

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have petitions signed by residents of Saskatchewan that reveal that commercial greenhouses in Saskatchewan are classified differently than agricultural enterprises under the current Labour Standards Act. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to make the necessary amendments to The Labour Standards Act to recognize the needs and realities faced by commercial greenhouse proprietors and employees.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitioners come from the community of Biggar. And I'm pleased to present the petition on their behalf.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, my petition today is regarding the Fyke report.

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 Kelvington health centre be maintained in its current level offering 24-hour acute care, emergency and physician services and that laboratory, physiotherapy, public health, home care, long-term care service be readily accessible to users from Kelvington and district.

People that have signed this are from Kelvington, Lintlaw, and Okla.

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present over 50 petitions today which were collected by Virginia Bonsan of Turtleford concerning the crying need for speech and language services for preschoolers in this province. And the prayer of relief reads as follows:

That your Hon. Assembly may take immediate steps to increase funding in all areas of speech and language services for preschoolers in our province so that such services are adequate and accessible for all families regardless of income.

The petitioners that have signed this petition have come from all over the province.

I so present.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of concerned citizens on the issue of the state of the Swift Current hospital. And the prayer of their petition reads as follows:

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

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

And the petitioners today, Mr. Speaker, are from the city of Swift Current as well as the communities in the southwest of Wymark, Waldeck, Webb, and Eastend, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition regarding the EMS (emergency medical services) service in the province. The prayer 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 from Brandon, to Redvers, to Storthoaks, and Bellegarde.

I so present.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition dealing with the health care in Saskatchewan. 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, and long-term care services available to the users from our district, southeast Saskatchewan and southwest Manitoba, and beyond.

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the good people of Redvers; Bellegarde; Brandon, Manitoba; Fertile; Weyburn; Storthoaks; Sinclair, Manitoba; and Antler.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to present a petition from citizens concerned about 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 service 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 good citizens of Leask, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present to do with the lack of funding to non-profit personal care homes. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide subsidies to non-profit personal care homes in the province so all seniors can be treated equally.

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Kamsack, Calder, Bangor, and Atwater.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens worried about the rate increases for residential and business customers.

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 Moose Jaw, Elbow, Loreburn, and Kenaston.

I so present.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents concerned about centralization of ambulance services. The prayer 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 to affirm its intent to improve community-based ambulance services.

And signatures to this petition come from the communities of Foam Lake and Wynyard.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today with concerns from the Shellbrook-Spiritwood constituency in their regards to cellular telephone coverage in the area. And the petition reads as follows:

Where 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 the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from

Leoville, Spiritwood, Shell Lake, Mildred, and Meeting Lake.

I so present.

Mr. Peters: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here signed by people from the province that are concerned about the high energy costs. And their 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 Saskatchewan consumers.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by folks from Unity and Reward, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise with a petition from citizens 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 rate rebate to Saskatchewan consumers.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks of Wood Mountain.

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.

These are petitions . . . citizens of the province on five matters that are tabled as addendums to previously tabled petitions.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to table in the Assembly on behalf of myself and my other six colleagues in The Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade, the final report of the committee.

And at the end of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I'll be moving a motion:

That the final report of The Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade be now concurred in.

But I'll first table the report.

Mr. Speaker, the committee is pleased to report and to present its final report to this Assembly. The seven members of the committee have had the opportunity to visit with and receive testimony from 188 witnesses. Our work has spanned a year and a half, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to first of all express appreciation to all those who testified before the committee. Some of those members are here today in the galleries and we welcome them warmly. And I also want to express my appreciation both to my Co-Chair, the member for Humboldt, and also to each of the members of the legislature who served on the committee, Mr. Speaker, and that included the member for Regina Northeast, the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, the member for Regina Dewdney, the member for Kelvington-Wadena, and the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to express appreciation at this point to our staff who served us very well on this committee. I want to recognize Randy Pritchard, who served as our technical adviser; Meta Woods, who served as Clerk to the committee. They both provided us with excellent support. And we want to thank all other members of the Legislative Assembly staff who supported us, the Law Clerk, staff members from *Hansard* and legislative broadcasting. We appreciated that support very much.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to highlight for members of the Assembly some of the key recommendations in this report. We were confronted I think with one of the darkest sides of Saskatchewan life, namely the involvement of children as young as nine or ten in the commercial sex trade, and the reality that hundreds of children are impacted by this phenomena, Mr. Speaker.

And we see this phenomena, Mr. Speaker, as a case of child abuse. It's often referred to as child prostitution, but members of our committee are unanimous in viewing this as the abuse of children. And we've taken the view from the outset that zero tolerance of this activity is our goal.

And the reality, Mr. Speaker, is that hundreds of men are engaging in I guess an activity that can only really be described as a sexual predator on the strolls of Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. And men are driving into those three urban centres from around our province to engage in this activity.

And the reality, Mr. Speaker, is that although we have a lot of wonderful people in our communities that are trying to help children get off the street — many with success, Mr. Speaker — every time a child gets off the street they're replaced by another child who's on the street. And the driving force behind this activity is the sexual predators who seek contact with these children.

And the only way to stop this activity in the view of members of the committee is to stop the johns and pimps who engage in this activity, Mr. Speaker. So a large part of our report deals with deterring these sexual predators, which are commonly referred to as johns. And, Mr. Speaker, members of the committee are determined to see Saskatchewan put an end to johns and pimps being out on the strolls of Saskatoon, Regina,

and Prince Albert.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in order to accomplish that, the seven members of the committee are recommending some fairly groundbreaking legislation to this Assembly which we hope will be adopted.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, we're recommending that the police gather a database where they collect the names of children who are at risk on the stroll and also men who are found to be in contact with these children — whether it be in their cars or approaching them in some other way. And then once that database is gathered, we're recommending significant legal action against the men who engage in this activity.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, we're recommending that The Child and Family Services Act be amended so that we broaden the concept of a protective intervention order so that it cannot only be applied in such a way that it prevents a suspected predator from having contact with a child, but it can also be applied in such a way that it prevents a suspected sexual predator from being in the geographic area of the strolls — period. And I think this is a very important change to the concept of a protective intervention order.

(13:45)

We're then recommending, Mr. Speaker, that we develop new provincial offences that men who engage in these activities can be charged with. For instance, we're recommending that anyone who entices a child into prostitution can be levied with a minimum mandatory fine of \$25,000. Anybody who endlessly drives up and down the stroll and is obviously circling the blocks looking for children to have sexual contact with — minimum fine \$5,000. So once those people's names are on that police database, if they're back there again, they'll be charged, and hopefully, they'll be convicted, Mr. Speaker.

We're also recommending, Mr. Speaker, that we implement new legislation in this province modelled on what the Government of Manitoba has done with respect to seizure of vehicles. We've got to get the traffic — the sexual predator traffic — off, out of the residential streets of our neighbourhoods in Saskatoon and Regina. It is totally inappropriate for children in Prince Albert or Saskatoon or Regina to have to live in a neighbourhood where hundreds of men are going up and down the streets over the course of a week looking for sexual activity.

So we are recommending in this report, Mr. Speaker, that this government introduce seizure of vehicle legislation. And when a man is charged under section 211 or 212 or 213 of the Criminal Code, at the time they are charged, we're recommending that their vehicle be seized and that it be returned if they enrol in a john's school. But if a child is in the vehicle, we're recommending that the vehicle not be returned but that it be held, Mr. Speaker.

So those are some examples of the legislative initiatives that we're proposing. We're also recommending changes to the law that would allow a police officer to more fully investigate the relationship between the man in the car and the child in the car.

We heard many reports from police officers frustrated by the fact that they couldn't lay charges against the john, and they didn't have the ability to investigate the relationship between the child in the car and the man in the car. And they told us how heartbroken they were to see those cars drive away. And there was, they said, under the existing law, there's nothing they could do unless they could charge the man with a Breathalyzer offence or unless he didn't have proper registration or a driver's licence. If the child said nothing, they felt they couldn't intervene.

Well we on the committee say that it's time to change the law to make sure that police officers can intervene. And we're recommending such a change, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, I want to add one more comment about legal changes and that is that we not only need changes at the provincial level but we need Ottawa to play a leadership role here with us. And one of the things we're recommending is a change to the federal Criminal Code that would increase the age of consent from 14 years to 16 years.

And we're also recommending that the federal government help fund some of the initiatives that I'm going to make reference to now, Mr. Speaker. Because the other side of this equation is ensuring that there are adequate services in place for children who've been victimized.

And right now, Mr. Speaker, we found that while there are many important helping agencies in place . . . every city, for instance, has very good street outreach services, funded with the support, significant support, from the province of Saskatchewan. The city of Saskatoon has a place of safe refuge for children under 16 who are at risk of being sexually abused, or have been sexually abused. And that's jointly funded by the province and Saskatoon District Health. Those are just two examples of the services that are in place.

But we also found service gaps, Mr. Speaker. And we are recommending that every one of the three major cities should have a voluntary safe house located in it where children who are either at risk of being sexually abused on the street, or have been, can seek refuge. And we're recommending that the province contribute to the funding of those voluntary safe houses.

We're also recommending, Mr. Speaker, that there be one protective, secure safe house. And this will be a facility that is difficult to plan, Mr. Speaker, but we're recommending that on a pilot basis, in the city of Regina, we establish one secure safe house that is a lock-up facility. And it's going to be difficult to plan because it has to be a loving lock-up facility — and that will not be easy to do, Mr. Speaker. The province needs to enter into this arena with caution.

But we're recommending that for children 14 years of age, and under that we establish on a pilot basis one secure-care facility where children can be held involuntarily to prevent them from experiencing the dangers of the street and to ensure that they are provided with good services.

And it's good services, Mr. Speaker, that we need to provide in every centre — Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert. Every one of those centres, as I say, needs a voluntary safe house. Every one of those centres we're recommending, Mr. Speaker, should also have follow-up caseworkers who are put in place to stay with these children and help them stay off the street, and to stick with them no matter what and to make sure they know where they are — no matter what.

We recommending that these caseworkers operate on a case ratio of 14 to 1, Mr. Speaker. Fourteen children to every follow-up worker. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that that service will be key in terms of helping children to get off the street.

We're also recommending, Mr. Speaker, that the province put in place addictions treatment services for these children. We found as a committee that there were not adequate addiction treatment services for children in the province in general, and we found that many of these children do not get the addiction treatment services that they require, Mr. Speaker. And we're therefore urging that the province invest in ensuring that these children do get services.

In fact we're recommending, Mr. Speaker, that the province extend a guarantee of services to these children so that they are not forgotten children but that they are among our highest priorities to make sure that every child is safe in this province should be, and I believe all members want to see, will be one of the highest priorities of this Assembly and this government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to say in closing that we also . . . I want to make two or three other comments. One is that we found, as we travelled the province, that the problem of child sexual abuse on the street is rooted in several other larger social problems. One is poverty. Another is the problem of addictions. A third is the reality of racism in our communities which is reflected in the fact that most of the men on the strolls of Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert are non-Aboriginal, 80 per cent of the children are Aboriginal.

We found, Mr. Speaker, that this problem is rooted in domestic abuse. The vast majority of the children who are on the street have first been abused somewhere else in their community or in their home. And we're recommending, Mr. Speaker, that the province launch two important campaigns.

One is a campaign against racism. I believe every member of this Assembly wants to ensure that we have tolerance in our society, but we're recommending that we plan a campaign against racism and have the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) and the Métis Nation join us in that campaign.

We're recommending that we give more priority to stopping domestic abuse in the home, and this report recognizes the work that is being done by this government in terms of launching home visitation services for families where children are believed to be at risk as a preventive measure to stop domestic abuse in the home. And we're recommending that initiative that was launched this year with the help of the federal government be expanded throughout the province over the next 10 years.

And we're recommending, Mr. Speaker, that we do even more than we have already done to address the issues of poverty that

these families are confronting.

And so, Mr. Speaker, those are some of the other recommendations that are in the report.

I want to again sincerely thank all members who served on this committee, and I will move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member for Humboldt:

That the final report of The Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade be now concurred in.

If I may be allowed, Mr. Speaker, I want to make one more comment and that is that all the recommendations that are in the report, all the recommendations are unanimous among the committee members. There's a draft Bill in the report that is there for public discussion. Not all elements of the draft Bill have the support of all members. But all the recommendations that are in the report do, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very pleased at this point to move, seconded by the member from Humboldt, that this report be now concurred in. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed my privilege to join with all committee members of The Special Committee to Prevent the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in tabling our final report today.

And it is my privilege to address all members of this Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and the highly esteemed guests and people present today who contributed to the report; and to address the citizens of Saskatchewan, and especially, Mr. Speaker, to address the unbelievably large number of children and youth in Saskatchewan who are suffering and who have suffered sexual, physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological abuse and torment at the hands of sick and evil people who would stoop so low as to sexually use and abuse children to satisfy their own perverse appetites.

