont, Mistawasis, and Muskeg Lake.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the citizens of Marcelin and Leask.

I so present.

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of comprehensive tobacco control legislation. And this petition contains over 500 names collected by an individual in Weyburn concerned about the human and financial cost to the people of Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to pass comprehensive provincial legislation to prevent children from starting to smoke, to protect all citizens from second-hand smoke in public places and workplaces, and to control youth access to tobacco products.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

And these are petitions signed by people from Weyburn, Bison, Midale, Halbrite, and there's approximately 500 names on these petitions.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition opposed to the possible reduction of health services in Kamsack. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that health care services in the Kamsack Hospital be maintained at its current level of service at minimum, with 24-hour acute care, emergency and doctoral services available.

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

The petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Kamsack and Togo.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here of citizens concerned with the rate increases that have occurred while the government is enjoying hundreds of millions of dollars in windfall oil and gas revenues. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to use a portion of its windfall oil and gas revenues to provide a more substantial energy rate rebate to Saskatchewan consumers.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Chamberlain, Estevan, Lashburn, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatoon, Regina, Craik, and Mossbank.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan, in regards to improved cellular telephone coverage.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide reliable cellular telephone service in the districts of Spiritwood, Medstead, Glaslyn, Leoville, Chitek Lake, Big River, Canwood, Debden, Shellbrook, Parkside, Shell Lake, Duck Lake, and Macdowall.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are signed from Spiritwood, Mildred, and Chitek Lake.

I so present.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan residents that are in support of comprehensive tobacco control legislation, Mr. Speaker. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to pass comprehensive

provincial legislation to prevent children from starting to smoke, to protect all citizens from second-hand smoke in public places and workplaces, and to control youth access to tobacco products.

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

Mr. Speaker. And the petitioners are from the city of Weyburn, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Peters: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by folks from the province concerned about the high energy costs. And the prayer reads as follows.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to use a portion of its windfall oil and gas revenues to provide a more substantial energy rebate to the province's customers.

And, Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by folks from Unity, Duck Lake, and Didsbury, Alberta.

I so present.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a petition to improve cellular telephone coverage in the Wood River constituency. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide reliable cellular coverage service to all communities throughout the Wood River Constituency.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good citizens of Rockglen.

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 asking that the Davidson and Craik health centres be maintained at their current level of service.

And 12 other petitions that are tabled as addendums to previously tabled petitions.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and to the Assembly, seated in the west gallery, 62 students from Silverwood Heights School in my constituency.

And accompanying these students are also nine students from Nunavut who are here on an exchange. And 10 students from

Silverwood Heights had gone up to Nunavut earlier, and I'm sure they will describe an enjoyable experience. But I would ask all members to welcome the students from Silverwood Heights and the visitors from Nunavut.

And accompanying the group today are teachers Jeremy Hozian, Russ Sheppard, Becky Harding, and Andrew Miller.

So I'd ask all members to welcome them to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly, I'd like to introduce some students from Limerick that are sitting in the east gallery. Mr. Speaker, six grade 10 students — small numbers again because it's rural Saskatchewan. And their teacher, Mr. Jeff Feeley, is with them.

I had the opportunity to meet with these folks before session, and I must say we had a good discussion on the political spectrum. So I'm sure they're going to enjoy question period this afternoon.

So would you please join me in welcoming these students.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, 27 grade 5 students from the Pilot Butte School. They are accompanied today by their teacher, Angela Downs.

And I've been squinting a bit — there's some senior-looking students up in the back row but I wasn't given the names of the chaperones, but I certainly do welcome them to the Assembly as well.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the privilege of being able to go to Pilot Butte School on many occasions. They have a wonderful developmental centre there, and I've watched as these students and others make their fellow colleagues and students feel very welcome at Pilot Butte School.

And I've been there for musicals. I've looked at the wonderful art work. And I know I'm going to have a great visit with the students. We'll be meeting after question period so they'll have a lot to ask me. We'll come together, I'll try and answer their questions and provide a refreshment.

I ask all members to join with me to welcome Pilot Butte School.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Saskatchewan Mining Week

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is Saskatchewan Mining Week, and as all members know — I

think there are some 30 of us tonight going over to meet with the COGEMA Board of Directors who are in town to help celebrate this event — mining is an extremely important industry here in this province. It's an industry which employs 20,000 people. It's an industry which pays more than 2 billion annually in wages, goods, and services. An industry that generates about 2.5 billion in sales annually and about 200 million in royalties for this province. This is a major sector of our economy.

Mr. Speaker, this is an industry that we are pleased on this side of the Assembly to work closely with, and I would encourage the members opposite to wake up, wake up, and hear what the mining industry has to say.

Mining Association President Josef Spross says the province is serious about keeping pace with the incentives offered in surrounding jurisdictions. Saskatchewan has opened the door to welcome investors, says Mr. Spross.

The executive director of the Mining Association, Mr. Speaker, says that he is:

... especially heartened by the positive response from the provincial government, which has stepped up with a \$1 million geoscience initiative and flow-through investment tax credits.

Mr. Speaker, Neil McMillan of the Mining Association says, quote:

You have to give the provincial government credit (you have to give the provincial government credit) for the measures they have come up with.

Mr. Speaker, these high-ranking officials in the Mining Association recognize the support of this government. I hope the members opposite will do so, and join with us in celebrating mining in Saskatchewan.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Swift Current Business Excellence Awards

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be able to congratulate the 17 Swift Current businesses who were competing for seven very prestigious Swift Current Business Excellence Awards sponsored by the Swift Current Chamber of Commerce last Wednesday evening in Swift Current.

Congratulations to Mcelheran and Woodworks Manufacturing who won the young entrepreneur award. Joe and Barb Arling and the entire team they have with them at the Best Western Inn were worthy winners of the customer service award. Boston Pizza took home the award for new business of the year. Etcetera Etcetera won for property appearance.

Mr. Speaker, for the better part of this century, Standard Motors in Swift Current has been employing people and contributing to the local economy. This 90-year-young business received the

Swift Current business excellence heritage Award.

Congratulations as well to the team at Wheatland Machine Shop and their achievement in winning a major new award unveiled called the business choice award.

And, Mr. Speaker, a special acknowledgement to the third annual Swift Current Business Excellence business of the year award winner, Pharmasave. Ron Heeg started this business in 1964, later joined by his partner Al Chilton, and they still operate a very excellent retail outlet recently renovated.

Congratulations to Pharmasave and all the winners and those who were nominated, Mr. Speaker. And a special thanks to the Swift Current Chamber of Commerce whose efforts on the business excellence awards are exemplary of the dedication they have to making Swift Current a great place to do business.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Weyerhaeuser's Saskatchewan Forestland Achieve ISO 14001 Certification

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The maintaining and preserving of our environment continues to be an important issue here in Saskatchewan as well as around the globe. And many groups, both business and non-governmental organizations, strive to become more cognizant of their impact on the environment.

One such corporation is Weyerhaeuser, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure on behalf of all members of the Assembly to congratulate Weyerhaeuser Saskatchewan for achieving ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 14001 Certification for 4.9 million hectares of Saskatchewan Forestlands.

The ISO 14001 Certification was established by the International Organization for Standardization which is headquartered in Switzerland. The International Organization for Standardization provides a framework for a company to identify areas where its activities, products, and services have an environmental impact, and requires the company to make a commitment to continual improvement. So far, 8.28 million hectares of forest managed by Weyerhaeuser in Canada, United States, and New Zealand, have been ISO 14001 certified.

I want to congratulate the entire Forestlands staff and all of the forestry contractors and their employees who helped to prepared for the ISO 14001 standard. As Weyerhaeuser Saskatchewan environmental management system coordinator, John Doucette said, this achievement will help Weyerhaeuser deliver in its commitments to sustainable forestry and environment excellence.

I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in congratulating Weyerhaeuser Saskatchewan on achieving ISO 14001 Certification.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Old Tyme Fiddle Jamboree Held in Battleford

Mr. Peters: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Toes were tapping at the 5th annual Old Tyme Fiddle Jamboree in Battleford this past weekend. Sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion, the jamboree shows off a great array of Saskatchewan talent for all ages.

The jamboree provided good, clean, family fun with a weekend of fiddle music and fellowship for the 750 people in attendance. From the toe-tapping music to the step-dancing to pancake breakfast to the special church service, the weekend was a lively affair.

My wife, Shirley, and I and our three granddaughters enjoyed ourselves immensely. The jamboree is another example of the great things that take place in my constituency.

We are again looking forward to next year's jamboree, on May 25, 2002 and we invite you all to mark your calendars and come to the Battlefords for a weekend of fun and fiddle music. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Yanke Trucking Wins Award

Ms. Jones: — Behold Mr. Speaker, I bring you glad tidings of great joy from Saskatchewan.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, another private Saskatchewan-based company thriving under this coalition government, Yanke Group of Companies from Saskatoon, was one of five firms to receive an employment equity award from the Conference Board of Canada in Toronto.

To receive such an award, Mr. Speaker, companies must show progress in implementing equity for four designated groups: women, visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, and people with disabilities.

Yanke Group of Companies has long ago developed a work plan that addressed these issues, said Deborah Salter, the company's human resource manager.

Mr. Speaker, Yanke Group of Companies is also a key player in the international transportation industry and is committed to being a community and industry leader, providing transportation solutions in partnership with their customers.

Under the company's collective vision, along with strong leadership from CEO (chief executive officer) Russel Maroux, the Yanke Group of Companies has grown from a mere 2 trucks to a fleet of over 400 and boomed from 33 employees in 1986 to over 650 in 2001.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to formally congratulate Yanke Group of Companies on their excellent achievement and their continued success in the future. It is people and companies like this that make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to call home.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Central Saskatchewan Music Festival

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 27 the Central Saskatchewan Music Festival held their grand finale performance. These extremely talented performers included the winners, the entries in the five-day music festival.

There were a total of 217 entries in this year's festival. These talented performers came from many communities around Davidson including Imperial, Liberty, Loreburn, Strongfield, Bladworth, Girvin, and Saskatoon. The entries included speech arts, vocal, piano, as well as other musical instruments.

The highlight of the evening was a special award that was presented to Mrs. Fran Stone of Davidson. Mrs. Stone is a past president of Central Saskatchewan Music Festival Committee to receive the volunteer award from the provincial Music Festival Association.

The award recognizes Mrs. Stone's 15-year involvement with the music festival. She was honoured for her effort and dedication she gives to the festival. It has been commented that Mrs. Stone gives selflessly of her time and does a wonderful job of any task she undertakes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members to join me in congratulating Mrs. Stone on her well-deserved award, and the Central Saskatchewan Music Festival Committee for another successful event.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rielisms

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage all members to go and see an exhibit currently being shown at the Dunlop Art Gallery in the Regina Public Library. The exhibit, entitled Rielisms, seeks to challenge Canadians' perception and ownership of Louis Riel. This exhibit asks the viewer to consider just whose hero Louis Riel was.

Rielisms was organized by the Winnipeg Art Gallery, and Catherine Mattes is the guest curator. The exhibit is an extension of her master's thesis, which demonstrates how widely, the identity of Riel varies in the public imagination. What results is a presentation of contrasting artistic depictions of Riel. These images, made during the '70s, '80s, and '90s, demonstrate how complex Riel's role in history was and still is.

I must mention that a former constituent of mine, now a constituent of Regina Centre, contributed to the exhibition. Sherry Farrell Racette's paper, "Metis Man or Canadian Icon: Who Owns Louis Riel," is included in the exhibition's catalogue, and two pieces of her artwork appear in the exhibition.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all of those involved for presenting such a thought-provoking exhibit. This exhibit demonstrates that through art, we can engage in a cross-cultural dialogue to examine complex issues.

I want to close by reading a phrase authored by Louis Riel that attests to the ability of art to challenge:

My people will sleep for a hundred years, and when they awake it will be the artists who give them back their spirit.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Allegations of Impropriety Regarding Ministerial Trip

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, isn't it amazing, everyday we seem to get a confirmation of another one of these so-called unfounded allegations. Today's catch of the day is the member from Meadow Lake. It seems Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming spent over \$1,100 to send its former minister on a fishing trip.

Does the Premier think this is an appropriate use of taxpayers' dollars?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, ministers of the Crown, members of government, and if I may say, members of the opposition will on a continual basis be meeting with members of the public, with members of industry and science who may want to invest or work in this province.

That a minister of the Crown is meeting with an individual or individuals involved in trade in this province, I do not find at all unusual nor do I believe would members of the opposition who in their capacity as members of this legislature, on a daily and weekly basis, are utilizing tax money to do their work. I think we all have work to do here, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Isn't it interesting the Premier thinks that three men in a tub on Waskesiu Lake is the right place to go ahead and carry out government business.

Mr. Speaker, this morning, this morning the Premier said he wants the Western premiers to focus on social issues. Well here's a social issue for the Premier.