Mr. Speaker, many, many precious children in Saskatchewan — numbers of up to 600 — have been manipulated and coerced, are being intimidated and frightened beyond measure. They have been threatened, beaten, molested, and violated through the terrible slavery of child sexual abuse and exploitation that is taking place every minute of every hour of every day in this, our province of Saskatchewan.

It is, Mr. Speaker, and it has been painful to look at the vicious reality that children are being so deeply hurt and to recognize that adults with powerful positions in society have been so painfully slow to respond in helping these children.

But finally, Mr. Speaker, finally, I am gratified after five years of public pressure, five years of pleading with government to do something to stop this horrible atrocity against our children, I am heartened that a legislative committee was finally formed to do something to stop the pain.

Mr. Speaker, we can not underscore how very precious our children are. They are God's children, and they are to be valued not to be abused. Our children are not commodities to be

bought and sold and our children are not slaves. Our children are not to be violated.

Mr. Speaker, our children are hurting and the hurting must stop so that all children can once again be treated with dignity and experience the joy of life associated with being a child and enjoy the respect that should naturally come with being a child of God.

Mr. Speaker, our children cannot wait any longer. Many children are suffering from disease due to sexual abuse and exploitation. Many of them will die. Many of them have died because society has tolerated their abuse. This is truly a fall from grace. There must be no more delay.

There have been numerous studies, task forces, and committees to discuss this issue. We now all know the reasons children have been abused and exploited. The committee has identified the gaps in the system and it is time for action. Responsible adults must now take action to protect our children.

Mr. Speaker, the most compelling message heard by the Committee to Prevent the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children was that johns, pimps, and anyone who sexually abuses our children or contributes to their exploitation must face harsher penalties. And children who are victims of sexual abuse need to have holistic, comprehensive services in place to assist them in their healing journey.

In response, Mr. Speaker, the committee has put forward recommendations for governments and communities to act on in that regard. These recommendations provide the elements for a concrete, strategic, comprehensive plan to end the child sex trade in Saskatchewan.

(14:00)

The recommendations also provide a pathway for holistic, immediate, and long-term healing opportunities for children who have experienced the trauma of sexual abuse to be assisted on the road to recovery.

Mr. Speaker, it is my deepest and most sincere hope that these recommendations are acted upon immediately. The lives of Saskatchewan's children depend on it.

The committee's recommendations also include preventative measures such as education for parents, children, and society as a whole in order to alert people to the zero tolerance of this criminal activity, and change societal attitudes in order to place a high value on children's mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical health.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I wish to sincerely thank all those people who have contributed their thoughts, their wisdom, ideas, experience, and who have put forward recommendations to our committee through public hearings. And in particular I wish to thank the youth who have given heart-wrenching testimony of their own experiences and whose witness drove home the message to us that children do need help now and offenders must be punished.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I express my deep felt gratitude to the

Aboriginal communities as it was so important to have their input because, as my colleague from Saskatoon Greystone mentioned, 80 to 90 per cent of the children involved in the sex trade are Aboriginal children, children who are disadvantaged.

I thank and commend all members of the committee on their fine work. And I thank and commend the staff who worked so diligently with us for their dedicated effort.

And I do thank the media for their constant expression of support and concern and their very effective coverage, raising awareness of this horrendous issue in our province.

I thank all the people of Saskatchewan because I know they're all paying attention and they want change.

And I thank the children, once again, who came forward. And I look forward to the day when the children who do not have voices, need no longer have a voice to express their pain.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just going to make a few brief comments because I want to take this opportunity to thank all members of this all-party committee for the excellent work that they have done over the past few months.

I would also like to thank all the people who made presentations to the committee including those who were at one time involved in the child sex trade, those who came forward to tell their stories.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take a moment specifically to say a few words about one MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) who got this issue on the public agenda in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, six years ago this month, a rookie MLA entered this legislature with a mission. She was determined to talk about an issue that most people would rather ignore. Mr. Speaker, for most of us it's a lot easier not to think about it. It's easier just to pretend that the child sex trade does not exist. But it does exist. And every year it ruins the lives of hundreds of children in this province.

Mr. Speaker, six years ago this was simply an issue that nobody talked about. One MLA set out to change that and, Mr. Speaker, she succeeded through sheer will and perseverance and determination. She talked about it when she was a Liberal MLA, she talked about it when she was an independent MLA, and she continued to talk about it when she became a Saskatchewan Party MLA. Some people would say that she alone has been an all-party committee on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, for the first few years she was kind of a lone voice in the wilderness on this issue and she didn't really seem to be getting anywhere. But slowly something started to change. The public started to realize that we could not ignore this problem any longer. Other members of this legislature started to realize we could not ignore the problem because too many children

were being hurt, too many lives were being destroyed, and something had to be done.

So after five years the government created this all-party committee, and after another year of hard work we finally have the report that has just been tabled.

Mr. Speaker, I know that many people today look at our system of government and they wonder what can one MLA do. Can one MLA really make a difference? The report is proof that one MLA can.

Mr. Speaker, I am not naive enough to think that the recommendations of this report will completely cure this terrible cancer on our society. But, Mr. Speaker, if the government acts on these recommendations it will be a major step forward. I believe many children will benefit from the effort, but if even one child is saved from having their life destroyed, then it was an effort well worthwhile.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage the government to act quickly on these recommendations, and I would once again like to thank all members of the committee for their work. But I particularly want to pay tribute to the one person who put this issue on the public agenda in the first place, my colleague, the member from Humboldt.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly a guest who is seated in your gallery and I wonder if she could rise and I would point out Ms. Peggy Rubin. She is the youth coordinator for the city of Prince Albert youth outreach program.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to warmly welcome Peggy here today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, two very special guests seated in your gallery. They are my sister Sharen Munn, and her son, Craig. They come to us from Surrey, BC (British Columbia). They're here today to observe the proceedings of the House.

I would like to mention, Mr. Speaker, that Craig is a recent journalism graduate and is currently employed as a reporter with the *South Delta Leader* and he's anxiously awaiting question period.

Sharen and her family have come home to Saskatchewan to help celebrate our father's 80th birthday this weekend. I'd ask all members of the Assembly to join in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to all members of the Assembly several guests that are here to see the tabling of the special committee report. I see, Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery several members who have been active for many years in working with children who are at risk on the street.

I want to welcome Jacqui Barclay, who has been a staff person with Saskatoon Communities for Children for many years, and Sarah Ninnie who's made a major contribution in this work as one of the young people who's been very intensively involved and made a huge difference.

I want to recognize two people with Egadz who've done outstanding work in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. Don Meikle who's involved in street outreach and devotes many, many hours beyond his 40 hours a week of paid time to helping children who've been abused on the street.

Bill Thibodeau, who's also made a big contribution in this field for many years is now the executive director at Egadz. And I'm just looking around to see if there are others who have not been introduced yet, Mr. Speaker.

But as I'm searching, I want to recognize, Mr. Speaker, Roxane Schury, from the Children's Advocate office, who I see is here, and has provided us with some very good advice during the hearings.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize two people who are very dear to me. My sister's visiting from Ontario this week. And I'm very happy to have my sister, Coral, in the Speaker's gallery, and my mother, who's been a constant support throughout my political career, my mother, Trudy, is here. And I'd like all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming her.

So please join me in welcoming all these guests to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to take this opportunity to welcome all the members in the gallery, all the people in the gallery, who we know and do appreciate for their continual work and support of children on the streets. There are many, many people who have spent many, many hours and years of their lives in trying to help children off the streets.

And they deserve a great deal of commendation. These are the good people of Saskatchewan who have their heart in the right place and who truly want to see our children lead a purposeful and meaningful life.

So welcome today and thank you for attending the press conference this morning.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a young guest seated in your gallery.

Her name is Jessica Pritchard. And she's 15 years old. She's here to watch the tabling of our report with her father, Randy Pritchard.

And Jessica is very interested in this topic. And indeed I understand that she actually made a speech in her school of Walter Murray Collegiate a little while ago. And she's just finished grade 9. And she's here with her dad.

And while I'm on my feet, I'd like to thank Mr. Pritchard for his technical advice; as well as *Hansard* staff and our Clerks for all the hard work that they put in.

So please welcome Jessica and her dad.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a visitor from the Government of South Australia, seated in your gallery. Susan Ball is the project manager of the Automated Lands Administration System project at the Department of Administrative and Information Services in South Australia.

The project is designing an electronic land administration system for South Australia, and Ms. Ball is here in Saskatchewan to meet with officials of the Information Services Corporation about our LAND (Land Titles Automated Network Development Project) system.

And she is . . . sitting beside her is Rob Greenwood, vice-president of the Information Services Corporation.

I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today seated in your gallery are four members of my staff. And some of them have asked that I just call them the usual suspects.

But as well today we have joining us a new person who joined our office this summer. And it was a tough choice, we had such good applicants. But Michelle Wesaquate joined our staff this summer. And as well, I don't think she's been introduced before in the House — Leane Goldsmith, from my constituency office.

And without these people, Mr. Speaker, I guarantee you I wouldn't make it through the day, so . . . and I'm sure it's true of all our staff. So if the Assembly could join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Historic Event in Legislative Assembly

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in this Assembly to talk about the importance of last evening's historic event in which vote 45, the estimates for Economic and

Co-operative Development, were defeated.

It has clearly been the focus of the Saskatchewan Party to criticize the questionable strategy and the lack of implementation of any sustainable economic development in our province, beginning with a vote months ago on the Speech from the Throne, which contained few specifics and directions to grow Saskatchewan; to a vote against the budget, a budget that we have shown to be unsustainable; to a motion of non-confidence a few weeks back in this NDP (New Democratic Party) government's disastrous economic policies.

Mr. Speaker, these policies have eliminated 21,000 jobs from this province over the last year — the worst record since the Depression. And only yesterday, another StatsCanada report showing our province has lost 9,000 people — next to Newfoundland the worst in the country.

Mr. Speaker, these are the reasons why we voted against the Economic Development's portion of this budget.

(14:15)

Members on this side of the House have no confidence in this tired, old, arrogant government. And the people of Saskatchewan have no confidence in this tired, old, arrogant government. Mr. Speaker, the government's on record . . . it's own record on economic development to help grow Saskatchewan is disastrous. The government should do the proper and moral thing and call an immediate election.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Successes

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe some members are saying that if you do "much research" you can finally find an article optimistic about the Saskatchewan economy. Which is true. And if you did your research perhaps you may take yesterday's *Fort Qu'Appelle Times*, page 5, which reports on the grand opening of a new business in Fort Qu'Appelle.

Or if you really wanted to expand your research you could go to any magazine stand in the province, buy a copy of that fine publication *Sask Business*, and this month turn to page 11 where you'll find the following, "More good news for Saskatchewan."

The Redvers newspaper *The New Optimist* won two awards for best all around newspaper for the year 2000 from SWNA (Saskatchewan Weekly Newspaper Association). That's *The New Optimist*, Mr. Speaker.

You will read that Arne Peterson, founder of the Elk Ridge Resort by Waskesiu, won the Saskatchewan Tourism Builder Award of Excellence for his development of Elk Ridge Resort and golf course.

You will read that the credit unions and co-ops in Meadow Lake, Swift Current, Shaunavon, Melfort, and Wynyard had very profitable years for their members. Not to mention, the

completion of Unity's northwest terminal's \$4.8 million expansion, or the Birch Hills' OmniTRAX producer car facility.

Finally you can read on page 6 of the agreement reached between Battleford's Tribal Council, the SFIN, and Enbridge Pipeline for employment and education opportunities.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this massive amount of research took me all of three minutes. And I'd encourage the other members to conduct similar research.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Congratulations to all Provincial High School Graduates

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in the House today, and on behalf of all members, extend our sincere congratulations and best wishes to this year's high school graduates.

Mr. Speaker, these past few weeks represent the culmination of 12 years of hard work. Through the years, not only have these young people acquired the skills and abilities necessary to become active and responsible members of society, but they've also helped build their communities, and this is a legacy we cannot forget.

Mr. Speaker, these young people have given us their time, their energy, their enthusiasm, and their knowledge. In return it is our hope that our wisdom and our courage and knowledge has been passed on to them.

Mr. Speaker, today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. They're nearing the end of their high school education and representing not only the future of our province, but also our country.

Once again, on behalf of all the members of the House, congratulations and best wishes to this year's graduates. We hope you stay in Saskatchewan. Our province desperately needs you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

FiberLINK Technology Unveiled

Ms. Jones: — Mr. Speaker, an Innovation Place company has found a way to allow telephone companies to deliver broadband services such as high-speed Internet and video on demand to remote suburbs at a much lower cost. Critical Telecom unveiled its FiberLINK device Tuesday at a technology launch event.

Mr. Speaker, the connection to high-speed Internet is made from the home to the nearby telephone company wiring pedestal via the regular copper telephone wires coming into the house. From the pedestal, the signal is converted onto fibre optic cable for transmission to a central point up to 12 kilometres in distance.