There is still a lot of people in this province, Mr. Speaker, who don't make \$1,100 a month. Yet the Premier thinks it's okay for his minister to take \$1,100 of taxpayers' money and go on a fishing trip. If the minister wants to go on a fishing trip, the minister should pay for it himself . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — . . . not the taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. How can the Premier possibly justify — justify — using taxpayers' dollars for his minister to go on a fishing trip?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the minister has responded quite publicly to some of the detail around his time in La Ronge, Mr. Speaker, where he was staying with . . . using a relative's cottage, using a relative's boat and so on. It is appropriate that a minister of the Crown, that a member of government, and if I may say in my view, members of the opposition, should be in contact and in the company of those who work.

If you disagree, if you disagree, my friends, then why is it that I see members of the opposition attending to functions, as that function we'll be attending to tonight — many of us — to meet members of industry in the COGEMA field, where there will, I believe, be food and drink.

Mr. Speaker, if it is inappropriate, if it is inappropriate to travel and to meet people, how is it then that members of the opposition are signing up for the CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) trips all over the world, Mr. Speaker, at taxpayer expense?

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate, in my view, it is appropriate that members of government should meet with people. It is appropriate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Premier wants to compare this, wants to compare this trip . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Order! Order. I ask members on both sides to come to order. Order. Member for Rosthern will start over.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Premier wants to compare this little junket to a CPA trip, he's got something else than line on his reel. I can assure you of that.

Mr. Speaker, the minister says the president of Bacardi wanted to discuss the mark-up rate, the mark-up rate. Of course they couldn't do that over the phone; saying I want 10 per cent, you want 15 per cent can't be done over the phone, Mr. Speaker. They couldn't that in the minister's office. They couldn't do it downstairs in room 10. The only place they could possibly carry this out is in a boat in northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming should not be spending \$1,100 of taxpayers' money to pay for that minister's summer vacation. What action is the Premier going to take against the minister for this blatant abuse of taxpayers' money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I have not kept a strict record myself, but I can't remember the last time in this House when a member of that opposition got up and asked about the situation facing farm families in western Saskatchewan when . . . (inaudible) . . . I can't remember an occasion when that happened.

I can't remember an occasion in this legislature during this

session when a member of the opposition got asked about children who may be hungry in the downtown of this city. I can't remember that. But we have a focus on the activity of a minister doing the business of the . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, these are important issues the opposition raises — fair enough. But I tell you, doing the work of government, doing the work of an opposition means meeting with people. And if it is suggested by the opposition that the tax funding should not exist for travel or for meeting with individuals, then they should accept the same rule for themselves as they travel around the province claiming mileage to meet with people, using caucus funds to put on functions, Mr. Speaker. Travelling, if I may say, around the world on their taxpayer-funded trips.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — If the Premier wants to talk about farming the least he could do, Mr. Speaker, is to put his name on CFIP (Canadian Farm Income Program). If he's concerned about poor, hungry people in Regina he should take care of it. It's his budget; it's his cabinet that has messed it up. He should take some responsibility.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — The utter hypocrisy of that is unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. Hypocrisy is what that is. Mr. Speaker . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Apparently the minister and president of the party went to check out the Waskesiu Liquor Store. A lot of people go on a tour of a liquor store before their fishing trip but the difference is usually people pay the liquor board, not the other way around.

Mr. Speaker, the minister's explanation doesn't pass the test. The bottom line is he spent \$1,100 of taxpayers' money on a fishing trip. Mr. Speaker, what action is the Premier going to take to discipline his member for misusing taxpayers' dollars?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the member has raised this question in the House. It has become a matter of some press coverage.

Mr. Speaker, I entertained the thought earlier this morning of including the minister's involvement in this trip with the review of this whole matter that's being conducted by Justice Wakeling.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to do that but what I am going to do is ask our Conflict of Interest Commissioner, our Conflict of Interest Commissioner, to review this circumstance and then report back to this independent level of the officer. Now maybe there are other expenditures of members opposite that I should also review or refer to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Or perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should refer to the

Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — I suggest, Mr. Speaker, before the Premier starts making threats, he should take any information he has, take it to the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), as his House minister is so fond of jumping up and down and saying.

Mr. Speaker, Bonnie Swan calls it an old boys' club. Excellent description. Bacardi takes the boys from SLGA (Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority) down to the Bahamas for a vacation and the minister takes the boys from Bacardi down to a fishing trip. Meanwhile, the woman who threatens to break up this old boys' club, she gets fired, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, doesn't this bother the Premier? What kind of government is he running, where people who break the rules keep their jobs and people who report it get fired?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the matter of the termination to which the member refers was dealt with yesterday by the minister in this House and dealt with extensively in front of the press.

And he will know, if he chose to listen to any of the answers, Mr. Speaker, that process here was entirely followed; that the services of the Department of Justice were utilized. And if the member is interested, or members of the media are interested, Department of Justice officials will be available to answer questions about the process involved, Mr. Speaker.

Due process was followed, as opposed to the practice that occurs in this House now almost on a daily basis where members of the opposition will stand up wanting the politicians, if you can believe it, to insert themselves directly into the process of personnel matters in government.

Well I know, Mr. Speaker, I know from sitting over there watching this group in government that was their practice — to involve themselves directly in the personnel matters of government.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, under this regime that's not going to be happening.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Wouldn't it be nice, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier involved himself in the business of government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan). While he was minister of Liquor and Gaming, did the minister ever take any other trips of this nature? Did the minister take any other trips paid for by SLGA or by a liquor company?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — To the best of my recollection, Mr. Speaker, I am aware that we represented Saskatchewan in

Norfolk, Virginia, where we were requested to make a presentation with respect to the regulations here in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan, in North America, is viewed to be having one of the strongest set of regulations around liquor and gaming.

We were asked to make a representation and presentation there. And to the best of my recollection I believe that Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming would have paid for that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ministerial Involvement in Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Personnel Matter

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Slightly better recollection than the minister for Liquor and Gaming's had recently.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we saw a new level of incompetence from an NDP (New Democratic Party) minister. The minister of Liquor and Gaming repeatedly denied she had anything to do with the investigation of Bonnie Swan until I read to her a letter that named her as one of the two investigators. Even then she wasn't too sure. Eventually she threw the whole mess back in the Premier's lap saying the investigation was done by the Premier's office — that's what she said. And she is just along for the ride, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, how long will this Premier tolerate this level of incompetence by his ministers? How long can you put up with a minister that doesn't even know her own responsibilities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the challenge before me is how long can I tolerate this line of questioning from this opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the minister spoke very clearly yesterday about . . . well I'm glad the member from Saltcoats says he gives up because maybe what we can do is move on to some other important public issues.

The minister yesterday spoke clearly of her role in this matter, how process was followed. I have no doubt in my mind that the proper processes were followed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to say this. I want to say this, Mr. Speaker. There are significant and important issues facing the people and the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We await an opposition who will begin to deal with the significant public policy issues that face our people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, public accountability is one of the biggest issues this province is concerned about.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — The Premier wants to wonder how long he can tolerate this — we don't care. We'll ask the questions as long as we wish. It will be his job to worry about the answers — not the questions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier has sent a clear message to . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Thank you.

Mr. Heppner: — The Premier sent a clear message to the public service — if you see wrongdoing in your department, don't say anything or you'll be fired. Joe Dosenberger took evidence of illegal activity to the RCMP — he was fired. Bonnie Swan took illegal activity to the Premier's office and she was fired, Mr. Speaker.

In Bonnie Swan's case it was the Premier's office itself that did the investigation that resulted in her firing. And now many of these allegations are proving true. Yet the people involved still have their jobs and she's fired.

To the Premier, why are you firing your own government employees who report illegal activities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I nor any of my ministers hire or fire employees in the civil service. We will engage . . . I will engage the most senior of officials. We will engage those in our own office staff, but beyond we have process that the member is aware of — process which was followed in this case.

Yesterday the minister and my deputy made that process very clear. Today if members of the media or members of the opposition have further question, we'll have officials from the Department of Justice available to answer the questions about the process.

Now this, Mr. Speaker, varies entirely from the way it used to work around here when these people occupied the government benches. I mean in those days, Mr. Speaker, it seemed you couldn't get a job with the government unless you had a . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. The Premier. The Premier . . . 10 seconds.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now, Mr. Speaker, that is not going to be the practice under my government. We are not going to insert political decision making into the civil service. We are not going to do that. As much as they would want to see it done so that the precedent would be set if forever . . . if on any occasion they should form government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also recall process in this government. I recall when we had a Premier and his cabinet when we asked questions, they had answers. And the fact is if the member who's sitting behind him had become leader, I'm sure we'd have some better answers than we have

now too.

It's an effort by this Premier and his cabinet . . . their process is to hide absolutely everything that they possibly can, provide no answers, take no responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming is responsible for hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars. That gives the opportunity for misuse. We're now learning of some of the misuse that takes place. Mr. Dosenberger, Bonnie Swan know what happens; they were fired. Everyday, Mr. Speaker, we hear from Liquor and Gaming officials who have serious concerns of other activities.

When will the Premier lift this gag order he's put in place? When will the Premier broaden the scope of Justice Wakeling's investigation and allow these employees to report improper activity to Justice Wakeling without fear of retaliation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, this very day in this House, this government caucus will introduce an amendment which reads:

That no member of the Legislative Assembly or employee of the government is above the law; and that no member or an employee of the government shall interfere with a police investigation; that no member or employee of government shall be punished for co-operating with a police investigation; and finally, should any employee of the government believe that she/he has been punished for co-operating with a legitimate police investigation that she/he has the right to take the matter to the director of labour standards for an investigation pursuant to section 74 of The Labours Standards Act and any/all other remedies that may be available by law.

Will you vote for that? Will you vote?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I would remind all members — order — I would remind all members in questions and in their answers to direct all of their remarks through the Chair please.

Conversion of Government Management Positions to Union Positions

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission.

On April 5, 2001 the NDP (New Democratic Party) government's Labour Relations Board ruled that 673 management level government employees would be forced to join the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union by May 1.

Hundreds of these employees protested the government's decision to force them into the union against their will.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP is forcing 673 management employees to join the union without their permission and without a vote. The deadline for this forced unionization was May 1. How many employees have signed SGEU (Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union) union cards as of today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, there's three options regarding how people may be able to resolve this dispute. Part of the difficulty is there is no precedent for employees who are in the employ of the government after the time that the initial unionization happened but are not new hires. And those employees that fall in the grey middle are the question.

At this point it appears as though the union and the Public Service Commission would have the option of going jointly to the Labour Relations Board for a ruling on how it affects those employees that fall in the grey area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, the minister didn't answer the question. I wanted to know how many SGEU union cards were signed?

Mr. Speaker, the NDP has unilaterally decided to take 673 government managers, and force them to join the union against their will and without any kind of vote.

The Saskatchewan Party has obtained an e-mail from Dave Atkinson. Mr. Atkinson is the director of labour relations for the Public Service Commission. The e-mail was titled, union security, union cards, union membership.

According to the e-mail, which was sent on May 25 to all management staff affected by the NDP's latest forced unionization initiative, a large number of managers are refusing to sign union cards. And they are also refusing to turn over 1.5 per cent of their salary in forced union dues.

Mr. Speaker, what does the NDP government intend to do to out-of-scope government managers who refuse to co-operate with the NDP's latest forced unionization campaign?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Contrary to the views of the opposition, which is that a government makes up, laws . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The floor goes to the minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The floor goes to the Public Service Commission minister.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Contrary to the members opposite who think that ministers make up the laws as they go along, there are laws in this province. There is a Trade Union Act, there's a

Labour Relations Board to interpret that Trade Union Act.

And what we have is a situation where if people were there the day the card was signed and the union is entered into in the workplace, they would then have to become members of that union but would have the option, if they were there on day one, of not signing the card but paying dues.

For employees that were hired after that time, there's a question mark about whether or not they have to sign the cards or whether they merely have to pay dues. And that's the issue that has to be resolved because there isn't clarity.

And certainly the members opposite are not of the interest that people who are part of unionized workplaces would be union members. But teachers who become teachers are part of a unionized workplace, nurses are part of a unionized workplace, and so are public servants who become part of the unionized workplace.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker. According to Dave Atkinson, director of labour relations for the Public Service Commission, government managers who fight the NDP's forced unionization initiative by refusing to join the union have two choices: either send the union 1.5 per cent of their salary, or the NDP will fire them immediately.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm that the NDP has threatened to fire hundreds of government managers because they are refusing to go along with the NDP's plan of forced unionization?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Now I don't know what the member opposite doesn't understand, Mr. Speaker. Because these people became part of a union member . . . a union-membered organization after they were already hired changes the circumstance somewhat.

The Labour Relations Board will likely have to rule on how it changes the circumstance. Once they have ruled, the rules will be clear and people would be expected to follow them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker, a memo sent to government managers affected by the NDP's latest attempt at forced unionization clearly states that managers have three options: number one, join the union immediately; number two, don't join the union but submit 1.5 per cent of their monthly management salary to the union, starting immediately; or number three, get fired by the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, how many of the 673 government managers that are being forced to join the union have refused to sign a union card? And will the minister confirm that the NDP is going to fire any of these 673 government management staff who refuse to either join the union or send the union 1.5 per cent of the salaries immediately.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear this eleventh hour concern about the public service.

But I do mention that this is the same opposition that has said we know where the skunks are and we plan to get rid of them all. This is the same opposition that has consistently throughout the budget debate and the estimates process talked about the lack of respect they have for the people who have been added to the public service in corrections, in forest fire protection, in water safety.

And I'm very touched by their concern but I can tell them one thing, Mr. Speaker — we will follow the laws of the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 42 — The Métis Act

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

Would the . . . Would the Assembly . . . Would the . . . Order, order. If the members . . . Order. If the members would like a recess, they should ask for it. Order.

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — And now that quiet and calm prevails, Mr. Speaker, thank you. I move that Bill No. 42, The Métis 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.

Bill No. 43 — The Police Amendment Act, 2001

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 43, The Police Amendment Act, 2001 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 44 — The Prairie and Forest Fires Amendment Act, 2001

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 44, The Prairie and Forest Fires Amendment Act, 2001 be 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. 45 — The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2001

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 45, The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2001 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.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to stand on behalf of the government today and table a response to question no. 205.

The Speaker: — The response to 205 is tabled.

Mr. Yates: — We'll convert that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Item 2 is converted.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased today to stand and respond on behalf of the government; table a response to question no. 207.

The Speaker: — The answer to 207 is tabled.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 6 — Cabinet Impartiality During Police Investigations

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is probably a bit of a sad day that we actually have to start dealing with these sorts of issues in this legislature. When we have looked at what we've tried to accomplish in the last week or two, the information that we've tried to receive from government, and what we've found out what happened over there, it's those sorts of things, Mr. Speaker, that bring us to this particular motion.

And I will read part of the motion later on. I will present it in a formal way, Mr. Speaker. But the motion will read as follows, and here's the first part of it.

That this Assembly formally recognize the principles: (and the motion, Mr. Speaker, will have two principles. The first one is) that cabinet is not above the law; that cabinet must refrain from any interference in police investigations . . .

What have we seen happen in the last week or two, Mr. Speaker? We've found out that when people have some concerns about government and one, one of those, Mr. Speaker, was one of their employees, the other one was another employee but with a history, I believe, of 26 or 28 years of RCMP service. Service that was so exemplary, Mr. Speaker, that when we looked at his what could be called a report card, it had S's on there. Not, Mr. Speaker, as you and I remember from another life that meant satisfactory. In this case, S's meant superior service. The highest mark that could be received, and I'm referring to Mr. Dosenberger.

(14:30)

Mr. Dosenberger came and he started working for government and he found that something incorrect was going on. And as an RCMP officer with decades of experience, he knew what he had to do. He had to present this information to the RCMP. And so that's what Mr. Dosenberger did. He gave that information to the RCMP.

Now the question . . . And remember, he was a special constable, Mr. Speaker. The first part of this motion that I will be making soon . . . and, as I said, it reads:

Cabinet must refrain from any interference in police investigations.

What in the world did cabinet do? It did two or three things. First off, they fired him. So the investigation was cut short — cut short.

Then they didn't just leave the issue there. Somehow one of our media people picked up some information. And then the cabinet minister stood in her place over there, Mr. Speaker, and said I think that leak came from the RCMP. She accused the RCMP who's in its third century of service to this country. Accused the RCMP of leaking documents to a media person from whom they had absolutely nothing to gain.

And I'm sure the member from Melville will understand how serious that is. And I'm surprised, Mr. Speaker, that that member hasn't already moved out of that particular caucus because he's ashamed of what they've done to the RCMP.

But anyways, they did those two things.

Now it says that it shouldn't interfere in police investigation. Then this cabinet did something else which really, Mr. Speaker, there's only one word for it — it stinks. Then they went down and found that folder in somebody else's hands at that particular time where it had been sent and one of their employees went there and pulls pages out of that folder of information.

And I see a member from Moose Jaw looking like she's amazed. I suggest she reads the report. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, she reads the report.

That cabinet sent someone down the road to pull information out of a police document. Now, Mr. Speaker, if you or I went down to the police office and pulled information out of their filing cabinet, I'm sure we would be very suspect of something going far amiss. But that's what this cabinet has done and done very recently.

Mr. Speaker, cabinet must refrain from any interference in police investigations. This cabinet has done anything but that. They've become involved in it. They have interfered with their own constables, with the RCMP. The story, Mr. Speaker, doesn't end there. The story gets worse.

Then they hire another investigator. And the investigator sets about his due diligence. He's going to do his work. This is an individual that has a good record of police service coming out of the police service in Saskatoon. And he starts to do the investigation. And so he gets a little bit of information and as any police officer then will have to do, they'll have to dig around, talk to people, interview them, find out what they know, and where the information is hidden.

As soon as he starts that, Mr. Speaker, as soon as he starts that what does this cabinet do? And I'm underlining the word cabinet as I speak because that's the crux of this whole debate this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. This cabinet tells him, hold it but

you can't interview anyone. Well they might as well of tied him to a tree in northern Saskatchewan for all the good he's going to do at that point.

Can you imagine an investigator that said, now go find out what happened but don't talk to anyone, don't talk to anyone. Don't ask anyone where the files are. Don't ask anyone who they interviewed. Don't ask anyone about any phone calls they made; you can't do that.

And so what did the second investigator do, Mr. Speaker? He quit. And I can't blame him. It was probably about the only honourable thing he could do. He could have sat around for half a year or two probably drawing a salary of some sort. But with the honour of his force he said, that's not the honourable thing to do, I'm out of here. And that's what he did because of this cabinet interference, Mr. Speaker.

So we had first of all the first investigator that I mentioned where there were three definite things this cabinet did. Second investigator, they shut him down as well. Then what else happens? We have some of their own employees who see some wrongdoing.

And we discussed that this afternoon already, Mr. Speaker, when we discussed this three-man fishing trip doing business. And the irony of that was unbelievable. That actually when you're going to discuss whether you're going to have a markup of 12 or 13 per cent, you have to sit in a boat somewhere in the Waskesiu area to carry this out.

First of all that discussion at best would have been a 10- to 20-minute discussion. It wasn't like it took days of negotiating. This was not Camp David, Mr. Speaker. This was not Camp David. This was the then minister of Liquor and Gaming on a fishing trip discussing two different numbers, two different versions of the markup — this or this, what is it? And that takes days on a fishing trip. That, Mr. Speaker, makes us question what this cabinet is all about.

The second part, the second part of this particular motion that I'll soon be making, Mr. Speaker, reads as follows:

. . . and that government employees should not be punished for co-operating with police investigations and for providing documents and other evidence pertinent to a police investigation . . .

Now this government is a retaliatory regime, Mr. Speaker. They retaliate every chance they get. What happened? They had one of their employees who passed this information on and what did they do with her? They fired her.

The government's own, basically, code of conduct, when it talks about harassment says very specifically, Mr. Speaker, it says very specifically that one of the things that can't happen is retaliation.

Now what stronger form of retaliation than when someone brings up a concern, government says you're fired. Just that quick. Just that quick they fire them.

Let's look at another example. Let's backtrack a little bit into

history. This NDP government likes to go back in time. Let's go back in time just a little, a year or three — Channel Lake, Channel Lake. That, Mr. Speaker, should have gone to the police for a police investigation, for a forensic audit of where that money all went.

But they stuck it into their cabinet ideas. The cabinet over there went ahead and created a committee. They investigated it and what happened, Mr. Speaker? Millions of dollars missing — millions. Not one or two thousand. Not a couple of hundred. But millions of dollars missing were never discovered where they went. Never discovered where they went.

They had a cabinet minister who chaired that particular committee, should have taken . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Members of the Assembly, there seems to be two simultaneous debates going on when there should be only one.

Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Hart: — To introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a constituent of mine, someone who has been very active in the farm income and farm policy area, Mr. Ray . . . he's seated in your gallery, Mr. Ray Bashutsky of Wynyard. Mr. Bashutsky has taken time out of his busy schedule and operation to get involved in farm policy.

And I would ask all members of the Assembly to welcome him here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 6 — Cabinet Impartiality During Police Investigations (continued)

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about cabinet and how they work and how they don't function. I'm sure the guest that was just introduced would be interested in knowing that this particular cabinet hasn't signed CFIP yet.

The Speaker: — I would just remind the member that we're not to involve any guests or anybody else in the Assembly in the debate.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was discussing Channel Lake, the millions of dollars that went missing. That was a cover-up by that cabinet — by that cabinet — and this Premier needs to take some responsibility for that.

Had that gone to the RCMP and they'd allowed a forensic audit, we'd have found that \$5 million. But no, the cabinet got

involved; they set up that committee; they hid it. It's there somewhere; we don't know where it is yet. But at the rate we're turning over stones and finding names, I'm sure it will pop up very shortly.

Channel Lake was an ideal example of government interference, of cabinet interference in what should have been a forensic police investigation.

Mr. Speaker, it's a shame to punish people as these people do; to punish people in the workplace; to make them afraid to come to work because they have no idea when they pass information on to their superiors whether they're going to lose their jobs or what's going to happen to them. That's the kind of attitude of fear and suspicion that this cabinet has created in its bureaucracy.

Mr. Speaker, because of those difficulties, as I said at the start, this is a sad day that here in Saskatchewan we have to go ahead and put forward a motion such as this. So therefore, Mr. Speaker, I put forth the following motion, and it will be seconded by the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from Humboldt:

That this Assembly formally recognize these principles: that cabinet is not above the law; that cabinet must refrain from any interference in police investigations; and that government employees should not be punished for co-operating with police investigations and for providing documents and other evidence pertinent to a police investigation to the police.

I so present.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to second the motion put forward by the member from Rosthern and, Mr. Speaker, I think this motion is so important to the people of Saskatchewan and to justice that we, in fact, should read the motion one more time:

That this Assembly formally recognize the principles: that Cabinet is not above the law; that Cabinet must refrain from any interference in police investigations; and that government employees should not be punished for cooperating with police investigations and for providing documents and other evidence pertinent to a police investigation to the police.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in respect to the kind of activity that has taken place by the government in response to people like Joe Dosenberger and Bonnie Swan who have done the right thing — have brought forward information about wrongdoing, the wrong spending of taxpayers' money, the wrong way to use it — in respect to the fact that those people got treated very shabbily by government, I think what is really incumbent right now, Mr. Speaker, is that government realize the very seriousness of their actions and that in fact those ministers responsible realize the implications for them in regards to their action in interfering with the law.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a section of the Criminal

Code. According to the Criminal Code, section 139(2), it reads:

Everyone who will wilfully attempt in any manner to obstruct, pervert or defeat the course of justice is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that may seem like a bit of a stretch to the people opposite here. But in fact, Mr. Speaker, if this situation was taken and forwarded and gone through the full extent of the law, I think the ministers would recognize that they may be up for some very serious judgment by the people of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, why is it that people in this province who feel that they can entrust a certain government, a certain number of elected MLAs (Member of Legislative Assembly), entrust them with the workings of the province, entrust them not only with the well-being of the province but entrust them with accountability and responsibility — why is it that these people are let down time and time again by this NDP government?

(14:45)

Mr. Speaker, we have seen and we have heard as official opposition from many, many people throughout the province about their fear of bringing forward information about government and government interference.

We have heard in fact — possibly not about direct money matters — but we heard from employees of health boards in the past, we've heard from health board members in the past, how they have received gag orders. They're afraid to bring forward information for fear of being punished, for fear of losing their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, having to deal with government covering up for the wrongful use of taxpayers' money is very, very disappointing to the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, we have here before the Assembly in the last few days, evidence being brought forward, the minister denying that evidence, and we have had letters that certainly qualifies the evidence. We have put this forward to the minister and still there is a denial. What the people of the province expect, and in due respect should get, is honesty from this government.

Mr. Speaker, it might come as a surprise to those members opposite that the official opposition does take the bull by the horns, that they feel very compelled to move a motion like this to reaffirm the Assembly's opinion that politicians are not above the law. It's a shame that we should have to do this, but in fact, Mr. Speaker, it is necessary. Recent comments by both ministers in that government and senior bureaucrats in the government make it necessary, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in response to Mr. Dosenberger's firing, both the minister and Kathy Langlois stated that cabinet materials cannot go to aid police investigations unless cabinet says they can. They imply that there is no big deal about government investigating government's own activity. They feel that it is okay if government decides what is and what is not evidence. Is this right, Mr. Speaker? Anyone with any common sense in our province knows it is not right.

Kathy Langlois told the media that it was her opinion that the cabinet document that went to the police from Mr. Dosenberger had no value to the RCMP investigation. Now, Mr. Speaker, one has to ask, who is she to make that decision over the opinion of two police officers with nearly six decades of experience between them?