This new technology is presently being tested by Bell Canada and being evaluated for field trials by SaskTel and TELUS. As well, Mr. Speaker, the potential market opportunity for

FiberLINK is estimated to exceed \$3 billion in North America alone.

Mr. Speaker, FiberLINK was conceived in Saskatchewan, designed by engineers trained in this province, and was completed through the hard work, creativity, and ingenuity of a Saskatchewan-based company.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote Mr. Oliver Cruder, president and CEO (chief executive officer) of Critical Telecom. He said, and I quote:

I believe that this accomplishment is a credit to the government's vision and support of technology-based companies through initiatives like the prestigious Innovation Place research park.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Oliver Cruder and his dedicated Saskatchewan team on their FiberLINK technology and wish them the best of luck in their future right here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Craik Lions Club's Cavalcade for Diabetes

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with pride that I rise in the House today to talk about the Lions Cavalcade for Diabetes, which was held this past Saturday at the regional park in Craik.

I had the opportunity to attend this important charitable event which was put on by the local Craik Lions Club and attended by Lions Club members from across Saskatchewan.

The day began with a 30-car parade which concluded at the regional park. There were over 100 people in attendance. My friend Harvey from the *Craik Weekly News* advised me that the event raised well over \$42,000.

The Lions in Saskatchewan have achieved a great success over the past decade supporting the Canadian Diabetes Association through cavalcade, providing nearly \$200,000 support for educational events, literature, support groups, and other services for Saskatchewan people who have been affected by diabetes. From 1999 to 2000 the Lions raised almost \$70,000 from the clubs throughout our province.

The Craik Lions and the people of Craik can be very proud of hosting this event and of all their past accomplishments which include the beautiful regional park and all the recreational activities that are available to local residents and travellers.

I know that Craik residents are further developing their golf course and have developed historic sites where an early sod house and barn were established over a hundred years ago.

I congratulate Mayor Ron Haugerud and his hard-working town council on the continuing efforts to develop new initiatives for the town which will ensure the future progress of their community.

I would ask all the members to join me in congratulating the

Lions of Saskatchewan for their ongoing efforts to assist the Canadian Diabetes Association.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Good News for Regina

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Don't take our word for it — here's some third party validation that this province is on the path to success.

I'd like to reference an article written by Mr. M. L. Klyne, president and chief operating officer of the Regina Regional Economic Development Authority. Mr. Klyne stated in his June 26 article in *The Leader-Post* some of the real facts about job loss and the real effect on Regina's business community. He stated and I quote:

Regina's economy is doing okay. Relatively speaking, it's doing just fine, (Mr. Speaker).

Here are some of the highlights that support Mr. Klyne's positive position. In the last five months of this year, Regina's total employment is up by almost 300 new jobs. Job growth in Regina over the next five years is expected to average nearly 2 per cent per year. That is almost 2,000 jobs per year, Mr. Speaker. Retail sales increased nearly 4 per cent. Construction of a \$20 million Saskatchewan Indian Federated College is underway, Mr. Speaker. And real personal disposal income per capita is expected to grow by 2.5 per cent in 2001.

Mr. Speaker, the list goes on and on. These highlights do not seem to represent the opposition's so-called job loss death spiral. The sky is not falling, Mr. Speaker. The government is equipped and ready for the challenges ahead, ensuring a prosperous future for all those within the borders of Saskatchewan, even if the opposition golfs more than they spend time in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

High School Rodeo Association of Saskatchewan

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Most people are not aware that the high schools in Saskatchewan have a High School Rodeo Association. The organization is recognized by the province and its schools.

The athletes have the opportunity to compete in 18 different rodeos during the course of the year. The events range from bull riding, break-away roping, team roping, pole bending, barrel racing, calf roping, steer wrestling, goat tying, cutting, bareback, saddle bronc, and rodeo queen. The athletes must have permission from their school, be attending school, and have a passing average in their studies.

Biggar Central School 2000 have a variety of students partaking in the high school rodeo. This year, there are two students who are taking part, Jordan Laventure and Christen Laventure.

Jordan took part in bull riding and finished for the season after an excellent season. Christen had a super year as well and also had great results at the Saskatchewan finals held last Friday,

Saturday, and Sunday in Shaunavon. Christen competed in the breakaway, finished second overall; goat tying, finishing third overall; cutting, third overall; and team roping, seventh.

With her great placing in both breakaway, goat tying, and cutting, Christen will be moving on to Springfield, Illinois, July 22nd to 29th, to compete in the National High School Rodeo, and to Regina to compete in the Canadian High School Rodeo, August 3rd and 5th.

We wish Christen the best of luck in the national and Canadian high school championships, and we look forward to hearing her results.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Confidence in the Government

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people have lost confidence in the NDP's ability to grow the economy.

Twenty-one thousand jobs lost in the last year. Nine thousand people moved off to other provinces. That's the NDP record, and that is a disaster.

The people have lost confidence in the NDP and now so has this Assembly. Last night the Premier could not even muster the support of his own government for his own failing economic policies.

The Premier has lost the confidence of the people of Saskatchewan. Now he has lost the confidence of the Assembly. Will he do the right thing? Will he dissolve the Assembly, and call an election?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the first thing I want to say today is welcome back, to all of the members of the opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — If . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The House will come to order.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — If I may say, Mr. Speaker, to make an observation, things are quieter in this House when they're gone. And, Mr. Speaker, they look well tanned and rested for the effort.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the final question and I'm sure we're going to have more questions to discuss issues surrounding last night and issues of Economic Development, but let me address the final question to which the Leader of the Opposition put to me — the question about calling an election.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in the last several months we've had not one but two by-elections in this province. And I'll tell you, the results of those by-elections gave very clear indication of the

mood and the view of Saskatchewan people. And what surprises me, Mr. Speaker, what surprises me in hearing a call for an election from the Leader of the Opposition, I want to quote a former House Leader of this House who said he was surprised that so many turkeys wished for Thanksgiving.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well if the Premier's confident, why doesn't he call an election? Why doesn't he call it if he's so confident?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier started off his answer by talking to himself, asking where he was last night. Mr. Speaker, the NDP . . .

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP blame other people for everything. They blame others for the job numbers. They blame others for the health crisis. Now they try to blame us for their problems last night when they can't get their members up to show for a vote on their budget.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party called the vote on Economic Development because the NDP record is a disaster — 21,000 jobs lost over the last year; 9,000 people have fled the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP has lost the confidence of the people. They have lost the confidence of this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, when is the NDP and the Premier going to stop blaming others and take responsibility for their incompetence?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — It is in my view about time the Leader of the Opposition took responsibility for his actions and the actions of that opposition.

Look at what . . . listen to the . . . Listen, Mr. Speaker, to what is incredible in this entire circumstance.

(14:30)

Subvote by subvote they voted for the budget of the Economic and Co-operative Development department. They voted for the business investment programs. They voted for the information technology office. They voted for co-operative development. They voted for Tourism Saskatchewan. They voted for the trade and exports partnership. They voted for the Opportunities Corporation. They voted for every element of this department's budget — every element.

Then at the end, what do they do? They vote against it. Mr. Speaker, an obvious political stunt to try and get a headline because they've not been able to achieve that through the course of this session, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier is spouting nonsense and verbal stunts here in the legislature, when the fact is the Premier could not get his own members out to vote last night. And now we understand he wants to call a second vote today. He's starting to sound a little bit like Al Gore. He wants to keep recounting the votes until he gets a result he likes.

Mr. Speaker, every day in this legislature — every day — the Saskatchewan Party has talked about the NDP's failing economic record. We've talked about 21,000 job losses; about 9,000 people leaving Saskatchewan. Yesterday we called a vote on their failing record and the NDP couldn't even get their own members out for a vote.

Mr. Speaker, if the NDP can't count to 27, how can they run the province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, they vote for every component, every component of the budget for the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development. They vote for every component. Then at the end of the day, they vote against the whole package, Mr. Speaker. We know what's going on here.

But I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, the consequence of what they did in this House last night. What has happened, Mr. Speaker, as a result of their political gamesmanship is that the funding now for all of these valuable programs, including Tourism Saskatchewan, including funding to the REDAs (regional economic development authority), including funding for our Trade and Export Partnership, including staff within government is now put in a difficult circumstance, Mr. Speaker.

And we have been working from early this morning to find a solution to the created problem from their political gamesmanship. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that we have a solution because we're not going to let down the people of Saskatchewan. We're not going to let down economic development in this province. We're going to do the work of government, no matter what they do over there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier is nearsighted. He's focusing only on the vote last night. But there's more than a loss of confidence expressed in the vote in the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, people are expressing their loss of confidence in this government by leaving the province. By not creating jobs in this province, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people have voted against this government thousands and thousands of times. Saskatchewan people . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. I'd ask the members to come to order.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people have absolutely no confidence in the government's ability to grow the economy. That's why people are leaving,

that's why jobs are leaving, and that's why we defeated the government last night — to drive home that point, to see the big picture.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier finally admit that his economic policies are failing? Has he realized that yet? That's what's important here, and that he has lost the confidence of the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Has the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, I wonder, realized the importance of the role of opposition. I don't think so, because in the course of this session, Mr. Speaker, have we heard from that opposition one positive or progressive idea about any aspect of this province's life, never mind economic development. Not one. Not one, Mr. Speaker.

What we witnessed last night, what we witnessed last night, was political gamesmanship and an attempt to grab some headlines. And fair enough, fair enough, Mr. Speaker. We were caught — fair enough.

But do they recognize the difficulties they have caused or have potentially caused the people in this province? Do they realize that? Or do they just go off on a two-day holiday to plan this kind of game and then, not thinking of consequences for real people, just institute the game without any thought.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the kind of opposition that any person in Saskatchewan wants to entrust with the responsibilities of government — I guarantee you that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, have you ever heard of such a pathetic list of excuses from the NDP House Leader as last night when the NDP House Leader is telling the media that there wasn't even a scheduled sitting last night of the House.

What nonsense, Mr. Speaker. Rule no. 3 says Tuesday 1:30 to 5 p.m., 7 to 10:30 p.m.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader has been elected . . .

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government House Leader doesn't even know what day he's supposed to be here.

Mr. Speaker, he's been elected since 1986 and we were voting on his department budget, Mr. Speaker, and his members couldn't even show up to vote.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Economic Development can't get

his own members to agree with his failed economic policies, why should the people of Saskatchewan put up with that incompetent minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd be pleased to respond to the House Leader on the opposition side. I want to ask him and his whip why he can't get his members to attend this session of the legislature. Why we sit in here when two and three members sit in here for estimates from the time we start till the time we adjourn.

I want to know, Mr. Speaker, what the Leader of the Opposition is going to do about his whip? That's what I want to know, because they can't put together enough to put a good opposition together. They haven't discussed health care, they haven't discussed agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, what they're good at is organizing a little sneak campaign in the Wascana Park and they come in, in the middle of the night, and oh my goodness, we have done it to the government.

Mr. Speaker, no policies, no direction, no credibility, no opposition, and never, never, never government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if you've never heard a sore loser, just read his answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Economic Development can't even count to 27. Why should we expect him to be able to turn the economy around, Mr. Speaker?

So let's go through it again: 21,000 jobs lost in the last year, thanks to the NDP; 9,000 people lost to this province because they moved away, thanks to the NDP. Those are pretty big numbers, Mr. Speaker, for a minister who can't count to 27.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — But that minister is still responsible. It's his job to grow our economy, Mr. Speaker, and he's failing miserably. Mr. Speaker, why would Saskatchewan people support this minister's economic record when he can't even get his cabinet colleagues to support him, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well you know what, Mr. Speaker, second chance — we're going to give the opposition a second chance because we have asked for a ruling on an emergency debate that would call their actions into question. And I'll tell you, we'll see who will win that vote. We'll see who will win that vote.

And I'll tell you what — I tell you what — I'm challenging the House Leader to lead his caucus into supporting this resolution

giving us leave to debate this resolution today and then to vote on it.

Now I'm going to ask the Leader of the Opposition if he'll instruct his House Leader to ensure that they support leave so that we can discuss this resolution this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before they're good at some things but they're not good at opposition. They're not good at putting forward thoughts and ideas as to how to move this economy around, they haven't seen an idea that they didn't like if it was negative and that's why the people don't trust them. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that's why they've taken a dip of 10 points in the public opinion poll since last fall and they're continuing to spiral downhill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is typical NDP policy. Simply rewrite history in their own vein, Mr. Speaker. Not once in 10 years has this government taken responsibility for its failed record.

Health system is a disaster and they blame everybody else; we're losing thousands of jobs and they blame somebody else; we're losing thousands of people out of this province, they blame somebody else; and now they can't even count to 27 and they try to blame that on the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are tired of this incompetent and bumbling government. They can't manage the economy; they can't manage the health system or highways; and now they can't even manage their own caucus, Mr. Speaker.