Mr. Dosenberger has sworn an oath under The Police Act to co-operate in all investigations. The government fired him for that. When Mr. Dosenberger was fired, the government purposely left everyone with the impression that he was fired for leaking the document to the media.

Now that was not the case, Mr. Speaker. This was another case, by the NDP, of character assassination.

The minister then mused publicly that the police themselves may well have leaked the document to the media — another case of attempted character assassination against a veteran police officer. How very shameful.

One can wonder . . . Or one really does wonder, Mr. Speaker, how the member from Melville, who now sits with a government who feels they are above the law, thinks of being part of that government which has such an obvious and low opinion of the work that police men and women do, when he so proudly holds up his own contribution to the force for 25 years.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the last week the minister of SLGA and the Minister of Justice have talked about due processes. Tell me, where was the due process for Bonnie Swan and Joe Dosenberger? There was none. They pointed out wrongdoing and they were fired for it.

Every day the government tries to explain this whole mess away, and every day they just dig themselves deeper on both fronts.

On the matter involving SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority), the minister has claimed all along that the first time the government learned of these questions about SIGA was in June of 2000. Now we find out it was in 1997.

Instead of doing something though, that minister and those members opposite and that government chose to do nothing. And instead they were worrying about protecting the members of the opposite politically.

Part of this involved firing Joe Dosenberger. And for this kind of immoral conduct, the taxpayers of this province are providing remuneration to those members opposite.

In terms of the problems of SLGA officials illegally accepting freebies from liquor companies, it appears now that at least some of those allegations could very well be true. But what happened to the person who raised them with her superiors? She was fired.

An investigator hired to look into problems surrounding SLGA was not allowed to interview any witnesses. That's another example of government tampering with an investigation. This is an obstruction of justice. This is a serious matter.

The minister is so out of touch that all the while she claimed that the process used to investigate problems raised by Bonnie Swan was an independent one, it turns out the investigation was conducted by a two-member board consisting of the deputy minister to the Premier, and the minister herself.

When there is wrongdoing committed or possibly committed, it is up to a responsible government to do everything to ensure that the wrong is righted. But what do we see instead, Mr. Speaker? We see this government's main priority being to hide the wrongdoing and make it quietly disappear.

The Speaker: — I would just ask the member to assume in her statements that all members are honourable and not to impugn, either directly or indirectly, on the motives of government members. And I'd just ask her to keep this in mind in her remarks.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, it is really quite interesting that this same government who claims time and time again and who has claimed over the years to protect employees, to make sure that employees are protected from wrongful dismissal, should be in fact the government that wrongfully dismisses.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has proposed and has tabled whistle-blowers' legislation. That legislation would protect government employees from dismissal if they took evidence or suspicions of illegal activity to their superiors or to a public body such as the police.

Mr. Speaker, we have tabled this legislation a number of times. We have it again on the Table. This is an important piece of legislation and in fact would have protected people like Bonnie Swan had this been passed in this legislature and given Royal Assent.

This Sask Party Bill would not protect those who take material such as an internal cabinet or government documents to the media. There should be procedures in place to co-operate with the police or to go to superiors with these suspicions, and employees should be encouraged to follow that process.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is only with this type of protection, such as the whistle-blowers' legislation, The Whistleblower Protection Act, that we can be sure most questionable and possibly illegal activity of government is brought to the attention of superiors of the police.

One wonders how many other people want to come forward but are afraid, are afraid to Mr. Speaker, because of the heavy-handedness that this government has arrogantly shown.

Mr. Speaker, as we have mentioned, there are many other people who have contacted the official opposition. There are many people from that very government department who have contacted us. They are so afraid that they are going to lose their jobs; they are afraid of repercussions and retaliation.

Mr. Speaker, I have had brought to my attention in the past many social workers out in the province who have presented to me some of the great difficulties they have had in relaying their concerns to the Minister of Social Services in respect to children, too many children in foster homes. Those same social

workers, along with foster home workers, are saying they're afraid to open their mouths for fear that they may be fired.

Now it's time to put this kind of thing to an end, Mr. Speaker, and we can put it to an end by protecting government employees from dismissal, wrongful dismissal, through The Whistleblower Protection Act.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party, on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and Her Majesty herself, and behalf of the people of this province, would like to move at this time:

That this Assembly do now proceed to item 13 under second readings for private members' public Bills and orders, Bill No. 203 — The Whistleblower Protection Act.

(15:00)

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, I wish to advise the Assembly, upon perusing the rules of the Assembly and looking at the motion, it is out of order for a motion to be moved by the seconder of the original motion. Therefore we will have to proceed with the debate on the original motion. So the debate before the motion is to continue.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely happy to enter into this debate, although calling it a debate is not quite accurate, Mr. Speaker, because there is nothing in the motion that we disagree with.

Mr. Speaker, we agree that no member of cabinet is above the law. We agree that cabinet must not interfere with police investigations. And we agree that government employees should not be punished for co-operating with police investigations. What is there to disagree with, Mr. Speaker?

I would like to repeat. We agree that no member of cabinet is above the law. And we agree that cabinet must not interfere with police investigations. And we agree that government employees should not be punished for co-operating with police investigations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — We do, however, have one small reservation, and that is that the member's motion does not go far enough. Consequently, Mr. Speaker, in a moment I will be offering an amendment to correct this oversight by the member from Rosthern — an unintentional oversight, I am sure.

The member's motion says that cabinet is not above the law. And we agree. We also believe that members of the Legislative Assembly are not above the law. Mr. Speaker, I am not above the law; my colleagues are not above the law. Furthermore, we believe that members of all political parties, be they government or opposition members, are not beyond the law.

Finally, we believe that employees of the government are subject to the rule of law, Mr. Speaker. Union employees, Executive Council appointees, ministerial staff, caucus office staff, everyone, Mr. Speaker, is subject to the rule of law. This is hardly a radical motion, Mr. Speaker, so we see no reason to

single out a particular wing of government. Actually we see no reason to formally belabour the obvious. But since we had the motion, let's make it comprehensive, Mr. Speaker.

Therefore I move, seconded by the member from Regina South, that we remove all words after "principles" and replace with the following:

That no member of the Legislative Assembly or employee of government is above the law; that no member or employee of that government shall interfere with a police investigation; that no member or employee of the government shall be punished for co-operating with a police investigation; and finally, should any employee of the government believe that he or she has been punished for co-operating with a legitimate police investigation, that he or she has the right to take the matter to the director of the labour standards for an investigation pursuant to section 74 of The Labour Standards Act and any and all other remedies that may be available to them under the law.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a very comprehensive amendment. I am sure that members opposite will have no difficulty with this amendment, which is actually more clarification than amendment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what is section 24 of The Labour Standards Act? It reads:

Discrimination by employer prohibited.

No employer (it says) shall discharge or threaten to discharge or in any manner discriminate against an employee because the employee:

(a) has reported or proposed to report to a lawful authority any activity that is or is likely to result in an offence pursuant to an Act or an Act of the Parliament of Canada; or

that a person:

(b) has testified or may be called to testify in an investigation or proceeding pursuant to an Act or an Act of the Parliament of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, and:

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply where the actions of employee are vexatious.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, this section 74 was added to The Labour Standards Act by this government in 1994 to deal with the concerns of employees bringing forward issues within government, Mr. Speaker. I point this out as a reminder of who protects workers and who does not.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I read all of section 74 into the record because it, in black and white, defines the right of government employees to the rule of law and to due process when the rule of law is violated, Mr. Speaker.

This government believes in due process. We believe that

everyone is subject to the law regardless of subject or title and must bear the consequences when the law is broken, Mr. Speaker. We are all responsible to the law.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, the obligation to follow due process in the pursuit of the law falls on the police as well as the rest of us, Mr. Speaker. There are procedures they must follow in an investigation: subpoenas, search warrants, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Rosthern has spoken at length about two particular cases through his motion, though his motion is general rather than specific. We will not comment on any specific case because, one, that is not relevant to the motion at hand; and, two, the cases that he mentioned are before the courts, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the fact that two employment disputes of government employees are being adjudicated in the completely impartial environment of the judicial system is the only evidence necessary to prove that this government follows due process.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the original motion by the member from Rosthern is incomplete. Our amendment is inclusive. It describes the limitations placed on cabinet but not on anyone else.

One other thing we can mention is this, Mr. Speaker. Both the motion and the amendment talk about responsibilities. Neither mentions rights, and perhaps we should. For instance, cabinet has the right to receive information in confidence and discuss in private the steps leading to the decisions of government. Parliamentary supremacy and collective cabinet responsibility are key principles of our system of government and should not be breached lightly.

Conversely employees of the government take the following oath when they become members of the public service, and I quote:

I do solemnly swear that I will not, without due authority in that behalf, disclose or make known any matter or thing that comes to my knowledge by reason of my employment.

They enter into a contract which requires them, as a condition of employment, to receive approval for their actions unless of course, Mr. Speaker, unless of course those actions fall under the protection of section 74 of The Labour Standards Act.

What actions might be restricted by terms of employment, Mr. Speaker, and what might be covered by section 74 can be subject to legitimate differences of opinion, and obviously have been at times. It is at a point where this thin line has or has not been crossed that due process kicks in to protect all, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment because it confirms that all of us are subject to the same responsibility and that is simply this: all members must uphold the core obligation of government, which is to uphold the rule of law, protect the basic legal rights of citizens, and ensure good and proper administration of justice. These functions must be effectively met by all public authorities if we are to have social and

economic order and just relations in our society, Mr. Speaker.

The rule of law means that the government itself is subject to the law and must operate according to its terms. The rule of law includes and requires equality before the law, Mr. Speaker. In other words, everyone is subject to the law regardless of position, title, and must bear the consequences when the law is broken.

Mr. Speaker, this government believes in the rule of law and this government follows the rule of law. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Is there a motion?

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That we remove all the words after “principles” and replace the following:

That no member of the Legislative Assembly or employee of the government is above the law; and

That no member or employee of the government shall interfere with a police investigation;

That no member or employee of the government shall be punished for co-operating with a police investigation;

And, finally:

Should any employee of the government believe that he or she has been punished for co-operating with a legitimate police investigation, that he or she has the right to take the matter to the director of labour standards for an investigation, pursuant to section 74 of The Labour Standards Act, and any and all other remedies that may be available at law.

Mr. Speaker, I so move, seconded by the member from Regina South.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I enter into this debate on this resolution today, and I want to make a couple of brief comments in it.

I have had the good fortune during my short professional career of having worked in both the federal and the provincial civil service. I have had the privilege of working in a political position with the provincial cabinet also.

During that time, I can tell you that I have served with many, many, many good, well-meaning men and women of every political persuasion and of no political persuasion. It's one of the things in Saskatchewan we have very much to be proud of — is our professionalism of our civil service.

That has not come easily to this province. And we have had to be zealous in our protection to make sure that civil servants understand that they have rights that go with their

responsibilities. This government, through the amendments we made to The Labour Standards Act in 1994, took a major step forward in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, as I've listened to this debate so far today and as I've listened to question period over the last few days, I have to say that I am troubled by the way that members are using the parliamentary privilege that we are afforded under the traditions of our Constitution to make accusations, allegations, and innuendo to attack other members, to attack the integrity of our civil service, and, unfortunately, I fear to undermine the impartiality of our judiciary.

I will give my colleagues in the House the benefit of the doubt that that's not what they intend to do. But as I listened to the member for Humboldt cast aspersions on the character of my colleague the minister of Municipal Government, who has a fine and distinguished career in the RCMP, I'm troubled.

As I listen to the member for Rosthern attack on a regular basis the integrity of the members of the cabinet who serve in this Assembly, I'm troubled.

As I hear members opposite raise direct and specific questions about issues which are currently before the judicial system, I'm troubled.

Mr. Speaker, I think we need to stand back and think about what it is we do here in this Assembly. We are here to protect the rights of citizens. We are here to ensure the government is held accountable.

We have certain constitutional rights afford to us, including parliamentary privilege. Parliamentary privilege has not gone untested in this country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we know from the comments made by the member for North Battleford, that were tested in the courts in Alberta.

(15:15)

I think all of us have to be circumspect in the approach that we take. All of us must be circumspect in the comments we are making in this Assembly about the public service, about the judiciary, and about the issues in front of us.

I dare say that many of the comments that I've heard today, I think would put the members who have made them at risk of defamation, were they said outside of this Assembly. We are afforded parliamentary privilege to be able to raise allegations and raise important high matters, but we also have on us the onus to follow due process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not be commenting specifically on any of the matters which may be in front of our courts. We can't do that as members, because we have the potential to bias any one of the sides of these cases. What we say in here is afforded parliamentary privilege for a reason, but we should not use it to undermine the independence of the judiciary who have to have a clear and simple, agreed upon set of facts in front of them when they look at these cases. That's not for us to comment on.

One of the things that distinguishes us, Mr. Deputy Speaker,

from other places, is we don't run show trials. The provincial Assembly should not be used to run a show trial. We no longer act as a Star Chamber. That's not one of our functions. Yes, under the Constitution we have that ability, but that's not what we do.

We deal with legislative matters, we set out our intent, we set out our protections, and we have a different arm of government that handles police investigations, and a different branch of government that adjudicates those.

It's important that we all recognize the role at these three levels. It is not our role, not my role, not the role of other members in this Assembly to either take the role of the police, which falls under the executive, or to take the role of the judiciary, which is separate and constitutionally independent.

We have to be very careful of what we're doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I support the amendment to the resolution because I believe it strengthens the intent of the initial resolution brought forward by the member for Rosthern. And I do not feel particularly defensive in saying that I support the resolution, although the amendment itself does make it much stronger and as such should be put in place.

I am however concerned about the approach that is taken on the floor of this Assembly in this debate; that we are involving ourselves in specific matters that we ought not to; and that in the process, that we are undermining the independence of the judiciary.

I believe therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in order to give members a chance to step back, think about the impact of their actions and their comments, that we should adjourn debate. And I would so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 15:19 until 15:29.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 30

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

Nays — 27

Hermanson	Elhard	Heppner
Julé	Krawetz	Draude
Boyd	Gantfoer	Toth
Stewart	Eagles	Wall
Bakken	McMorris	D'Autremont
Weekes	Bjornerud	Kwiatkowski

Brkich	Harpauer	Wakefield
Wiberg	Hart	Allchurch
Peters	Huyghebaert	Hillson

Debate adjourned.

Motion No. 7 — Increased Support for Education

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand today in this Assembly to speak on education. At the end of my comments, I will be moving the following motion. Therefore be it resolved:

That this Assembly urge the government to carry through with its long-term plan for education as announced in the budget, a plan which includes expanded community schools, enhanced operating grants, improved teacher training, greater access to the Internet, and early learning programs and specialists.

Mr. Speaker, education is one of the great levellers in our society. As a social democrat, as a progressive, and as a proud member of this government, I believe that access to good education is critical if we are going to secure something of equality of opportunity for our people.

Opportunity should not just be a matter of chance nor should it be a matter of being lucky enough to be born into the right family. Securing opportunity is something that must be worked on.

So working to ensure access to a good education is a critical task for this government. It is critical if we are going to enable our people to make a better life for themselves and their families. It is critical if we are going to equip our people with the skills and the knowledge to get and keep or create employment that pays well and which is challenging and engaging and fulfilling.

For myself, my belief in the importance of education is not just a matter of principle. It is also a matter of experience. I know from my own life the difference that education can make. I went to Kitchener community school for kindergarten to grade 8; to Scott and Thom collegiates for high school. My brothers and my sister and I grew up in a single-income family that was blue collar and frugal. We didn't want for much, certainly not in terms of love and encouragement and support, but we weren't wealthy by any stretch of the imagination. And if access to education was decided solely by the cash in my parents' bank account, then I'm not certain that the McCall kids would have gotten the good education that we did receive.

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

Ms. Julé: — With leave, Mr. Speaker, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the existing speaker for giving me a moment to take this opportunity on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to welcome to our Legislative Assembly today,

Chief Ron Crowe who is sitting in the Speaker's gallery. Chief Ron Crowe is with the tribal council . . . File Hills Tribal Council, pardon me. And we welcome you today, Chief Crowe, and we hope that you'll enjoy the proceedings of the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — I would like to welcome guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to extend a welcome to Chief Crowe, my good friend and neighbour from Fort Qu'Appelle who's well and highly respected in the First Nations community, and sitting next to my seatmate. So I would also like to also extend a very warm welcome here today, Ron.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 7 — Increased Support for Education (continued)

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Canada and throughout the western world, it is generally regarded as progress if a family moves from blue collar to white collar between generations, or that the standard of living increases from one generation to the next.

This kind of progress has certainly been the experience in my family. There was certainly many other factors at play in bringing this transition about but getting a good, solid primary and secondary public school education from teachers like Mrs. Martin and Mr. McIlrick and Mr. Ast — who was here the other day — and Mr. Kehler and Ms. Lewis and Mr. Davies and Mr. Tomchuk definitely made a difference in my life.

These teachers and the education that I received cultivated in me a love for learning and gave me the sound educational foundation that has served me well thus far. And that's why I'm extremely proud to be part of a government that places such a big emphasis on the importance of education.

Before we go too much further into this debate, I would like to clarify that when I talk about education, I'm referring in the main to the primary and secondary levels of education. This is not to detract from the importance of post-secondary education; far from it. I'm sure that PSE (post-secondary education) will warrant a debate some day in this House on its own merits, but for now let us focus on the motion at hand and on this government's solid commitment to primary and secondary education in Saskatchewan.

The true measure of a government's commitment, of a government's resolve on any given issue, can be measured by the dollars involved. In the Throne Speech the importance of education to this government was clearly spelled out, but it was in the budget that this priority was solidly backed up with the necessary funding — where the walk met the talk. This government's budget was about connecting to the future. It was

about making investments right here and now that will benefit our people both today and tomorrow.

When this government went about the hard task of reconstructing this province's fiscal well-being in the 1990s after the carnage and corruption of the '80s, it was to make possible budgets like the one for Education that we are discussing here today. Balanced budgets were a means to an end.

In the budget speech, the Minister of Finance touched on this very thing when he said the following about education funding. And I quote:

Think of it, Mr. Speaker. It was not that long ago that we spent more on interest payments than on education. In 1993-94, we spent \$865 million on education. That same year, interest on the debt was our second-highest expenditure . . . (at) \$873 million . . . Think of it, Mr. Speaker, \$8 million more spent on interest than on education.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that this year we will spend almost twice as much on education as we will (on) interest . . .

And that's progress, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCall: — And that certainly is progress, Mr. Speaker. Now to the matter of education funding itself. So that the hon. members here today and the folks watching at home might gain a more exact appreciation of the extent of this government's financial commitment to education, I'd like to take this opportunity to go over some of the main details of what this year's budget meant for education.

To begin with, the basic per pupil rate again increased by another \$396 per student. This is a 50 per cent larger increase than the year before when it was increased by \$262 per student — to 262, pardon me.

Operating grants to school districts were increased by \$33.7 million — a 7.9 increase, Mr. Speaker — bringing the grant amount to \$460.1 million this year.

We further increased per pupil funding for high-cost, special needs students as follows: level 1, to \$6,000 from 5,000; and level 2, to 12,000 from 10,000.

This budget also included 100 per cent coverage of the negotiated \$9.3 million health care package recently negotiated with teachers.

Also in keeping with Connecting to the Future the Department of Education is highlighting our move to the information age. This year alone school districts will be saving \$1.5 million in Internet access fees because we are investing \$3.7 million into CommunityNet, along with \$2.0 million from the Centenary Fund to improve in-school connectivity, and \$3 million for digital learning resources.

Increased funding for pre-kindergarten to over \$3.8 million with this budget. This brings the number of spaces, pre-kindergarten spaces to 1,264 — an 80 per cent from the year before, Mr. Speaker.

And we will see an 87 per cent increase in shared services bringing the total funding recognition to \$9.7 million.

To address the localized teacher shortages in rural and northern Saskatchewan, \$1 million in new dollars has been committed; a continuation of the \$25 million education property tax rebate for farmers is also part of this plan, Mr. Speaker.

And this budget has also included . . . has also continued to support school capital, with a projected . . . with 90 per cent of the total amount provided this year — \$29.2 million — going directly to capital projects rather than to debt servicing. A tremendous advance over the experience in years past.

I would now like to turn to this government's commitment to Saskatchewan's innovative and award-winning Community Schools Program. Community Schools, as you may well know, Mr. Speaker, in 1997 won a national award from the institute for community education for best . . . from the Association for Community Education in Canada, for the best institution.

Community schools have long been recognized as an effective model for meeting the complex educational needs for at-risk students. Since 1990 . . . They were first introduced in 1980 under the then Allen Blakeney government and then Education minister, Doug McArthur. Since 1995 we have doubled the number of community schools.

The recent report by the task force on the role of the school lent its voice to the chorus of others in praise of the Community Schools Program. They said, and I quote:

The "Community School" Program is one of the most helpful and hopeful changes to be initiated in recent times. Given its remarkable success and evident benefits, not only for children but for parents and the whole community, the Task Force is of the view that the time has come for a major "community school" initiative in our province.

In its final report the task force recommended an increase of 26 schools over the next three years.

In fact in this coming year, Mr. Speaker, we are more than doubling the number of community schools. We are enhancing the successful program by increasing the number of new community schools to more than . . . by more than 40, expanding into rural and northern communities, and into secondary schools as well. That's 44 urban elementary schools, eight rural elementary schools, three rural K-12s, 10 northern schools, and 18 secondary schools, Mr. Speaker. A wonderful advancement.

(15:45)

And as a graduate of Kitchener community school, this is . . . I think this is great news for the children of this province. And I'm not alone. I would like to quote from an article that appeared in the *Shellbrook Chronicle* on May 7, 2001. It's

entitled "Community Schools Seen as Vision for Future." It's written by Debra Kuzbik, superintendent of instructional and student services for Parkland School Division:

In . . . (the) spring budget (she writes), the provincial government announced a \$7 million increase in grant recognitions for Community Education in Saskatchewan. (The) Parkland School Division was delighted to be selected as one of the recipients . . . (for) Community School designation (under this budget).

Saskatchewan Community Schools are centers of learning for their communities and incorporate a comprehensive range of best educational practices for meeting the diverse learning needs of all students. They provide a responsive, inclusive, culturally affirming, and academically challenging learning program and environment and are effective in addressing the challenges of the communities they serve. As well, Community Schools use collaborative approach to foster the development and well-being of the entire community.

As the Community Schools Program has grown in Saskatchewan, it has evolved to meet the changing needs of students. Originally designed to meet the needs of urban at-risk First Nations and Metis youth, the program has evolved to affirm and celebrate cultural diversity in our schools, both urban and rural, elementary and high school.

The first Community Schools were similar in program delivery. Now (they) reflect the diversity, uniqueness and needs of each community. However, the guiding principles and foundational components . . . of Community Schools have remained constant.

(First), the student is the heart of the school and the centre of all activity. All aspects of a Community School focus on (the need to) respond to the needs of students. (Second), the student is supported by the Learning Program, Integrated Services, Parent and Community Involvement, and Community Development.

Our work on community schools sees us once again leading the nation and . . .

That's all the quote for now from that particular article. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, on that.

Our work in this government on community schools sees us once again leading the nation with an exciting social policy innovation. I was at the launch of the report by the task force on the Role of the School and to hear the Chair of that report, Dr. Michael Tymchak, talk about the vision of School^{PLUS} and the great promise of the community schools for this nation, and that in Saskatchewan we've always had this proud, pioneering tradition when it comes to social policy. And Dr. Tymchak held that up and said, this is an area where we can once again lead the nation. And we should be very excited about it. And I couldn't agree more.

So community education — it's not just about community schools. It's just . . . community schools are just one part of the community education strategy.

In 2001-2002, an additional \$7 million in recognized expenditures has been provided to assist school divisions in expanding community education programs. This brings the total funding recognition for community education programs to approximately \$17.5 million. Again, where you've got your money, it indicates your priorities. And we've got our priorities made clear.

In 2001-2002, Saskatchewan Education has also enhanced the following programs: \$4.5 million in funding, bringing the total of recognized school expenditures for community schools to 9.5 million; there's also the northern community school programs developed collaboratively with Creighton, Ile-a-la-Crosse, and the Northern Lights School Division to respond to the unique needs to students in the North. For the northern school divisions, this has meant an enhancement of approximately \$360,000 in 2001-2002, for a total budget of \$1.4 million.

Also in this year's budget, an additional \$130,000 in recognized expenditures has been allocated to enhance the current nutrition program recognition for existing and new and K to 12 elementary schools . . . community schools.

I'd like to just briefly read from an article that appeared in the March 1998 edition of *ON COURSE* put out by Saskatchewan Education. It's a newsletter updating on the activities of community schools.

It's a profile of Jacquie Ferguson:

Kitchener Community School Nutrition Coordinator

It's 6:30 a.m. and very quiet at Kitchener Community School in Regina. The lights snap on in the kitchen as Jacquie Ferguson begins another day as nutrition coordinator. A fleet of toasters are lined up and ready to spring into action, making upwards of 70 slices of toast every morning. Dishes and cutlery are spread out on the counter as Jacquie slices fruit, pours milk and tends to the large pot of hot cereal on the stove. For 25 years Jacquie has worked at Kitchener Community School — 18 of them ensuring children get a hearty breakfast to start their day.

Before serving breakfast, she also begins preparing morning snacks for all the classrooms. After breakfast has been served and the kitchen's tidied, Jacquie begins the lunch preparation. She also uses this time to plan weekly meals, pour over flyers, order supplies, pick-up groceries and talk to teachers about classroom cooking activities and needs.

At the end of May 1998, Jacquie plans to hang up her apron. She has fond memories of her time at the school (and she said): "I really get to know the kids and their families. I also enjoyed the program development during the pilot years. It received a very positive response from the community."