The people of Saskatchewan no longer believe the NDP are capable of managing this province, Mr. Speaker, since they can't even manage themselves. Mr. Speaker, will this minister resign?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, let me answer that very clearly. This minister will not resign because I believe . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I want to tell you why, Mr. Speaker. You know this opposition has been trotting out half-truths, quarter-truths. They know this economy has grown year over year with respect to GDP (gross domestic product). And you know what GDP is, Mr. Speaker? It's the money that this province has in its pocket to spend on consumer goods. That's happened for 10 years under this administration.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to give you a little . . . numbers from last year. I'll refresh the member's memory. Department store sales up 8.2 per cent; building permits up 33 per cent; new motor vehicle sales up 4.9 per cent; oil production up 3 per cent; mineral production up 15 per cent; new business incorporations up 7 per cent; value of . . .

The Speaker: — . . . time has elapsed.

Farm Safety Net Program

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While, Mr. Speaker, while the minister may not resign, a lot of people in this House and probably across this province are wondering whether this Premier will fire him.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — My question is for the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one excuse the NDP, another one of the excuses they are using for their dismal performance last night in the legislature was because the Minister of Agriculture is attending an Agriculture ministers' meeting in Whitehorse. My response to that is well, finally that minister will do something for . . . (inaudible) . . . for the farmers in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Because, Mr. Speaker, that was not the government, this is not the government that was at the table when AIDA (Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance) was put in place. You forgot to get around to getting to that meeting. They walked away from the table when AIDA was being revamped and then signed up for it anyway. And they remained silent when CFIP (Canadian Farm Income Program) was being discussed and implemented and the farm families in this province wound up with nothing once again.

My question to the Premier is the following, Mr. Speaker: what exactly are the details of any farm income safety net program that your minister, the Minister of Agriculture, is taking to the Agriculture ministers' meeting in Whitehorse?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Here exactly, Mr. Speaker, is of what we speak. While our Minister of Agriculture is speaking for Saskatchewan farm families at the Agriculture meeting in Yukon, that member from Kindersley and all his colleagues are sneaking around playing golf and planning political shenanigans in this House.

How many questions, Mr. Speaker, in this session have we had from that member or that leader on the subject of agriculture? Well I'll tell you it's very few, Mr. Speaker.

What happened, Mr. Speaker, a year ago when we joined together in an effort for all-party unanimity to go to Ottawa to work with the federal government and with other provinces? Who went south on us? That group over there, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture is in the Yukon. He is speaking on behalf of Saskatchewan farm families. He's talking about long-term safety net programs. He's talking about the need for drought assistance in this year. He is talking about things that matter to people, unlike the group of men and women across the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:45)

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is very interesting. The Premier said he was going to go to the wall for farm families in this province and what did the Minister of Agriculture say just before he left for those meetings. He said, we are giving up any idea, any view that the federal government should come forward with any additional assistance. So while the Premier is saying one thing, his Agriculture minister is saying exactly the opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — And while we're at it, while we're at it, Mr. Speaker, Roy Romanow when he was the minister . . . when he was the Leader of the Opposition said in this Assembly, the measure of a Premier is his ability to go to Ottawa and bring back assistance, bring back cash when there is a need. By any measure — by any measure — Mr. Speaker, this Premier is a miserable failure.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Will the Premier of this province lay out for us today exactly what concrete proposals the Minister of Agriculture has taken on behalf of Saskatchewan farm families to the meetings in Whitehorse?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the rantings of the member opposite do not assist the farm families of Saskatchewan, I guarantee you that. The hollering on the benches of the opposition does not assist the farm families of Saskatchewan. The hiding in the bushes and sneaking about at night do not help the farm families of Saskatchewan.

Our Minister of Agriculture is doing the work of this legislature in the Yukon, drawing to the attention not just of other provinces, but of the nation, the need of farm families — and not just in Saskatchewan, but across the country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're talking about long-term farm safety net programs. We're talking about the need this year around some drought assistance. We're talking about transportation issues.

Now it's interesting that the member from Kindersley, the major supporter of Mr. Stockwell Day, gets up and asks agriculture questions in this House. So who was it, Mr. Speaker, who was it that said there's not to be any further support for family farmers in Saskatchewan, or Canada? The Leader of the Alliance Party, their federal cousin, that's who.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Legislation to Protect Children in the Sex Trade

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, today the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade released its report.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a long process on an issue that I personally believe is of utmost importance to the children, and indeed all people of this province.

The committee has been very thorough in its research, and this report reflects the depth of our concern our committee shares as a result of what we have heard throughout this process. The report makes several recommendations that we believe will crack down on the exploitation of children through the sex trade.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister announce in this House today what day this session they will introduce legislation that follows through on these recommendations, particularly recommendation no. 3 referring to the seizure of vehicles modelled on Manitoba's legislation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for her question and focusing attention on the needs of children in the province of Saskatchewan. I want to thank her colleagues for allowing her the time to do so in question period, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are united in our belief that we should seek to eliminate the involvement of children in the sex trade in Saskatchewan. How we do that will be a matter of debate as obviously the report points out.

We can say to the Legislative Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan that now that we have the recommendations, that we seek to move on those recommendations as quickly as possible, even within hours, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, the special committee held wide-ranging consultations with people from Saskatchewan and with people from other provinces who in some way have been affected by the exploitation and abuse of children in the sex trade.

Their stories are heart-wrenching. Many spoke of abuse, of violence, of poverty, and of loss. And most still struggle with issues in their lives today as a result of their experiences. The recommendations in this report, Mr. Speaker, are based on the committee's belief that the cost of allowing this exploitation to continue are too great. The province must act now.

Mr. Speaker, if this government survives their confidence motion today then they must display the leadership and commit to the people of Saskatchewan. Stand by their word to immediately implement legislation as a result of the committee's report.

Will this government do that, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question.

I would point out to the member and the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that our approach over the course of the last four

years has been to work with community partners, in communities in Saskatchewan, to provide those community partners with the resources and the legislative tools that they need to deal with the issues in their communities.

We are encouraged by some of the success we are seeing in some communities, notably Prince Albert, where we get reports that there are far fewer children on the streets engaged in this type of activity, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, additionally as a government, we have also taken the point of view that we need to deal with the root causes that the committee spoke about and therefore we have focused on an anti-poverty strategy in the province of Saskatchewan with no thanks to the members opposite.

We have focused on programs such as Kids First so that kids can grow up in healthy families, Mr. Speaker. We seek to continue to do that and to move on other recommendations of this committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Priority of Debate

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, I would like to make a statement.

Today at 9:35 a.m. the Office of the Clerk received a request for priority of debate pursuant to rule 19 from the Government House Leader and subsequently notification to the Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, Leader of the Third Party was made.

In reviewing their request for priority of debate, I find that the Government House Leader has made sufficient case for priority of debate and that the requirements of rules 19(5) and 19(6) are met.

I therefore call upon the Government House Leader to now proceed to make his remarks and to put his priority of debate motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIORITY OF DEBATE

Confidence in the Government

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to indicate on the outset that I intend to move at the end of my remarks a motion seconded by the member from Saskatoon Northwest:

That the Assembly does not regard the vote of the Committee of Finance on June 26 in connection with estimates for the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development as a vote of non-confidence in the coalition government; and further that this Assembly express its confidence in the coalition government and urges the government to continue to provide progressive, effective government for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Now, Mr. Speaker, in my remarks, I would like to give a bit of a history with respect to this session of the legislature and the involvement of members.

We've gone through a number of votes, we've gone through days of question period, I believe this is day 67 if I'm right. And I want to say — 66, I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I was a day ahead of myself — and I want to say, Mr. Speaker, it's been some very interesting debate. And I think there have been some issues put forth that the people of Saskatchewan wanted discussed.

I think there might have been more time spent on health care. And I would have hoped that the opposition members would have willingly joined in hearing the committee that was established during this session to hear the people of Saskatchewan as it relates to health care in our province and the future of health care. But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I was somewhat disappointed that they first of all balked and refused to join the committee.

And the member from Kindersley today — I found it quite interesting — is up asking a question on agriculture, which was another area that was sadly deficient with respect to discussion in the legislature, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, our Minister of Agriculture is busied himself with the other Ministers of Agriculture and working on some policies, some programs in urging the federal government to ensure that the Saskatchewan economy is aided by our national government — which is what it should be.

We're the largest agriculture-producing province in Canada and we are facing some severe pressure from subsidies outside of this province.

And so, Mr. Speaker, that member is where he rightly should be, meeting with those ministers in terms of putting forward the Saskatchewan position.

Mr. Speaker, we went through a process whereby we introduced the budget that continued tax reduction that introduced a 25 per cent decrease in small business tax and an increase in the threshold by, from \$200,000 to \$300,000. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of work done.

There are 59/60 Bills before this legislature which is a modest workload. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that most of those Bills are now either in adjourned debates or very close to it.

And so I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that as we wind the session down, it's not uncommon to take a day like yesterday — which is normally a day for private members to put forth resolutions and debate motions and to put their personal positions and government's positions forward — and as the session draws to a conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we turn that to government business which means much more pressure on ministers who have to be here for debates and for putting their Bills and shepherding their Bills through the Legislative Assembly.

The hours become longer. But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that

it puts a lot of pressure on all of us.

Normally opposition members will be in their places — the vast majority of them. But they do have much more freedom, of course, than government members, ministers who do a job outside of this legislature as well as looking after their constituencies.

An Hon. Member: — And we don't?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Oh the member says they don't. Well you know what? I can under . . .

The Speaker: — I just want to invite the minister to continue making his remarks to the Chair.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I can understand why that member says they don't, because he's never been on this side of the House to experience and he never will be.

Mr. Speaker, what they know is negative. What they know is negative. They understand negative very, very well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, but you know what they don't understand? They don't understand governance. They don't understand the importance of this place.

They don't understand that the people whose departments are hired by this place depend on this process so that they can feed their families and pay their mortgages and pay their car payments. And they don't understand that operations like second parties . . .

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

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, with leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to members of this Assembly, I notice we have a group of students from the Grenfell High School who have joined us this afternoon.

Actually, we have 28 grade 8 students from Grenfell High. They're joined by their teachers, Mr. Neil Theisen, Mrs. Valerie Brennan, Mrs. Cheryl Schoenroth, and Mr. Barney Stopanski, and by chaperones Mr. Cameron Bonk and Mrs. Deanna Horn.

Mr. Speaker, we certainly want to extend a special invitation to the students who have joined us this afternoon and I look forward to meeting them in a few minutes for pictures and a bit of a discussion.

I would like to invite the members or ask the members to join me in welcoming these students today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIORITY OF DEBATE

Confidence in the Government (continued)

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much. And I want to welcome our guests as well to the legislature, Mr. Speaker.

I intend to keep my remarks brief because I think this motion speaks for itself. And I am totally convinced, as I was yesterday, that in this legislature there would be the ability to vote a motion of confidence. And I am convinced as well that this government will win that motion.

But I tell you, what I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is last night I thought was a shameful display because it . . . And I want to tell you why, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, not because we lost the vote. Not because of that. Because that's some difficulty for us and we understand that and perhaps we shouldn't have.

But you know what? It showed a lack of understanding of the impact of putting politics before governance and before doing your job and your role as a member of the legislature.

(15:00)

Now, Mr. Speaker, I said we have members out doing their jobs outside of this legislature, and they may not understand that because they only understand one thing, and whether it's in their constituency or whether it's in this building, it's politics.

It's got nothing to do with developing this economy. It's got nothing to do, what they do, with furthering the living standards of the people of this province. It has nothing to do with that, Mr. Speaker — nothing to do with that.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, they're more interested in gamesmanship. We're interested in governing; we're interested in governance.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, their staff was trotting around the building today, wondering how we could get out of this circumstance where they took 60-some-million dollars out of the hands of third parties, REDAs, TISASK (Tourism Industry Association of Saskatchewan). I can go through the list but I won't. And 200 families depended on that allocation, which is part of the budget, to support their families.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to dwell on this because I think, I think their actions speak for themselves. To sneak around, to sneak around, cowering around the Legislative Building, and then in the dark of night, at 10 after 10, coming out, coming out, Mr. Speaker — coming out, Mr. Speaker — out of the dark as it were, they snuck around the corner and down the corridor and they come through the back door of the legislature and they say, you know, by golly, I think we might get more votes tonight than they did.

They go through a whole process of voting on subvotes on the same department that they voted for the main vote that would give the allocation to run the department. And they won, and whoop-de-do, Mr. Speaker, one of them says gee, I don't think it's a vote of confidence, but we sure tricked them and we sure

made our point. And you know, Mr. Speaker, they did.

But I tell you what — there are no tricks today because there are two things I'm asking them to do. This motion we're putting forward, they should all vote against it; we will all vote for it and we'll win. And I want to say that later this day I'm challenging them as well to allow for a motion to be put forward here that would ask us to return to those same votes so that we can ensure that the people who work in that department and who are funded by those programs can do the work that they're set out to do.

STEP (Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Inc.) is an example, the Trade and Export Partnership. Fifty million dollars a day of exports from this province and they are largely responsible for it, and they would take that funding away with their actions.

TISASK, goodness sakes, Mr. Speaker, a \$1.1 billion industry in this province, and they would take away the opportunity for those people to do their work.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is that this is a government that understands nothing but this, a raw, unbridled desire — desire, Mr. Speaker — for power. It's nothing more and it's nothing less.

They don't understand the nature of this province and the fact that people understand that we've got a crisis in agriculture. Mr. Speaker, they don't understand the impact that that has on this economy. And as we try to grow this economy and create a good place for people to raise their families and to invest in their businesses, they're out creating an environment, by people who understand economics, an environment where people are afraid to invest in. That's them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you who's on the other side of that coin — this government. And I want to tell you who else is supporting us — the business community. And I want to tell you who else is supporting us — the men and women who have small businesses in this province, of which I am one, Mr. Speaker, because they know that you've got to have consumer confidence in order to grow your growth.

And they don't want to hear this and I know that. And they can holler from their seats all they want. But I tell you what, Mr. Speaker, the facts are the facts and their actions are very clear. They've very transparent — selfish, political motives, Mr. Speaker, and that's all it's about.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Northwest:

That this Assembly does not regard the vote in the Committee of Finance on June 26, 2001 in connection with the estimates for the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development as a vote of non-confidence in the coalition government; and further that this Assembly express its confidence in the coalition government and urges the government to continue to provide progressive, effective government for the people of Saskatchewan.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

We'll vote and we'll see who wins.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today and second the motion with regard to confidence in this government. And I see this as confidence from the people of Saskatchewan as well as this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

When we talk about the people of Saskatchewan and what we have heard over the past three or four months with regard to this coalition government and the positives with regard to our budget, they are hallmarks throughout the land — urban and rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

When we talk about, for example, our approach to health care, no one expected that we would be increasing our health care budget by \$200 million this year — no one expected it.

No one expected that we would cover 100 per cent of the deficits in health boards but we did that by special warrant, Mr. Speaker. We covered their deficits and we added 200 million to health care. And you know what the people of Saskatchewan said? They said, this government is investing in health care. This government knows the problems.

And now we have a Fyke report and an all-party committee listening on how we can make it better in the province of Saskatchewan. This government listens to the people; it has the confidence of the people, Mr. Speaker.

And when we talk about what their program would have been — the members opposite — who we've noticed the last few days, during the day there has been a dire dearth of presence on that side. In fact we can hear the echoes over there sometimes, Mr. Speaker.

Because you know what? They're off doing other things, plotting and strategizing so that they can come en masse at 10 o'clock in the evening to defeat a vote on estimates that are important to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. They need those dollars; they rely on those dollars to do the good work that they do for the people in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — So when we talk about our budget and the Throne Speech and the budget speech, and we talk about protocol and parliamentary tradition, we all know, everyone, all the members recognize that there are two occasions where a government can be defeated.

And it can be defeated on the Throne Speech and it can be defeated on the budget speech. And guess what, Mr. Speaker? Both of those speeches are followed by a week of debate by the full Assembly and then there's a vote. There's no scurrying into committees to pull fast ones on the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. It is full debate for an entire week. It is full debate for an entire week, Mr. Speaker. There's no shenanigans there, Mr. Speaker.

And when we talk about committees and we talk about votes and subvotes. We've all seen the estimates here. We've all seen the 60 Bills that have come forward, Mr. Speaker. And there are sometimes 60 clauses and 60 votes. There are literally thousands of votes in this Assembly, and every one of them except one of these shenanigans has been passed by this government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — And the members opposite . . . and the members opposite talk about what they would have done if they would have formed government. But we know what their platform says, Mr. Speaker. We know the way . . . *The Way Up*, what it talks about, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm just going to talk a little bit about agriculture, because there was some questions on agriculture. And this was the platform on agriculture that all of the members opposite in their collective wisdom put forward, Mr. Speaker. And guess what? It amounted to zero. They do not have anything in their platform other than lobby the federal government; demand the federal Liberal government do this. And guess what? They provide no provincial initiatives in agriculture.

And I had the opportunity . . . I had the opportunity to participate in the trek to Ottawa, when we went to Ottawa to talk to the federal government about providing subsidies . . . about how our producers were disadvantaged in this province because of European economic union policies and American subsidies.

And we went to Ottawa and I had a chance to talk to the then Reform Party Leader, Preston Manning. I also had an opportunity to talk to the Prime Minister at that time about the issues on agriculture.

And you know what? Mr. Hermanson was there, and he couldn't get . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would remind the member that . . . Order. I would remind the member that in our debates we are not to refer to any sitting members by their first or second names, but to refer to them by their title or by their riding.

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — The Leader of the Opposition went on that trek as well as the member from Kindersley. And you know what? They weren't even . . . they couldn't even get a meeting with the Prime Minister.

They wanted to talk about what they would do for producers in this province and they couldn't even get a connection with the federal Liberal government, not one connection. And they talk about how they would lobby the federal Liberal government, and demand from the federal Liberal government.

Well the fact of the matter is that they can lobby and demand all they want. They would not get a single dime. They would not get a single recognition from those federal Liberals in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, when we talk about what this provincial

government is doing for agriculture in this province, Mr. Speaker, let me just talk, let me just talk a little bit about what we're doing.

We still have in this province a clause known as a 331(1)(q). You know what that does? That exempts farm buildings from assessment on property tax, Mr. Speaker. And do you know that this year, we dropped the assessment from 70 per cent on cultivated land to 55 per cent and pasture land remains at 50 per cent.

And again this year, we have full exposure to the 25 per cent rebate on education property tax on farmland, Mr. Speaker. And not only that but we've extended the date for producers to apply to the end of February 2002.

We have completely eliminated farm fuel taxes in this province, Mr. Speaker. We have full participation in CFIP. We have full participation in CSAP (Canada-Saskatchewan Adjustment Program) too. And we have full implementation of grants in lieu this year.

And as a property class compared to commercial, industrial, compared to business and residential, ag land provides the least amount of tax levy based on its assessment than any other jurisdiction.

That's what we're doing for agriculture in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melnychuk: — And I remind, I remind the members opposite in their platform — their four or five clauses — not one, not one mention of subsidies. And when their leader, their Leader of the Opposition was in Ottawa and he sat on the ag committee, he said, we don't support subsidies for producers. We want to eliminate all subsidies. And they sit there all session, Mr. Speaker, and cry give more — more subsidies, more subsidies. And we give all that we could. We gave over 300 million in our Ag budget this year, Mr. Speaker. The budget they voted against, Mr. Speaker.

And let's just talk a little bit about education now, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about education . . . let's just talk a little bit about education and what people are saying about education, Mr. Speaker. You know when we look at what the budget did for education this year, it was the largest increase on the foundation operating grant in 15 years, Mr. Speaker.

And you know what people have been saying about our budget this year, Mr. Speaker? They have been saying positive things all across the piece, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about, for example, some, some of the things that school divisions have been saying, let me just give you an example here.

(15:15)

Wayne Steen, chairman of the Sask Rivers School Board, gave the province an A for its budget, Mr. Speaker.

Cindy Gee, the chairwoman of the Prince Albert Catholic School Board, who was so pleased with the 2001 budget she

gave it an A as well, Mr. Speaker. Not only that, she wrote me a personal letter thanking me specifically for the budget allocations as the best in 15 years.

And what did the School Trustees Association say? They represent all of the school boards in the province of Saskatchewan. They gave it an A and said children benefit from budget from this coalition government, Mr. Speaker.

And when we look at . . . we look at what the Teachers' Federation said. You know what the Teachers' Federation say? Province's teachers applaud education spending in budget and they gave it an A as well.

And the members opposite voted against that budget, Mr. Speaker. They voted against it, Mr. Speaker.

So let's talk a little bit about what the members opposite would have done for education, Mr. Speaker. And you know it really, it really troubles me to know that the members opposite — some of them were former Liberals who talked in glowing terms about what they would do for education in this province — but when it came down to what they did in their platform, what was their influence in the platform of the Sask Party? Zero, Mr. Speaker.

Because when they talked about education, what did they say? We would freeze spending on K to 12 education — we would freeze the spending — so there wouldn't be any money.

And guess what else they said? They said that we would be looking at privatizing our education system by introducing independent schools. So freeze and privatize; that's what they're talking about, Mr. Speaker.

Now we all know that their little ploy last night was basically designed to drum up some activities for a party that is falling like a stone in the polls, Mr. Speaker. We all know, we all know that recent polling, recent polling has shown that the coalition government is some 20 percentage points ahead of those members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

And we also know, we also know that their leader . . . We also know, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party, the hon. member from Rosetown, is also trailing in his party's support, his popularity, by some 7 percentage points. So we have a situation where not only do we have a party that's dropping in the polls, but the party leader is dropping even faster, Mr. Speaker.

So you can see why they would want to develop shenanigans, why they would want to create this havoc at 10 o'clock at night, Mr. Speaker, why they would want to vote against Economic Development, Mr. Speaker — because they know full well that they needed to do something drastic to prop up their failing support in the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And before I, before I make some closing remarks, Mr. Speaker, let me just remind the members opposite that many times in this Assembly and many times out in the public those members opposite have stated that small business creates jobs in the province of Saskatchewan. And now they say to the government well, we're going to defeat your economic plan

because, you know, it's just not doing the job, even though they've recognized that small business . . . but what was actually, what actually was those budget estimates? What were they talking about there?

When they voted against the estimates in Economic Development, they were voting against regional economic development authorities; that means that all REDA funding, many in their own communities, would have been cancelled, Mr. Speaker.

Tourism Saskatchewan would have had no funding, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership would not be able to operate, Mr. Speaker, and the synchrotron project which is so important to research. In fact, it was here at the University of Saskatchewan this morning where the president talked about the importance of the synchrotron. Many of these projects would not proceed, Mr. Speaker.

And when we talk about Western Economic Partnership agreements, when we talk about the Duck Lake Interpretive Centre, none of these would proceed without that needed money, Mr. Speaker. And the Small Business Loans Association would not receive funding. The neighbourhood development organizations would not receive funding and would have to be shut down.

And new projects would have to be put on hold, like the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order. I've asked the members to just calm down a little bit so that we can hear the speakers one at a time. We have the whole afternoon.

Hon. Mr. Melnychuk: — And, Mr. Speaker, many valuable projects would have needed to have been put on hold; projects like the NATO flight training facility in Moose Jaw, the Staples Call Centre in Regina, and the Alberta garment manufacturing expansion in Saskatoon. All of these benefit from that important vote.

So in terms of their political strategy, I think everyone recognizes now that they've bombed on their strategy, Mr. Speaker, because it was the wrong time to defeat an estimate.

If you want to play shenanigans . . . and I recognize that the federal Liberal government had a vote that was defeated some two months ago, on a minor issue. Sure the opposition parties had a chance to make a point, you know, to embarrass the government, etc., but they did not choose valuable estimates, valuable dollars that help the people of Saskatchewan to make their shameless point, Mr. Speaker.

And I think the members opposite should be embarrassed by their actions and I will be supporting this government in its confidence because we know the people of Saskatchewan support this coalition government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think what we just witnessed in the last few seconds in the House was the government members accepting the latest NDP recruit, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Northwest has clearly aligned every one of his duck in line with the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the vote last night was about democracy. It was about the exercise of democracy in this legislature and how democracy is exemplified across the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in 1999 we held a vote in this province to make a determination as to who would be the government. Well, Mr. Speaker, the popular vote in the 1999 provincial election was in favour, by a greater percentage, for the Saskatchewan Party. But, Mr. Speaker . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — But, Mr. Speaker, because of the way our system is designed, because of the way our system is designed, Mr. Speaker, the government members won more seats. They won half of the seats, Mr. Speaker. The Liberals won three seats, Mr. Speaker.

Even though the members of the Saskatchewan Party had won a greater popular vote, Mr. Speaker, we recognized that democracy has to be observed, Mr. Speaker, and that under our system it's not the number of popular votes you get but the number of members that you elect that makes you the government, Mr. Speaker, or makes you the opposition, or makes you an independent in the House.

Well, Mr. Speaker, last night's vote was also about democracy. It was about those members, Mr. Speaker, that were elected in 1999 exercising their rights on behalf of their constituents, Mr. Speaker. And last night the members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, voted against a government proposal in their budget, the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development.

Mr. Speaker, that vote last night was as much an exercise in democracy as was the 1999 vote.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Now the government members, Mr. Speaker, want to say, oh no, we can't possibly accept the vote of the people, Mr. Speaker. The rules of democracy must be suspended because we lost.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you didn't hear the . . .

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, you didn't hear the members of the Saskatchewan Party saying, oh no, we have to have a new election because we actually won the vote. No, Mr. Speaker, we recognized that under our rules, Mr. Speaker, that the government had won half of the seats and the Liberals had

won three of the seats and they formed a coalition.