Jackie wishes she had more time for the educational aspect of the nutrition program. She knows that helping students learn to choose the right foods and how to cook are also an important part of their education.

Congratulations Jacquie! Thank you for all you have done in your 25 years at Kitchener Community School. All the best wishes to you!

And I would very much like to add to that, because I was one of those kids that was kept very well fed and happy and there wasn't a stigma to feeding programs. I was one of the students that benefited from the good work of Jacquie Ferguson.

And it thrills my heart to know that there are 83 schools now in Saskatchewan where we have the kind of nutrition programs put in place by people like Jacquie Ferguson. And we have the assurance . . . or we can take some comfort from the fact that when it comes to learning, children won't be worrying more about their empty stomach than they'll be able to focus on their lessons, Mr. Speaker. I think that's a wonderful thing.

Now another part of community education in the portion of this budget is the Indian and Metis Education Development, the IMED Program. It was established in 1984 to encourage school divisions to promote, to provide innovative, responsive, and culturally affirming supports to help Aboriginal students to succeed in school.

In 2001-2002, additional new funding recognition of one-half a million dollars has been directed to IMED and the Aboriginal elder outreach programs. The Aboriginal outreach program — also part of this funding — encourages relationship building between school divisions and the Aboriginal community, and it encourages school divisions to bring Aboriginal resource people such as elders and outreach workers into schools.

Now to get the best possible education, early childhood development also has a big role to play. This government strongly believes that establishing a comprehensive system of early childhood development services and supports is a priority and that it is vital.

In 2001-2002, Saskatchewan Education provided approximately \$3.8 million in funding recognition for 79 pre-kindergarten programs in high-needs urban, rural, and northern areas.

In 2001-2002, Saskatchewan Education will also provide \$1 million in recognized expenditures to enable school divisions to support three- and four-year-old preschool children with disabilities. Again, very important work, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan Education will also work closely with the provincial early childhood development unit and target high-needs communities to support the creation of early learning services and programs for preschool children and their families who live in circumstances of high risk. This initiative will be facilitated using \$1.4 million of the federal early childhood development funding.

This government is committed to supporting the early childhood initiatives and collaborating to achieve a high quality of services for preschool and their families.

More detail can be provided about another aspect . . . more detail can be provided so that other aspects of the education investment of this budget, such as CommunityNet . . . but I must leave something for my colleagues to speak about, Mr.

Speaker, so I'll leave that for now.

I would just like to close off by pointing out that when the Role of the School Task Force was presented at Kitchener School, there were a couple of statements made in the House, one by our Minister of Education. And he said the following:

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 . . .

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

Moving on down in his statement, he said:

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.

Now he made that statement, Mr. Speaker, and he was responded to by the Education critic for the opposition, the hon. member from Kelvington-Wadena. And the member from Kelvington-Wadena had many positive things to say about the report of the Role of the Schools and was quite glowing in her comments, in fact, about what was put forward by the report.

And at the end, she said . . . at the end of her comments, she said:

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.

Now after we took up the challenge and after we put the cash on the table to make good our commitment to the Role of the School Task Force report, we had a budget debate. And the members opposite had a chance to move an amendment to that budget debate and they had an opportunity to back up the expression of support that was made by the member from Kelvington-Wadena for the good work done by the Role of the School Task Force report and how that was embraced by the budget.

They didn't do it. Mr. Speaker. They trashed it. The gauntlet had been thrown down, we picked it up in all good honour and in good faith, and made good on the good work of the Role of the School Task Force report. The members opposite indicated their support. And they had a chance to make a meaningful expression of that support and they chose not to.

Now today in this debate we have a chance to partially rectify that, not in a deep way perhaps being that it's not a budget debate and not a budget vote, but in a symbolic way. So I would urge the members opposite to take up the member from Kelvington-Wadena when she said things like, Mr. Speaker:

The recommendations of the Role of the School Task Force set out a powerful plan for change. Most of the changes we support wholeheartedly and I expect we'll be debating the few that cause concern here in the House.

We're having one of those debates, Mr. Speaker. And I would urge the earlier comments to be taken up and given the kind of support that would be warranted by the uptake by this government on the Role of the School Task Force.

And I'll just cite two quick examples, Mr. Speaker. The Role of the School Task Force recommended that an expansion of the pre-kindergarten program in the range of 25 per cent to 50 per cent would be reasonable. In this budget, Mr. Speaker, we substantially increased our pre-kindergarten financial support and increased the number of pre-kindergarten spaces by more than 80 per cent — exceeding the recommendations of the Role of the School Task Force report.

And again on community schools, you could take the same approach. The Role of the School Task Force report recommended an increase of 26 schools over the next three years. And as I'd outlined earlier, Mr. Speaker, in this coming year, something that we're all very proud of on this side of the House, we are doubling — more than doubling — the number of community schools.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCall: — So, Mr. Speaker, it's been a pleasure to take part in this debate. And I think education is crucial to this government. It's crucial to the kind of quality of life that we can secure for our people in this province. And as I'd referenced earlier, we're very excited on this side of the House that we are now in the fiscal position to be able to make the kind of investment that we'd dearly love to have been making for the past decade had the finances allowed.

But, Mr. Speaker, I will then close my remarks by moving the motion, and I repeat my earlier words:

That this Assembly urge the government to carry through with its long-term plan for education as announced in the budget, a plan which includes expanded community schools, enhanced operating grants, improved teacher training, greater access to the Internet, and increased early learning programs and specialists.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(16:00)

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very glad for the opportunity to get up and speak to this motion, to second the motion indeed.

Mr. Speaker, it is my belief and I think the belief of most of us that education is the foundation upon which we will build this province. We look around the world and we see very clearly that where there is good, solid program of education, there is good development in that community.

We're also aware, Mr. Speaker, that it is not just simply the academic education which is vital to the healthy growth and knowledge and wisdom of our children in this world. There are many clichés around the fact that it takes a community to educate a child. It truly does, and I think this budget makes very clear that the commitment to community schools is a recognition that that community is involved in the process of teaching children and guiding them into the future.

I've talked with some people who have been educated in the community schools, and what they learned there was far beyond just the academic education from kindergarten through grade 12. There were tremendous programs that helped them learn more about the community that surrounded them.

The particular case I am thinking of, a young man that was raised in an inner city school learned a lot about the Aboriginal community that was a large part of that school as well. There were elders who would come into the schools in the Community Schools Program and would help to teach the children about what their heritage was, what their hopes were.

In that Community Schools Program, Mr. Speaker, they care for the whole child. Not only do they educate, but they bring in a nutritionist so that all of the children who gather there — no matter what their economic circumstances at home — get a nutritional and balanced diet. All the children in that school, not just a few exclusive children, all of the children get to participate in those meals.

Mr. Speaker, they also have community development workers in these schools who reach out beyond the boundaries of the schools to also broaden the base of the education. This year in this budget we've more than doubled the number of community schools that are going to be operating in this province.

I think this is a tremendous piece of work, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to the results of that in the decades ahead. That doubling of community schools will help nurture a whole generation of young people who might never have got that kind of broad education that they will get through this program.

But community schools are just one aspect of what is being developed because of the increased budget that we were able to put into education this time.

In the past, as a previous speaker mentioned, there were huge debts that had to be paid off. Mr. Speaker, we had . . . we were paying more on the interest on those debts than what we were able to put into the education program of this province. And that's appalling.

But we worked our way through that with balanced budgets, with a concerted effort to pay down the debt, and we've come to this place where we were now able to put more than twice as much into the Education budget as what we are paying on interest on those debts. And I'm very pleased with these actions of the government, of our Minister of Education in recommending this, and of our government in approving this expenditure on education.

This expenditure will make a lot of difference in a variety of areas. The enhanced operating grants will mean that there is

some relief for local taxpayers. I know in Regina there is some relief there — about 1.4 per cent in the public school system, 1.4 in the Catholic system — and this will make a difference to what can happen in the community.

I'm very pleased that these enhanced operating grants will enable more work to be done in a variety of schools throughout the province.

Improved teacher training is also essential. If we're going to have a good base of education for our children, we need to make sure that we have enough teachers and that those teachers get the best education possible. The increased funding for education will enable that to happen.

Greater access to the Internet. What a tremendous tool for learning this is, and that tool is made available through CommunityNet to schools throughout this province. Children will be able to access information that is available throughout the world at every level of schooling that's available, Mr. Speaker. And that's impressive.

It's impressive when I hear how free this information is made available to our students and to our teachers. I was impressed when I heard that MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) last year decided that it would put its educational program out on the Net for anybody to access.

This Internet tool allows people to grow and expand at their own rate. It's a tremendous asset to our community and the investment that has been made into CommunityNet means that that asset is available throughout the province where it never would have been available had it just been left for private companies to develop or just left for individual school boards to try and attach to an Internet system.

So this is a real opportunity to level and broaden the education that's available for all of the students in this province. Part of having information available on the Internet, Mr. Speaker, is that we also have a Department of Education Web site and that Web site has been used many, many times. I'm told that there have been over 173 different countries that have gone to that site on the Net and they've downloaded millions upon millions of pages of information about the curriculum that has been developed in Saskatchewan.

France has been one of the major users of that curriculum. Britain has also been a major user. And this is millions of pages of data that they're taking from our site to be able to use in their education systems throughout the world. This is also available to those nations that do not have the facility to develop curriculums such as our nation has been able to develop over the years.

So it's a tremendous offering that has been made, not only to our own communities, but simply by posting the Web site made available throughout the world. And I think this is part of the nature and the sign of a very progressive government that looks to the social democratic needs of not only our own province, our nation, but of the world.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would also like to note that throughout the broadest community of Saskatchewan we have people who

have stated their support very clearly for this budget. They have stated it in newspapers, in a variety of documents, and I would like to quote a number of those for the benefit, not only of those of us sitting here in the House, but I would like to quote them for those people who are out listening and watching on the television.

First of all from the Canadian Association for Community Education:

Thank you for caring about our children and for expanding the Community Schools Program for at risk and Indian and Metis children and youth in our province. Next month Canada will be hosting the world conference in Vancouver. As president of the Canadian Association for Community Education, I am so proud to say that I come from a province that puts our children first.

Expansion of the community school program will have a profoundly positive impact on the lives of so many children and their families. Providing services to those who are most in need is appreciated more than you will ever know.

From the bottom of our hearts. Thank you.

That was Fay Stupnikoff, councillor from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, community schools do not just educate the children; they also take responsibility for educating the community. Parents, adults who are in the community can go and take part in some of the learning programs. Some of these community schools have night classes so that people who were not in their own youth able to develop and expand their education are now able to through the work of these community schools.

So a tremendous progressive effort has been made here, and Ms. Stupnikoff notes that and notes what a tremendous gift it is not only to our own province, our nation, but to the world.

From the Northern Lights School Division, I would like to quote:

On behalf of the Northern Lights School Division, No. 113, I would like to commend the Saskatchewan education team for a job well done. Your newly released budget clearly indicates a strong commitment and support for public education.

The provincial objectives of addressing the very real challenges facing our education system, providing leadership and support for policy and program priorities, and maintaining the integrity of financial support for education have indeed been met.

Best wishes for continued success. Your excellent work is greatly appreciated.

And I quote that from Ralph Pilz, director of education for the Northern Lights School Division.

Sometimes in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of the

tremendous things that are being done, the work that is being done by this government is missed in the morass of mud that the opposition throws up and non-constructive, non-creative questions and criticisms. And I think it's very, very important that for the people of this province, we highlight the very good and solid work that is being done to provide a foundation for our children and for the future development of this province.

Education will provide a base that will move us into the decades beyond, into the centuries beyond. Education will provide us with people who know how to work in the high-tech sector, will provide us with skilled teachers who will be able to teach new generations of young people coming up.

This is also recognized by the Prince Albert Catholic schools who write to our minister, and I quote:

On behalf of the Prince Albert Catholic School Board of Education, I congratulate you and your officials on delivering a budget that better meets the needs of the educational community of Saskatchewan.

In spite of competing demands placed upon the government, your leadership and increased commitment to various educational programs are greatly appreciated.

Thank you for recognizing the challenges facing local school boards and your willingness to address these. Thank you for advocating so strongly on behalf of the children of our province.

We appreciate the government increasing the provincial share of the operating costs of public education. In so doing, many boards of education, including Prince Albert Catholic, will be able to reduce the local mill rate.

While we appreciate the increase in grants, however, we are also concerned that the funds allocated for capital projects may not be sufficient to meet the needs of Saskatchewan school divisions.

Now that's a very important point because I think in the past we have tried to keep those levels of funding for capital projects up. We're trying to keep them up still, but we knew that it was absolutely essential that we put more into operating funds so that the education would not wane at the time that the buildings and the capital projects were being worked on.

And that from the Prince Albert Catholic School Board.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, from the Regina Separate School Board, I would like to also quote a trustee who wrote to the paper, to *The Leader-Post*, in May.