We did not contest that, Mr. Speaker. We accepted that. Just as, Mr. Speaker, it's incumbent on this House to accept last night's vote that the people have no confidence in this government's ability to provide economic development in this province. And the vote, Mr. Speaker, should stand as it was cast.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, if I look up the rules here in Beauchesne's dealing with those very kind of things, rule no. 558 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, not a copy of the constitution, a copy of Beauchesne's, Mr. Speaker, No. 6. And it says:

Decisions of the House

(1) An old rule of Parliament reads: "That a question being once made and carried in the affirmative or (the) negative, cannot be questioned again but must stand as the judgment of the House."

Mr. Speaker, rule 558 says that if you hold a vote in the House, the decision being made is final. You don't get to go back and say, let's do the best two out of three, Mr. Speaker. You only get one vote.

Mr. Speaker, listening to the Government House Leader today, he certainly seems like he wants to rewrite the history of last night. He wants to go back and say no, that vote never happened, let's do it all over again; maybe this time I can get it right.

Well, Mr. Speaker, he couldn't get it right last night. He couldn't count; his whip couldn't count; his cabinet ministers weren't prepared to support him; even his Premier wasn't here to support him, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll withdraw that.

Mr. Speaker, a number of the cabinet ministers were not prepared to vote and support that particular motion. Mr. Speaker, clearly they have no confidence in the Minister of Economic Development. Mr. Speaker, looking at the reactions from the other side, I suspect very strongly that they don't have any confidence in the leadership in its entirety, over on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

One of the items though, Mr. Speaker, that we have seen as the testimonial to the NDP government for the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker, is their inability to accept any responsibility. It doesn't matter how minute or how grand it may be, they simply cannot psychologically, pathologically, cannot accept any responsibility.

(15:30)

Mr. Speaker, last night the events that occurred rest solely on the government side. We have held many votes in this House over this session. We have held a significant number of recorded votes, Mr. Speaker. Every other vote, the government has maintained their numbers. And yes, Mr. Speaker, we're heading towards the end of session, we're heading into summer. And I understand why the government members can't keep . . . the government can't keep their members in the House. For one reason or another, they wish to disappear.

The Premier says last night when questioned, well my Agriculture minister was in the Yukon. My Labour minister was in Saskatoon. Well, Mr. Speaker, what I have to say is that has to be the fastest Labour minister going. Because he was in Saskatoon, and voted. Now otherwise . . . otherwise, Mr. Speaker, there's two of them, or there's a Labour minister we don't know about, but the minister for Labour was here and did vote, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know why the Premier said well one of the reasons we lost the vote was because the Labour minister was in Saskatoon. Obviously the House Leader and the whip aren't keeping the Premier informed on what's going on. Although perhaps they don't talk to the Premier at all, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot of whining from the government members about who is in and who is out of the House. Well, Mr. Speaker, in the 10 years that I have been here, unfortunately sitting on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, I have watched the government members come and go a lot. And most of the time it's go, Mr. Speaker. Very, very few of the government members over the last 10 years have remained in the House for its entire duration each day, Mr. Speaker.

They're here when the votes happen. They're here in such numbers as to ensure that they can win the votes, Mr. Speaker. Last night they even failed in that.

You know the Government House Leader talked about in the dark of the night, Mr. Speaker. Well in the dark of last night, his members crawled away and didn't vote, Mr. Speaker.

The only interest that the Government House Leader and the minister for Education have, Mr. Speaker, is not in fairness, is not in democracy, is not in governing well, Mr. Speaker. Their only interest and their only exercise that this motion has, and the future motions they will bring forward dealing with this issue, Mr. Speaker, is to retain power. Nothing else. The whole exercise, Mr. Speaker, is about retaining power.

That's why the coalition occurred. That's why the Government House Leader was in such a tizzy today, because his power is being threatened, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this House voted no confidence last night in this government. The public, Mr. Speaker, voted no confidence in that party in the last general election. Mr. Speaker, polling shows that the people have no confidence in this government. It's time, Mr. Speaker, for this government to resign; it's time for the Lieutenant Governor to issue a writ of election.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to enter into this debate.

And, Mr. Speaker, let me say right upfront that what we're dealing with, obviously, to state the obvious, is a motion of confidence in the Government of Saskatchewan. And let me state without any qualification whatsoever, Mr. Speaker, that I

am proud to take my place in this House today and say that I stand firm in confidence in the performance and the plans and the execution of those plans of the Government of Saskatchewan and I will be voting for this motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the words of the hon. member opposite when he talked about the principles of democracy. And that's what this all about, Mr. Speaker. This is all about democracy.

And what we have is some of the cut and thrust and the parry that goes on in the House as we engage in the combat for power, as the hon. member refers to. It's not a negative thing, Mr. Speaker, to seek power. That's what draws the hon. members to this place is to have combat, to battle with words . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . But not bullets. Words but not bullets, Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague from opposite points out.

But I listened with interest, Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member opposite takes his place and he talks about democracy. And what is the first thing that is on his mind, Mr. Speaker? He's not gotten over it yet. He goes straight back to the election of 1999 and he claims that there was some kind of ethical right to govern on that side of the House when, as a matter of fact, you put together the percentage of representatives . . . representation of the vote on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, there was a clear majority of percentage of vote, a clear majority of the House in terms of numbers of seats.

And I recall their words, I recall their words when we got on this subject the first time we came back here, Mr. Speaker, when they shouted across that the NDP had a near-death experience, they said.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I said then and I say again, I was in my home city back this morning and, Mr. Speaker, those I talked to, they are afraid. They wanted me to get back to this place today to vote, as I will, because, Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest fears of the people of Saskatchewan is that that party had a near-life experience. And that will not happen, Mr. Speaker. That will not happen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Now, Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member accurately . . . what the hon. member accurately captures, he accurately captures that this is a combative place, it is a place of open debate, and so it should be. So it should be.

But at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, we are all charged — no matter which side of the House and what party we come from — surely we are charged to take those responsibilities that have been dedicated to us as a result of winning an election in our home constituency to take this exercise of democracy and to use it responsibly. Surely, surely that is the highest of all ethic, Mr. Speaker, when we use our right to act in this House, to carry out our right to speak and to vote. And that, Mr. Speaker, to me is the essence of what this debate is all about.

Because, Mr. Speaker, when I look at what's going on, what we

have here is a conflict, a conflict between the right to exercise in games of democracy and the responsibility to govern. And that's what's going on. That's what this is all about. That's the essence of it here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to make a comment before addressing that point particularly, to go back to a point that the hon. member raises regarding the procedures of the House. And the hon. member accurately — accurately — refers to the precedent set in democratic conduct that a decision of the House taken cannot be reconsidered. Point well made. Point well taken.

But I point out, Mr. Speaker, that the issue before us comes about as a result of a decision made by committee of the House and now we come today to the House itself. And what we are dealing with, as we stand in our places, is the importance of the supremacy of the Legislative Assembly. The importance of the supremacy of the Legislative Assembly and the obligation of this Assembly having been challenged in committee, a creature of this Assembly, having been challenged in the committee.

The hon. member says that the committee motion . . . vote last night indicated a lack of confidence in the government and that the Lieutenant Governor should call an election. We heard the same theme being repeated by the Leader of the Opposition earlier today in question period. Nothing could be further from the truth.

What we saw, we saw was a result of a vote and I'll come to that. A significant result but, Mr. Speaker, not by any stretch of the imagination an indication of the confidence of this House and the government. That's what we're doing right now. Here we are, in the House, exercising the supremacy of the House and the conduct of our democratic responsibilities.

So the hon. member says you can't revisit the question in the House. Mr. Speaker, the decision was not . . . the question to which he refers was not made in the House. It was made in committee. And the House has the authority to receive the advice provided to it through its committee — Committee of Finance in this case — and then to do as it deems appropriate, carrying out the democratic responsibilities to conduct the affairs of government in the interest of the people who sent us, the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And that's what this is all about.

So he says there's no confidence in the House. I don't agree. And I'm here to make that point and at the end of the debate we'll decide. The House will decide whether it has confidence in the Government of Saskatchewan or not.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's a long-standing principle in parliamentary democracy that the Assembly must have the right to indicate its confidence in the Government of Saskatchewan, and that's what we're doing here right now today.

Last night we had . . . we had an experience. Let's just refer to that for a moment, Mr. Speaker. Last night a vote was taken and the opposition won the vote. It's clear; it's on the record. They won the vote.

Mr. Speaker, I point out when I look at significant votes that

have been taken at recent times, if we want to take a measurement of the will of the people, then we can compare two votes taken last night in committee, won by the opposition, and compare that to two votes taken in recent months in the constituency of Elphinstone and Riversdale, won by the will of the people by the Government of Saskatchewan.

It's another expression, Mr. Speaker, another expression of democratic decision making — both legitimate, both legitimate. So I ask . . . we all have to ask ourselves: which vote, which vote most accurately reflects the will of the people of Saskatchewan?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I say today, I say today it is all about . . . it is all about putting together and comparing the right to play political games in the pursuit of power, the right to carry out games with the right and the responsibility to govern.

And, Mr. Speaker, we heard the . . . we heard the references of the media; their observations about the attendance of the members in the House over the last couple of days, apparently, Mr. Speaker, I don't know, only they will know, apparently setting up a situation to engage in trickery — in trickery. To establish a circumstance which would make it possible to win a vote. Stunts; there it is.

Now what were they doing, Mr. Speaker? The media have observed, the media have observed that there was a whole lot of space between the seats that were being occupied over on the other side over the last couple of days. And what were they up to?

I do not know, Mr. Speaker, but I would speculate that there may be some opposite who would find inspirational the words of Adlai Stevenson who said this. He said:

Golf is a fine relief from the tensions of office but we are a little tired of holding the bag.

Mr. Speaker, they may find that just a tad inspirational.

But when we look at what happened here last night, Mr. Speaker, and we follow this through, we follow this through. I was here. I was here, Mr. Speaker. I was here and I was able to observe who was present and who was not and that it was a wonderful . . . it was a moment of inspiration that in the middle of the night, well after 10 o'clock last night, after having been unable for some apparent reason, or unapparent reason, to find their places into the seats, well here that all of the Sask Party members had this simultaneous moment of inspiration that found them dashing through the door to cast a vote.

And I asked myself, Mr. Speaker, you have to wonder what was happening in the minutes and maybe the hours and the minutes before we found them coming through the door. And some would say, some have speculated that perhaps they were casting themselves about, skulking around in the dark in the bushes of the legislature outside around the building.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can almost . . . I can just . . . I can imagine . . . I could just imagine what's going on in those bushes out there in the dark that are scattered around the Legislative Assembly. And there he is, Mr. Speaker. There he is, the Hon.

Leader of the Opposition. He's out there in the dark skulking in the bushes and he bumps into some total stranger doing whatever they do out there in the bushes, Mr. Speaker, after dark; I don't know, Mr. Speaker. And a total stranger says to him: now you look kind of familiar; who are you? And he says, I'm the Leader of the Opposition. And he said: the Leader of the Opposition; what are you doing skulking around out here in the bushes? And he says, well I'm leading the opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And he says, well aren't you the guy that says that you're the government in waiting? Aren't you the guy and he says, yes I'm the guy that says I'm the government in waiting. And he says, well what are you doing out here in the dark in the bushes surrounding the legislature? And he says, I'm out here waiting.

And then, Mr. Speaker . . . then, Mr. Speaker, he says . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . so just a second here. In the building inside there's a room in there where they're talking about Economic Development and they're talking about building the province for the people of Saskatchewan. Don't you think that you should ought to be in there saying something about that? And he says, well no, no, not really. Well why not? Because we've only got one idea and the coalition government's already doing it. Our definition is cut taxes and that coalition government got way out ahead and they have introduced the greatest tax reduction in the history of Saskatchewan right before our very eyes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(15:45)

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And so he says to the Leader of the Opposition, he says, but surely there's something else he can do. And the Leader of the Opposition says there is, there is, but we're praying for rain, Mr. Speaker, that's all we can . . . that's our second . . . that's plan B.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if that's accurate or not, only the Leader of the Opposition can know. But you kind of got to wonder, when you got half the crew, half the crew is here for two days straight, and then after dark, after 10 o'clock at night, there comes this simultaneous moment of inspiration as they come charging through the door to cast the vote.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, is this the exercise of responsible use of the democratic authority or is this a political game? Well we'll leave it to the people to decide. We'll leave it to the people to decide.

So when we ask ourselves well maybe, maybe, maybe there was really something serious going on in here. Maybe as a matter of fact the opposition, taking responsible use of their position in this House, was in here debating Economic Development, proposing alternatives. Maybe they were in here proposing amendments to the budget or voting against pieces of the budget because it just didn't fit their plan about how you do this thing right, how you grow Saskatchewan. Maybe that was happening.