Students will benefit

As a school trustee, it is my responsibility to let the public know when the best interests of education are not being met. That is why I wrote a letter to the editor concerning teacher salaries, special education funding and the transfer of education taxes from the provincial government onto local taxpayers.

It is also my responsibility to recognize those who listen and act. That is why I congratulate Education Minister Jim Melenchuk and his deputy minister, Craig Dotson, for the recent provincial education budget. This budget has assisted the Regina Catholic school system to not only maintain its standard of excellence, but to actually improve the chances for our children to succeed. At the same time, our board is able to maintain faith with the provincial government by lowering local property taxes.

A very special component of the Catholic school budget is the provision of computers in every classroom. Since every workplace requires some application of computer skills, this is important for our children. Not every family has the finances to afford a computer. That is why school computers give every child an equal chance to succeed.

With this budget the Regina Catholic schools will apply 80 per cent of its revenues toward instruction of our students. A heartfelt thank you to Melenchuk and Dotson for their caring, perseverance and hard work. I hope our students take time to send their thanks. They will be the beneficiaries.

And that was Gerald Kleisinger, trustee from the Regina separate school board.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are so many comments that came in the public as a result of this budget. And I do believe that it's important that we as legislators in this Chamber pay attention to the comments of those people. They help us to understand the impact of our budget decisions.

From the Moosomin paper . . . or pardon me, from Moosomin, but recorded in *The Leader-Post*: "School taxes are good news," is the comment from Harold Laich who is the director of education for the Moosomin School Division No. 9. I quote:

One year ago I submitted a letter to the editor lamenting the lack of funding by the Government of Saskatchewan for public education in Saskatchewan. School boards were again forced to go to the public taxpayers for additional funding as education costs increased. Taxpayers have been very supportive of education spending. Nevertheless, increased taxes were a burden, and especially to those struggling in the agricultural sector. What is fair, is fair. Credit should be given when it is deserved.

The 2001 budget, tabled by the Government of Saskatchewan, provided significant additional money for most, certainly not all, but most school divisions. This increased funding has allowed those boards the benefit to commit expenditures to areas that have been on hold for many years. In some cases mill rate reductions have been possible as a result of increased funding and some change in assessment.

Now I read these, Mr. Deputy Speaker, acknowledging also the criticisms that have come from previous years. Because sometimes we are called, as government, we are called arrogant; it is said that we do not listen.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think as I listen to the discussions

amongst my colleagues as decisions are struggled with as we tried to bring forward a budget that truly was responsive to the needs of this province, I believe that people like Mr. Laich were heard, were understood, and were responded to with the kind of vision for the future for the education of our children. And I'm very pleased with that action and with the budget impacts on those communities.

The Meadow Lake School Division, according to Mandy Higgins of the Meadow Lake press staff, the Meadow Lake School Division has set the 2001 mill rate at 18 mills unchanged from 2000. That means property owners in the division will not pay more taxes than they did last year.

The school division was able to keep the mill rate the same from 2000 to 2001 because provincial government grants helped cover increased costs, said Glen Winkler.

"The government really helped us keep things going. We're happy to not have to raise the mill rate," said Winkler.

The government's annual foundation grant covered a 4.5 per cent teacher salary increase, and division program initiatives in special education, preschool education, nutrition and literacy.

And I would like to, for just a moment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, also highlight the work that is being done in early childhood education. There we are reaching beyond even the kindergarten to pre-kindergarten and earlier than that to try and help every child in this province, whether they are economically disadvantaged, whether they are in, in difficult straits in terms of family relations, we are doing our utmost as a government, as a Department of Education, to reach out to all of those children so that we can provide them with the best possible potential for the future.

Give them a good grounding. Make sure that their parents understand what is needed to help give those children a good grounding. And so the work and the budget that's gone into early childhood education will help in that process, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a release here from the teacher . . . Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation also commenting on our budget. Let me quote from this:

The province's teachers applaud education spending in the budget

An increase of 7.9 per cent by the provincial government for K-12 education, \$33.7 million this calendar year, is welcome news to the teachers of the province.

Wayne Clements, president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, said he was particularly pleased with the fact that the new money allocated for public education in the March 30 budget has been done in such a way that it can be distributed unconditionally to school divisions.

Clements indicated the budget was a step in the right direction in terms of addressing various equity issues the revolve around education in Saskatchewan. He alluded specifically to the

recently released Role of the School Task Force report, which advocated the formation of a greater number of community schools throughout the province.

In its budget the government announced 42 new community schools which, for the first time, have been expanded to include both high schools and some rural settings, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I continue to quote:

The additional funding for community schools and for Aboriginal education and special education reinforces the commitment of teachers to meet the needs of all children in Saskatchewan in an integrated way regardless of where they live.

Clements also praised the government's commitment to teacher recruitment and retention which included a million dollar fund primarily earmarked for northern and rural communities.

And I'd like to editorialize there, Mr. Speaker, because very often the opposition tries to characterize this government as insensitive to rural Saskatchewan, insensitive to the needs of the rural communities. But here, as Mr. Clements notes, as this Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation document notes, this government listened to those concerns from rural Saskatchewan and responded with care and in a way that makes a substantial difference for those people.

Now I'll continue to quote here. He said:

Teachers will look forward to working with government to determine how best to apply the money. There's also a three-pronged approach intended to meet the government's goal of ultimately having all the schools in the province connected to a high-speed communications network.

This budget is a welcome reinvestment in K-2 education, and it allows school divisions more flexibility in order to meet the demands in a system that have been crying out for attention, Clements said.

Not only were the teachers pleased, but the school trustees were pleased with this budget. And I'd like to quote from a media release from the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association. This media release is dated March 30:

Children benefit from the budget.

Students from kindergarten to Grade 12 will benefit from the provincial government's budget, says the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association.

An increased commitment to various education programs, along with increased funding to school boards announced in the budget Friday, will help students in the K-12 education system.

"This budget helps our students in the classroom, and that's what's most important, said Gary Shaddock, President of the SSTA, which represents all boards of education in Saskatchewan. "We hope this signals a renewed commitment by the province to educating our children. It's a step in the right direction."

The government announced Friday that school divisions will receive an additional \$33.7 million towards operating costs for 2001. The SSTA had asked for at least \$32 million extra to cover various cost increases such as salaries, utilities and transportation.

And I'll note again, Mr. Speaker, if I can editorialize the quote, that 33.7 million was put into the operating cost above what was asked for by the SSTA.

And I continue to quote:

Included in that funding are increases for Aboriginal education, community schools, early childhood education, special needs, teacher recruitment, and technology.

"This is a positive investment in our future — our children," Shaddock said. "At first glance this is a step forward for our students. This definitely increases the government responsibility for funding education on a province-wide basis."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, again I want to editorialize just briefly to fill in the gaps there. For years, people were concerned that the shift had gone from the provincial government to the communities and had been asking us to change that shift. It had reached something like a 60/40 split and with this budget we managed to move that up to 42/58. And the response of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association was very positive as we moved that line.

Shaddock went on to say that boards of education will be affected differently, and it will take some time to fully understand those effects. Changes in student enrolment and reassessment will determine how much money each board gets.

The SSTA, the province's elected school board members and the voice of public education, represents all boards of education in Saskatchewan, serving nearly 190,000 children in our schools.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these people were very clear on how positive this budget was for them and for the children of this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also received correspondence from the Regina Early Learning Centre, and this is addressed to the Minister of Education. And I quote:

First, let me congratulate you on your recent launching of the early childhood initiative and your progressive partnership with the ministers of Social Services and Health. Even more laudable is your willingness to work with community organizations. What better message for Saskatchewan families to learn co-operation and the value of pooling resources than to have this modelled at government levels.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll editorialize here. Just letting the people know that there was a tremendous amount of work that went on prior to this budget between the departments trying to coordinate this activity so that when the budget came out we

would be ready to move and we would help work on this early childhood initiative.

I continue to quote then:

I have written to the ministers of Social Services and Health to express our support of your integrated approach and initiatives for children. Your commitment to support vulnerable children and prevent long-term negative outcomes in the newly announced Kids First initiative is welcome and timely.

At the Early Learning Centre, we have been working for 23 years with children and families who live in risk-filled circumstances offering education, health, and support services from birth to school entrance. Many children have gone through our doors emerging confident and competent and more ready to face the challenges ahead of them. Many of our parents have gone on to complete their own education and, in some cases, have completed university degrees.

And I would like to editorialize here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and just point out again what the impact of this kind of integrated work is and how the community schools not only affect the children who are coming up, but also have a profound effect on the larger community providing initiative, providing the incentive for some of the adults to go on and broaden their learning and their understanding as well. And we're very glad that this budget supports that kind of activity.

So let me continue to quote. Before I do that, I would just like to editorialize again, briefly.

I hear the chirping from the other side talking about this being a boring speech. Well it may be boring to people who don't have much interest in developing education, as this side of the House does. But I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that for those people who are listening in to this, this channel, I think it's very important that they get a very clear picture of how positive this is for the province; what a foundation it will provide for the children of this province.

And I want to say that it's a far cry from the mud-throwing activity that's been going on, on the other side of the House for the last few days that is primarily unsubstantiated and really not worth getting into.

So now I will come back here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I will continue to quote from this letter from the Regina Early Learning Centre:

We are aware, however, there are many families for whom our services are too little, too late. The addition of universal screening and intensive follow-up support will fill a gap in existing services.

With the multitude of pressures facing government these days, we applaud your efforts to take on a children's agenda and hope this will be a beginning of a broad range of social, health, and education supports for young children and their families. We are willing to offer our expertise and our experience in the community to move this agenda

along.

(16:30)

And that's the Regina Early Learning Centre.

As pioneers in the development and delivery of holistic programs, the Early Learning Centre has delivered these programs to children and families who are most marginalized in our society. They note that they are eager to contribute to this developing vision for Saskatchewan's children. That was written by Anne Luke, executive director.

It's tremendous work that that group is doing in our community and to have their acknowledgement and their support for this budget and for the actions of this budget means a lot to those of us in government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The commendations come from a very wide variety of sources and I would like for our members to hear them as well because I think very often the members of government do not hear the commendations that come.

And so I would like to quote from the *Humboldt Journal* by Keri Dalman, who is staff writer there:

Rural school divisions get budget break.

The 2001 provincial budget was good news for the Humboldt Rural School Division.

The 2001 budget has improved the program side of education, noted Milton Kerpan, director of education for the school division at the annual meeting held April 11 at Lake Lenore, which drew over 25 people. The government has shifted its priorities and put more money into the program side of education this year, he said in his report. Capital funding however stayed the same as last year.

The greatest change in the budget was the per pupil rate which went up significantly, Kerpan stated. The increase in the per pupil rate will benefit greatly those divisions whose enrolment numbers are going up, not necessarily the HRSD (that's the Humboldt division) as their enrolment is slipping a bit but it will benefit others.

Also the amount of money available for shared services such as social workers and core curriculum development almost doubled he said.

The changes mean that the board will be allowed to consider program initiatives such as expanding computer use, increase social worker time and introduction of the renewed elementary language arts curriculum.

Technology in the school division is moving ahead. Saskatchewan Education is paying the cost of bringing high-speed Internet service to rural schools, he said, and the board is also planning on putting libraries on a bar code system which would allow for better interlibrary loans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these things mean a lot to the rural education programs, to be able to tap in to the best of our

education resources, to use the Internet to do that, to be able to draw from the interlibrary network, tremendous access is gained by the funds that were put into those divisions through this government's budget and through the increase in the per pupil grants that are going out.

Earlier on I alluded to the impact on the cities. And we had a lot of pressure early on from the municipal governments to do our best to try and to give them relief on the tax base and we heard from them that it was important to give some of that relief through the education side of our budget.

And therefore we did that and the response was very clear. The boards in Regina were setting their budgets and the increased provincial fundings, as the Regina Public School Board; at 48.2 million is 9.33 million or nearly 24 per cent more than last year. It is responsible for this year's good news, according to Burnett and that allowed the Regina Public School system to put a 1.4 per cent tax cut on the table.

It also was good news for the Catholic School Board and the Catholic School Board was also able to put that same matching 1.4 per cent cut on the table which gives relief to the citizens of Regina, to the citizens of all of our communities, when that money is put in place and their taxes do not have to increase, in fact, may go down.

Mr. Bresciani of the Catholic School Board expressed gratitude to the provincial government for the increased funding but was wanting to be wary about how that money would be spent.

I would also like to quote from our Regina *Leader-Post*. Murray Mandryk, who often makes very cutting and challenging commentaries on where the government is going and what the government is doing, but here's what Mr. Mandryk had to say when he was reflecting on the budget for education:

And while it likely won't be enough to reduce our property taxes, an extra \$43 million for education over last year's total also addresses specific opposition complaints. What is perhaps more impressive, however, is where some of the big spending increases in education are going.

For example (Mr. Mandryk notes) the number of community schools — a concept where schools are open in the evenings so that inner-city children in particular have a place to go — will increase to 83 from 41, thanks to a doubling of their budget to 9.5 million. Such spending is never a big vote getter.