Was it happening, Mr. Speaker? Check the record. Check the record. Scant attendance. Some questions; responsible questions. Alternatives proposed? I don't remember any. No. Objections to the votes, Mr. Speaker, for any of the subvotes of Economic Development and Co-operation? No, no, none of that.

Until we got to the end and all of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, there came this simultaneous inspiration — some would say with a little bit of artificial perspiration mixed in, Mr. Speaker — this simultaneous inspiration as they charged into the House for the vote. So we had the vote. Some would say out of the bushes they came.

Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague, the member for Saskatoon, has talked about some of the consequences about political games, real life consequences, has referred to the impact to the REDA funding, and Tourism Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, the synchrotron project, some important research projects going on at the University of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, those are real life consequences, real life consequences.

But, Mr. Speaker, now we hear them chirping from the side, you know, and there will be opportunity when we get to go back and revisit this item, there will be opportunity and I will listen carefully for alternatives as to how you grow Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I stand confident in the performance, not only the Government of Saskatchewan, but in the plans of the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development — as released publicly with the attendance of some of the members opposite, with the great fanfare of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — *Partnership for Prosperity*, Mr. Speaker. And I stand firmly in support of the targets as part of the plan.

They say there's no plan. Well I'll tell you this government has got so doggone many targets for a government with no plan, it would make your head spin, Mr. Speaker. Let me just share some of those.

This government with no apparent plan has got some targets for 2005 for our first . . . our celebration of our centenary, Mr. Speaker.

What are the targets? To increase the number of jobs by at least 30,000, Mr. Speaker; to reduce provincial income tax by over 25 per cent for an average Saskatchewan family between 1999 and 2003; to increase the average personal disposable income by 20 per cent; to achieve net youth in-migration; to increase the proportion of working-age people with some post-secondary education by 15 per cent; to increase the number of businesses and families connected to the Internet by 40 per cent; to increase the employment rate of First Nations and Métis people by 20 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on. Should I go on? Mr. Speaker, I hate . . . it bothers me to be destroying the myth that they try to perpetuate that there's no plan. Mr. Speaker, for a government with no plan, it has a whole lot of specificity to its no plan, Mr. Speaker.

On it goes. It might come from comparable provinces and states Saskatchewan will be the most cost-competitive jurisdiction in which to do business in our key sector, Mr. Speaker; 7,500 start-ups of new businesses and co-operatives annually; Mr. Speaker, increased non-traditional exports by 60 per cent; Mr. Speaker, become a world leader in research and development and it enhances our ability to benefit from our unique resources, infrastructure, and market interest.

It goes on, Mr. Speaker. Do we go on and on? Well, people can get it, Mr. Speaker, they can read it for themselves. If they want the whole list, we're happy to give it.

But, Mr. Speaker, I stand firmly in support of those targets and the proposals of the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development, which deserve to be supported by this Legislative Assembly in support of the people who sent us, the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this motion is about the authority, the authority of the government to do the business of the people of Saskatchewan, to continue to build and grow our Saskatchewan.

To do that in support of the ones that sent us, Mr. Speaker, I am confident in the performance of the government. I am confident in the plans of the government, and, Mr. Speaker, I express my confidence by standing firmly in support of the motion that is before you. And I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, well, well, Mr. Speaker. Here we are debating today a motion regarding confidence, or the lack thereof, in the Government of Saskatchewan, because of something that happened last night — very, very historic; very, very unusual.

Mr. Speaker, rarely — rarely — does a minority government lose a vote on a budget issue in a Legislative Assembly, but it does happen from time to time. Almost never, Mr. Speaker, does a majority government lose a vote.

One has to ask, why did that happen? Mr. Speaker, this government has been clinging on to power on life support for a long, long time. Mr. Speaker, in the 1999 election that government lost the popular vote; Mr. Speaker, the NDP came in second.

Mr. Speaker, we now have a Premier that was never elected in a general election as the Premier of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we have a government that is haywired together; a coalition of two parts that cannot get along, cannot function, has not been working.

Mr. Speaker, the only reason they're still there is because they want to hang on to power. That's the only, only issue, they've admitted it. They call it providing stable government.

Well, Mr. Speaker, have we had stable government over the past two, two and a half years, whatever it is since the 1999 election? Mr. Speaker, we have not had stable government. We have had an economic disaster in this province. Mr. Speaker,

hanging onto power for power's sake alone is not a noble virtue, but it is the only principle to which the members opposite cling.

Mr. Speaker, what happened last night, what happened last night? Well what happened was that the members opposite failed to show up. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't understand, they're talking about the opposition not being here. The opposition was here; it was the members opposite that weren't here.

But, Mr. Speaker, they can't have it both ways. They can't complain because we're not here, and then complain because we are here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the official opposition performed its functions and its duties at every step of the legislative agenda of this legislature. Everyday we've been here, everyday we've done our job. Too effectively, Mr. Speaker, for the opposition. We have provided such an excellent opposition that they are hanging onto power for power's sake alone.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, had it been close — had the vote been close — had they lost by one vote, perhaps they could claim well a minister had a duty somewhere, Mr. Speaker. But the vote . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order. I ask the member to stay in order.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member from Regina South is screaming uncontrollably. He's angry because they lost the vote and they lost it substantially, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it wasn't even close.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a very revealing object lesson. Mr. Speaker, the fact that they weren't here for the vote last night is an illustration of a government that isn't there for the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, not only is this government incompetent and bungling at getting its members in the seats for a vote here in the legislature, but they have been bungling the important issues that affect Saskatchewan people on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, this government is sloppy. This government is unable to meet its objectives. This government is arrogant. This government does not deserve to govern any longer.

Mr. Speaker, this vote, this vote that we're going to have on this motion, arising from this emergency debate, will not change people's minds about whether or not they magically now have confidence in the government should they get enough members in their seats for the upcoming vote to win the vote. That's not going to convince the people of Saskatchewan that the Premier is competent, that his cabinet is competent, and that the members of his government are competent.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a little time this afternoon to talk about the record of this government. Mr. Speaker, this is going to be Saskatchewan Tourism. We're going to take a tour, Mr. Speaker, of the government benches and we're going to start out in Finance.

Mr. Speaker, why have the people of Saskatchewan lost confidence in this government? Well let's start out with the Finance minister's budget. Mr. Speaker, he is borrowing from windfall revenues to make government bigger while the tax base gets smaller. Think about that, Mr. Speaker. He is borrowing windfall revenues, today, to make government bigger, to make government more expensive while the tax base is shrinking.

The tax base is shrinking because there's 21,000 fewer jobs in Saskatchewan this year than there were last year. Mr. Speaker, the tax base is shrinking because 9,000 people left the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that's why the people of Saskatchewan do not have confidence in this government. Mr. Speaker, they do not have confidence in the Finance minister.

And, Mr. Speaker, what is even sadder is that during his budget debate, during the delivery of his budget, Mr. Speaker, in the face of people leaving Saskatchewan, in the face of jobs fleeing this province, the Finance minister had the nerve, had the audacity to point his finger to the air and say, now that's progress. What a heartless, what a heartless statement. To tell the people of Saskatchewan, when their young people are leaving the province, this cataphasic statement — now that's progress.

Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, the mother, can you imagine the mother of the last child that left Saskatchewan watch the Finance minister proclaim from his seat, now that's progress, as their son or their daughter had to leave Saskatchewan to find a job. Mr. Speaker, that's why the people of Saskatchewan don't have confidence in this government.

Let's move on to the minister for Economic Development and let's look at his department because after all it was his budget that was defeated last night.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it was interesting watching the expressions on the faces opposite. I heard the member from Moose Jaw North say this is no big deal; you know, what the heck was basically his attitude, this is . . . That wasn't the expression I saw on his face last night.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you think that the member from Moose Jaw North had an expression of shock on his face, you should have seen the member for Prince Albert, the Government House Leader, the minister for Economic Development. I thought he was going to need a blood transfusion on the spot, Mr. Speaker — he went so white.

Mr. Speaker, this minister, this minister's colleagues deserted him when his vote came up; when his estimate came to the House for the approval or the disapproval of this legislature, his colleague, his seatmates deserted him. No wonder he was a little pale last night.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, they have this paper that they wave around in the legislature, this *Partnership for Prosperity* or whatever it's called. There's been so many versions — partnership for progress, *Partnership for Prosperity*. It doesn't much matter what the title is, the fact is that it's pure fiction.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan don't have confidence

in this government because they can't believe the government any longer.

(16:00)

Mr. Speaker, in the 1999 election the government said they were going to create 30,000 new jobs — 30,000 jobs. And then they come along with their *Partnership for Prosperity* or whatever it is, and they say they're going to create 30,000 jobs.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there's no magic formula for creating jobs. You cannot have a plan for prosperity if it doesn't meet the criteria that will generate economic growth. If it doesn't have some substance and meet some teeth, it will not impact this province; and we've seen people of Saskatchewan lose confidence in plan after plan after plan that fizzles out, that comes to no effect.

And so while the government is projecting that they're going to create 30,000 jobs, what really has happened? Well Statistics Canada tells a different story than the members in the benches across the way. And quite frankly I believe Statistics Canada. They said we lost 21,000 jobs — is anybody awake over there?

Mr. Speaker, we lost 21,000 jobs and they're waving a paper around saying they're going to create 30,000 jobs. They can say that day in and day out. Every time they say it they're like the little boy that cries wolf. Nobody believes them any more, Mr. Speaker.

Well the budget delivered by the Finance minister predicts a very small economic growth. The minister's own budget says that our growth in Saskatchewan's going to be well below the national average. I think it was 59 per cent of the national average. What sense is there having this *Partnership for Prosperity* plan if the Finance minister is committed to low growth, to not creating jobs, and to substandard economy?

Mr. Speaker, the economic development under this government is an abominable failure. Mr. Speaker, if it wasn't so sad it would be funny. Mr. Speaker, people leaving the province — the best province in Canada. And people are leaving because of the economic policies of that government. And they expect us to support, they expect us to support a government that is driving people from the province. Not on your life, Mr. Speaker.

Let's move from that failure over to the Crown Investments Corporation. Well the Crown Investments Corporation — where do I begin? Mr. Speaker, this whole session has been filled with nightmarish stories about wild investments by the Crown Investments Corporation that have gone bad. Mr. Speaker, they have been purchasing private-sector businesses to compete with existing private-sector businesses in this province. Mr. Speaker, they are putting the taxpayers of this province at a distinct disadvantage, in competing against themselves.

Mr. Speaker, the policies of this government are wrong, they're wrong-headed. The minister hasn't taken responsibility for the department that he's supposed to run. He says everything's at arm's-length and in fact he has a runaway department that is totally out of control and is damaging the economy of this

province.

How do we know it's damaging the province? His economy? We know because we've lost 21,000 jobs over the last year and 9,000 people have left the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the minister involved for the Crown Investment Corporation gleefully supports unreasonable rates in natural gas rates . . . unreasonable hikes to natural gas rates. Doesn't lift a little finger to prevent it. When gas rates are going down this minister is busy raising the rates to the customers of SaskEnergy here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, that's why the people of this province have lost confidence in the NDP-Liberal government because they're doing the wrong things. They can wave their documents around, they can do their news conferences, they can send out press release after press release but the people of Saskatchewan are smart. They're not fooled by this nonsense. They can see the writing on the wall, Mr. Speaker.

Let's move on to the Department of Agriculture. I won't spend a lot of time but I must say how disappointed the official opposition is that this government are using farm families as scapegoats for the failure of the Saskatchewan economy.

You know, we talk about them blaming everybody but themselves. Well it's fair perhaps in politics to point your finger at your political opponents and say oh, it's the opposition's fault. Perhaps you could justify that they point the finger at the federal government and say, it's Ottawa's fault for our dismal economic performance.

But to start to attack one of the key industries in this province — the industry of agriculture — and say it's because of farm families that we have an economic disaster is unconscionable, it's shameful, and this government should apologize for those statements in the legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, who has failed? Who has failed when it comes to agriculture? It's this government that doesn't get their minister to the negotiating table when AIDA was put together. AIDA doesn't work for the province of Saskatchewan. I wonder why? It's because we weren't there. At least this government was not there when the plan was being put together.

And we all recognize that taxpayers' precious dollars — including the tax dollars of farm families — are wasted, are ineffective because those dollars are going into a support program that's not working for the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that is irresponsible government. That is why Saskatchewan people are losing confidence in the Government of Saskatchewan — the NDP-Liberal coalition government that has such a disastrous economic record.

Mr. Speaker, what's the top-of-mind issue with many, many people in this province? It's health care. Health care is extremely important. Well we've lost 21,000 jobs and 9,000 people. A lot of those people are doctors, nurses, health care professionals.

The NDP-Liberal coalition government are driving out health care workers from the province of Saskatchewan because of their disastrous economic policy. And what do they do, Mr. Speaker?

Well we have the Fyke fiasco. All that money invested in a report that really doesn't mean a whole lot because now we have to study the study. And then we find out that even if we study the study, there's also a parallel study that's happening that may be the real study. Mr. Speaker, what a shell game. It's no wonder the people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence in this NDP-Liberal coalition government.