Hear that again:

Such spending is never a big vote getter, but it is the right thing to do.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is what this government is about. It is about trying our utmost to do the right thing, to make sure that whether it is vote getting or not, that we will build that foundation properly so that there will be a future.

And this investment is a clear action now that will make a difference down the road. Not a vote getter, but a very, very vital action to help build this province.

Let me quote this one more time — one more time:

The number of community schools, a concept where schools are open in the evenings so that inner city children in particular have a place to go, will increase to 83 from 41, thanks to a doubling of their budget to \$9.5 million.

And I quote Mr. Mandryk in saying:

Such spending is never a big vote getter, but it is the right thing to do.

And we will continue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to try and do the right thing, not only in education, but we will try continually to do the right thing in agriculture, in rural revitalization, dealing with our Crown corporations, in every aspect in health, in every aspect, including in liquor and gaming.

We will do our utmost to do the right thing, to provide the best possible government for this province so that we can build a future for all our children, a future that will make this province rise above the others.

We've seen it rise above the others in the last decade in terms of gross domestic product. We've seen the rest of this country acknowledge how this province has grown. When we look back at *The Globe and Mail* in the fall, they said "Saskatchewan leads" — "Saskatchewan leads the country."

And you need to hear that, my friends over in the other side, and you need to lock it in because . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Just to remind the member to address the comments to the Chair and through the Chair.

And while I'm on my feet, I'm having difficulty hearing his speech. So if we could just tone it down just a few notches, I'd appreciate it.

Order. Thank you very much.

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to make clear once again that Saskatchewan has led this country in economic development. *The Globe and Mail* made that very, very clear that in this past decade we have been a leader even over that province next to us.

And I think that it's vitally important that the members opposite pay attention to that fact. They have continued to push gloom and doom on this province for the last two years in an unbelievable manner. They have now just slightly started to shift because they're trying to buy into the vote-getting schemes.

But I have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that what we are about, is seeking to do the right thing to build this province on a solid foundation — not cheap tricks, not trying to sell off, but to build a solid foundation upon which this province will move into the next decades.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to go back to the issue of the community's response to this budget, because it is absolutely

vital that all of us hear how moved and how impressed the community was — not our point of view; their point of view — from what was done in the Education budget.

I want to quote from the SaskWest Media Monitoring Ltd., and there are a number of quotes here. The first comes from Gary Shaddock of the SSTA. Garry Shaddock, president of the SSTA, I quote:

This year's budget is an investment in our children, the future of our province. The monies that the province has designated will go direct to the classroom, which will be a huge benefit to our students. And we hope that this is an indication from the provincial government that they are planning to reinvest in education in the future. And we see this budget as a step in the right direction.

Wayne Clements, STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) president, and I quote:

We were quite excited given the fact that the community school mandate has been expanded, in fact doubled. There are a number of initiatives there that will provide more equity-based education for students of our province. And that's what it's all about — providing equity for students no matter where they live in this province, as well as keeping the money here to provide the education they so rightly deserve.

On CJME, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Regina School Board is quoted as giving the budget an A-plus, and I quote:

The extra expenditures in the provincial budget may help Regina taxpayers. At least it's looking like school taxes should stay the same this year. The provincial budget is earning an A-plus from the public school board. Chair Ernie Pappas, chair of the Regina School Board, says trustees can finally begin repairing the damage caused by years of cutbacks and shortfalls.

And I'll editorialize here once again to remind the public that those cutbacks were necessitated by a huge debt that was built up in this province by the last right-wing government that pushed its policies on the people of this province and just put us deeply, deeply in debt.

And we have been able to build our way out of that with very, very careful balanced budgets over the last decade, and because of those careful balanced budgets, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have been able to move away from the cutbacks and the shortfalls and invest more deeply in the education for our children.

I quote Ernie Pappas again, and he says:

It was a very generous budget for the urban schools and it feels like we have come out of a nightmare of the last 15 years. This certainly is the best budget, certainly during the time that I have been on the board, and for many, many years.

Pappas says he fully expects the board to hold the line on taxes and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we noted already that he had not only

... they had not only held the line but were able to drop them by 1.4.

"The province gets top marks," says the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*. A trustee there says overall its probably the best budget we've seen in 15 years, said Wayne Steen, chairman of the Saskatchewan Rivers School Board. Chairman Steen gave the province an A.

Cindy Gee, the chairwoman of the Prince Albert Catholic School Board, was also pleased with the 2001 budget giving it an A minus or a B plus.

"All the money goes into the classroom (I quote) in one form or another," said Cindy Gee.

St. Mary High School will become a community school which will enhance the school's existing programs and enable more staff to be hired including a community school coordinator and perhaps school associates. The division will initially receive \$100,000.

"It's wonderful," said Gee. "It's one of the highlights for us."

From *The Estevan Mercury*, Mr. Deputy Speaker, "Public school system holding the line at budget time."

Norm Park of the Mercury writes:

It's a zero and in this case a zero is a good number.

That's the information that came from the Estevan School Division this past week regarding their 2001 budget mill rate. The public school system won't be asking local property taxpayers for an increase in contributions. Their mill rate is standing pat at 21.3.

Thanks, in large part (Mr. Deputy Speaker, I quote) to an increase in provincial foundation grants based on student enrolments, the Estevan School Division should be able to meet all their financial requirements without having to go to the Estevan property owners for any more money than they did last year.

These are tremendous accolades from all around the province for a well thought-out budget — a budget that, again I repeat, will provide a foundation for all children, an educational foundation that will help them move into the future successfully.

The Estevan Mercury also quotes the Catholic School Board Chair, Vince Marcotte. He said:

This budget was not as difficult this time around as it has been in recent years thanks to an increase in grant money from the province.

(16:45)

The Moosomin School Division No. 9, 2001 budget information as reported in the *World Spectator* of Moosomin:

The Board of Education of the Moosomin School Division has completed its 2001 budget deliberations and has set the 2001 mill rate at 21.5 mills. This is a reduction of .7 mills. Total expenditures for the year will be \$8,107,000.

The reduction of the mill rate was made possible by an increase to the foundation operating grant by the Government of Saskatchewan as well as direct reimbursement from the government for the increase in the professional salaries and a small increase in the division's assessment base.

Provincial funding for education in the 2001 budget year for the Moosomin School Division will increase to 22.83 per cent of total expenditures, up from 16.79 per cent funding of expenditures in 2000. The increase in funding will enable some significant program and maintenance improvements.

In *The Four-Town Journal*, Langenburg, "The province gives more money to Potashville," and I quote from the article:

One bright spot in the board's financial figures came in analysis of how much money the provincial government provides to the division compared to how much must be raised through local taxes. In 2001 the provincial government's operating grant will increase by over 7 per cent to 33.9 per cent while local tax revenues will drop by approximately 7 per cent to 58.3 per cent.

A real plus for Langenburg, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

From the *Shellbrook Chronicle*, "Community Schools Seen As Vision For Future," the following background information was written by Debra Kuzbik, superintendent of instructional and student services for the Parkland School Division. And I quote:

In its spring budget, the provincial government announced a \$7 million increase in grant recognitions for Community Education in Saskatchewan. Parkland School Division was delighted to be selected as one of the recipients of Community School designation.

Saskatchewan Community Schools are centers of learning for their communities and incorporate a comprehensive range of best educational practices for meeting the diverse learning needs of all students. They provide a responsive, inclusive, culturally affirming and academically challenging learning program and environment and are effective in addressing the challenges of the communities they serve. As well, Community Schools use collaborative approaches to foster the development and well-being of the entire community.

And again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to reference the fact that these community schools really do provide a broader opportunity for the community. Not just for the children who are going to those schools who get to learn not just the academic side but also learn about cultural traditions, who also gain because they are able to take part in nutritional programs; but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it also provides so much to the community because the elders of the community, the parents, people within the community who have special skills, are able

to come in and meet with those children and share their gifts and abilities with the children, so that the education they are getting is not just academic but is focused on how the community lives, how the community grows, how the community works together.

And I have to say from my perspective, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that it is this kind of education, community-based education, that will provide the best foundation for the future of this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are significant comments from across the province, and I would like to quote from *The Melfort Journal* from Tuesday, April 3. This is by Jordie Dwyer of the *Journal* — "The division's diversity education program hits the planning stage."

A program to help at-risk youth and put a focus on facing the challenges presented by a diverse educational system has been approved in principle by the Melfort School Division.

School division trustees passed a motion at their meeting on Tuesday to proceed with the planning of a diversity and education program, and additional money provided to school divisions in Friday's provincial budget will also help jump-start the program.

The province increased funding to \$460 million for the kindergarten-to-grade 12 system in Saskatchewan, including more money for Aboriginal education, community schools, early childhood education, and special needs.

Crandall Hrynkiw, director of education for the division, said the money will help pay for a position that will assist in the development and implementation of the plan.

Resources, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are needed in order to bring people on board who can help make these plans come to fruition. And the money that is provided in this budget also provides for those people who will provide the knowledge and the resources that will help these school divisions develop their programs.

In Kamsack, from the *Norquay North Star* of Norquay, Sask, they say:

The Kamsack School Division keeps the mill rate at last year's level.

This is good news all across the province that comes from this budget.

The tax rate will raise about 46 per cent of the total budget, whereas last year it raised 48 per cent.

So most of their funding then is going to be provided through the provincial school budget.

From Melfort, I quote:

The total operating revenue for the school division is up

nearly 7 per cent over 2000 and that jump is mainly attributable to an increase in the provincial government grant. These grants truly help develop the province's education system.

And by the accolades that have been given there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is quite clear that the people of this province know that this government heard their concerns. We listened to the teachers when they said what their needs were. We listened to the boards of education when they said what their needs were. We listened to the communities when the communities said we need more support in educating our children. We listened, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This is not the sign, if I may say so, this is not the sign of an arrogant government. It is the sign of a government that is willing to learn to grow as we listen to the people of this province explain what their needs are.

And I hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that today and in the days ahead we will continue to listen to the needs of the people and we will continue to respond as effectively as what we have responded in this education budget. I believe we will. I will work to make sure that as a government we do that. And I know that my colleagues feel similarly on this issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, education is a vital component in any country, in any land, in any community. I want to refer to an article that came from *The StarPhoenix*. Its source is in Ottawa and he writes:

As former US labour secretary, Robert Reich, is telling politicians and thinkers on both sides of the border, education coupled with a healthy workforce and well-defined values makes the difference between success and failure in an age when capital ignores borders and companies have few national loyalties.

Now I want to editorialize just briefly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I think this is what is key. We are not interested in short-term little blips. What we are interested in as a government in this province is building a foundation that we will have a future for our children in this province. We do not — do not — want to just throw money away to make it look good to buy votes. What we want to do is build a solid foundation.

And that's what this expert says and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's what we say as a government. We will build that future. We build a solid future for our children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wartman: — The question is asked, how will we keep our children in this province? Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not going to throw money on some short-term thing that'll keep them here for a few days. What we will do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is we will build a solid province that has a good educational foundation; that has a good economic foundation; that has a future that will continue to grow. We will build our infrastructure with the Internet. We will continue to make this province a place where children will stay.

And not only that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a province that will be a destiny. Where people will look from other places around the world. And when they're saying, where do I want to go to build my company, where do I want to go to build a future for my children, they will come to Saskatchewan. Because they will know that this is the place to build a future. I am convinced that we can build that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wartman: — I am convinced that we can build that when we start with this foundation — a solid foundation in education, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Let me continue to quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

With considerable lucidity and insight, Reich argues in his new book, *Future of Success*.

I would like you to hear this, members on the opposite side of the House. In his new book, *Future of Success*, he argues with lucidity and insight:

That countries and individuals will only prosper when they have the knowledge and skills to conceive and construct those things the world wants.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wartman: — Let me read that again:

With considerable lucidity and insight, Reich argues in his new book, *Future of Success*, that countries and individuals will only prosper when they have the knowledge and skills to conceive and construct those things the world wants.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this past week I was able to attend on Rochdale Boulevard Days, in my constituency, a special event that was organized by the entrepreneurs, the young entrepreneurs class at Winston Knoll Collegiate.

My son is a member in this class, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and he has said a number of times that he is interested in a future of business administration, of building. And I want to say that together that class put together a program, an entrepreneurial program that their teachers helped them with so that they could build something for the future. They had insight, they had knowledge, they had an educational system that would help them, and they put together a very successful program, Mr. Speaker, last weekend.

Let me conclude now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to conclude by finishing the quotes from Mr. Reich:

Prosperity depends on adding value to products and services, not on the profitability of companies with national profiles. It is no secret that the foundation for all those good things is a cutting-edge education system, one that is as strong in the humanities as it is in the sciences. Given that brilliance is not the preserve of the rich, that system must be accessible and it must be affordable.

Let me say again. Let me say again:

Given that brilliance is not the preserve of the rich, that system must be accessible and it must be affordable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, with those words, I would like to move that we adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.