Mr. Speaker, while they're playing games with study after study after study — the real ones, the imaginary ones, the past ones, and the future ones — Mr. Speaker, the waiting lists in Saskatchewan have become the longest in the entire country.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's where it gets so sad because waiting lists are not just numbers — waiting lists are people who are hurting. They're seniors who need an operation and can't get it. Mr. Speaker, they are working people that want to get back on the job but the health system has failed them.

Mr. Speaker, our failing health care system is part and parcel of the reason why our economic record is so dismal.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let's move on to another department on this tour of why people in Saskatchewan have lost confidence in this NDP-Liberal coalition government. Let's look at SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management).

Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, we had a water crisis in Saskatchewan. Now if that isn't enough to shake people's confidence, I don't know what is, because when we pick up a glass of water, we want it to be safe.

And, Mr. Speaker, the revelations from the minister's own departments were shocking. Revelations of incompetence. Revelations of poor communication with municipalities over the quality of their water. Mr. Speaker, no interaction between SERM and Sask Health when a problem was uncovered. It was awful.

And yet their communication strategy, Mr. Speaker, was to say everything is okay. SERM and Sask Health have our water quality under control. There's absolutely no problem, don't worry about it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when it's revealed that our drinking water is unsafe, why wouldn't the people of Saskatchewan lose confidence in that government? Of course they're going to lose confidence in a government that does not tell them the truth about their quality of water and deliberately has a communication strategy that deceives people about the safety of their drinking water.

Mr. Speaker, I was in northern Saskatchewan and I heard northern residents talk about how SERM was a barrier to economic development in their part of Saskatchewan. And it wasn't just once or twice, Mr. Speaker. But community leader after community leader after community leader, business person after business person in Saskatchewan told me that the Minister

of SERM doesn't even come to the North any more. He's forgotten the North once he entered the cabinet and they have lost confidence in their minister and they have lost confidence in this NDP-Liberal coalition government. Mr. Speaker, they feel that the minister has abandoned his constituents.

Let's go to the next spot on this tour of the government's record of incompetence and mismanagement. Let's go into the labour area, Mr. Speaker, where this government supports undemocratic practices.

Mr. Speaker, under the watch of this government, and this new Premier I might add, we have seen senior public servants conscripted against their will into SGEU (Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union). Mr. Speaker, that's undemocratic; that's wrong. It's unproductive and it is very self-serving on a part of a government party whose finances are dependent upon the goodwill of unions who donate tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars into their financial accounts.

Mr. Speaker, financial support for the NDP is more important to this government than people leaving the province of Saskatchewan. It's more important that they get a few more senior public servants in SGEU than it is keeping 9,000 people from leaving Saskatchewan or 21,000 jobs from leaving the workforce. If that isn't a reason to lose confidence in this government, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what is.

Mr. Speaker, we could talk about Rural Revitalization. I think that's the department, Mr. Speaker, that's responsible to wind up the affairs of rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the people who are the most self-reliant people in the province of Saskatchewan have been slapped in the face by this government. They've been kicked in the shins. And what is the result — 21,000 fewer jobs in this province; 9,000 people leaving the province of Saskatchewan. What kind of a record is that when it comes to rural revitalization?

Mr. Speaker, the next stop on this tour of the benches opposite is the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority. Mr. Speaker, if ever there was a minister plagued by scandals, this is the minister. Mr. Speaker, if ever there was a minister that is a candidate for scrutiny under the principle of ministerial accountability, it is this minister.

This minister has had problem after problem after problem after problem in her department. The problem goes back several years. The minister apparently was aware or at least her officials were aware of these problems and nothing was done, Mr. Speaker. If that isn't a reason to lose confidence in this government, what is, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, so what does the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming do? Well, Mr. Speaker, she punishes the whistle-blowers. She punishes the people that want to fix the mess. She fires them, whether they be an investigator like Joe Dosenberger or whether they be an employee like Bonnie Swan. They're expendable as long as the minister and the senior officials in her department are spared embarrassment and spared the consequences of the actions that they have taken.

Mr. Speaker, people are going to lose confidence in a government that operates with two sets of rules, two sets of standards. There's one set of standards in Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming for the service providers. They're watched like a hawk. My gosh, they get one freebie bottle of booze, they're booted out.

But, Mr. Speaker, if it's a minister or if it's a senior person in Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming or SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) and they get a trip to the Bahamas, they'll do whatever it takes to protect that person. Mr. Speaker, they will go to the wall for that person.

But they don't care. They don't care a hill of beans about the service providers on the front line. They're expendable, Mr. Speaker, as long as they save their own skins. That's why the people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence in this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, let's move over to Municipal Affairs. There is another disaster. We went from a crisis last year where they tried to force amalgamation on municipalities. Mr. Speaker. What a heavy-handed, top-down measure that was. The former minister who is now the Minister of Agriculture and the Deputy Premier was dogged and determined that he was going to force this amalgamation process come hell or high water.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it was due in large part to the effective work of the official opposition that that minister did not get his way. But we've gone from one disaster to the next.

We now have a new minister responsible for Municipal Affairs and, Mr. Speaker, this minister, sitting at the cabinet table when the budget was determined, folded his hands, perhaps he went to sleep, I don't know. We had the member for Moose Jaw North fabricating a story earlier. I don't know whether this is a fabrication or not but I think perhaps the minister responsible for Municipal Affairs was asleep when the budget discussions were entertained around the cabinet table because he certainly didn't come up with anything whatsoever for municipalities in this province.

(16:15)

Mr. Speaker, his colleagues were able to build a bigger government around him but he was asleep at the switch. He was asleep at the switch when revenue sharing was discussed. Mr. Speaker, he failed every municipality in Saskatchewan and now property ratepayers are paying the price in almost every municipality in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatoon saw a 4 per cent rate hike. Municipalities across this province have seen rate hikes as high as 90 per cent on their property taxes because the Minister of Municipal Affairs was sleeping at the cabinet table. If that isn't reason to lose confidence in this government, Mr. Speaker, what is?

Well, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about Aboriginal Affairs. There's another interesting fiasco. Mr. Speaker, the minister just the

other day tabled something called The Métis Act. Well, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan doesn't have a Métis Act and it's probably something that's required. But the minister made a big, big bungle — a big, big booboo. She forgot to consult with the majority of Métis people before she introduced the Bill into the legislature.

And, Mr. Speaker, Métis people of Saskatchewan found out what the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs was trying to do. And their leaders crowded the benches of this Assembly and watched the pathetic performance of their minister and this government, this NDP-Liberal coalition government, as they tried to foist a piece of legislation on Métis people in Saskatchewan that they didn't even support.

If that isn't reason to lose confidence in this government again, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what is.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education, he's also the leader of the Liberals — I think he is anyways. It's really tough to tell who the leader is; there's more debate in this House between the Liberals on the different sides of the House than there is between the opposition and the government some days.

But, Mr. Speaker, how can the people of Saskatchewan have confidence in a government when the Minister of Education says, anything I say during an election campaign should just be considered as pure political rhetoric; you know, it doesn't count after the election; I'll say how terrible the NDP are before the election, but if I don't win then I'll join them because it was just political rhetoric, it doesn't matter; the people of Saskatchewan don't care.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education said, we've got to cut staff in Executive Council. The Premier has too many staffers; ministers have too many staffers. Well nobody has been a bigger offender of that principle than the Minister of Education. And we've seen it under the new Premier's government.

We see them expanding the size of government and who do they start with. They start with a defeated NDP MP (Member of Parliament), Dennis Gruending. He was so important they had to get him on the payroll. And then they go to a defeated Liberal candidate, Ken Magnus and they've got to get him on the payroll.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when a minister and a co-leader of the coalition government says that the size of ministerial staff and the Premier's staff has to be reduced, and then becomes a part of the problem rather than the solution, the people of Saskatchewan are going to lose confidence in the government. And that's exactly what has happened.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, who is ultimately responsible? Who is ultimately responsible for the record of this government? Well, Mr. Speaker, the buck stops at the Premier's desk.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier was just out in the rotunda of the legislature, and we were together honouring people of the Three Century Club, people that were born in the 1800s and are still alive in the 21st century. And that's a good thing to do. It was a plaque that was unveiled.

But it was rather funny, Mr. Speaker, while we're actually in here debating whether or not this government even deserves to exist, the Premier was on the piano playing a rendition of *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. Mr. Speaker, that's where this government's head is. It's somewhere over the rainbow, because they don't have a clue when it comes to accountability, to economic development, and to providing good government, Mr. Speaker.

Now the ball is clearly in the government's court. And the ball is clearly in the hands of the Premier. Mr. Speaker, that's the way it should be, but the determination of whether we have a good Premier and a good government, or a bad Premier and a bad government, will depend on what the Premier does with the ball. It'll depend on what he does in the next day or two.

Well what we've seen so far, Mr. Speaker, is not encouraging. We've seen a Premier and his front bench that are angry. What are they angry about? They're angry because the opposition showed up and voted.

Can you imagine in a parliamentary democracy . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And right now I hear the Government House Leader, he's still angry that we showed up to vote. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, that the government would be angry because the official opposition is doing its job.

Mr. Speaker, what we are hearing from the public, what we are hearing from the people of Saskatchewan is, thank you for what you did. You held this government accountable, you pointed out the failure of their economic development record, and we're with you a hundred per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has a choice to make. The Premier can look at his economic development record and he can stand up in this House, or he can go out in the scrum, talk to the media, and he can say we haven't done so good. We've actually failed in economic development. We promised 30,000 jobs, and the opposition's right; we've lost 21,000 jobs, 9,000 people have left the province. It's serious. We're going to roll up our sleeves and do something about it.

The Premier could do that. The Premier could say, I take this matter so seriously, so seriously that I'm going to resign and I'm going to take this issue to the people of Saskatchewan; we're going to come up with our vision for economic development; we realize we have to start afresh; we'll let the opposition put forward their ideas for economic development; and we'll give the people of Saskatchewan their rightful, their rightful opportunity to express their preference over who has the right vision for Saskatchewan and its economic development.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier could do that. The reputation of the Premier would rise substantially if he admitted that his government has failed on economic development. Mr. Speaker, I guess he could probably take the wind right out of my sails, but up to this point we have not seen a Premier that's moving in that direction.

The other thing the Premier could do, Mr. Speaker — and what I think is more likely — is the Premier can initiate this emergency debate. He can marshal in his members to make sure

that he wins this vote and he can say, let's just pretend it never happened, folks; let's just pretend that we still have the confidence of the people of Saskatchewan and let's just go on governing like we always have.

Mr. Speaker, you know what that decision would mean to the people of Saskatchewan? It means we will continue to report that thousands of people have left and are leaving this province. It means that Canada West's prediction that 40 per cent of graduates will leave Saskatchewan upon completing their education in this province rather than staying and making a life for themselves here.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier can make the decision to continue to drive people from this province and drive jobs from this province, or he can recognize that his plans are not working and he needs to do something different. Mr. Speaker, he has a chance to do the right thing. Because of the work of the official opposition he has time to reflect and to strike out in a new course in a new direction for this province. How fitting that would be at the beginning of a new century. How fitting that would be to provide hope, change, and chance of growth in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the member from Moose Jaw North bragging about the NDP's results in the last two by-elections. He conveniently mentioned two rather than three. But, Mr. Speaker, those were, those were considered some of the safest ridings for the NDP and they saw their support go down; the Liberals saw their support vanish; and the Saskatchewan Party was able to attract strong candidates and they brought their support up.

Mr. Speaker, if they are so confident, if they are so confident, why don't they take this issue to the people of Saskatchewan and give them the chance to vote on it? Why don't they have the courage? Why don't they have the courage?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, we've been clear on our record. We have been clear on our plan of action for the province of Saskatchewan. We have a plan to grow Saskatchewan. And we have a team, Mr. Speaker, that are committed to growing this province.

Mr. Speaker, we're tired of playing the silly games that the government will play, that everything is okay. That the Minister of Finance would point at the air and say now that's progress, when 21,000 jobs are lost and 9,000 people leave Saskatchewan. That is cruel to the people of Saskatchewan. The Minister of Finance should apologize for spewing that kind of rubbish in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, it's time for change. It's time for this government to take stock of its shortcomings.

Mr. Speaker, I will not support this charade. I will not support this charade of thinking that somehow if they magically win the next vote, suddenly people's confidence will be instilled in the government once again. Therefore, I will not support the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it's a real pleasure to get up in the House to speak today. I haven't had as many opportunities to do this as I would have liked this session.

And true to form, Mr. Speaker, again here we are — the Sask Party creates problems and the New Democratic Party fixes them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — And today, we're here fixing the latest problem. Now what is the nature of this problem, Mr. Speaker? The nature of this problem is a fascination with photo opportunities and media play. Now you'd think they would have learned a little something from Stockwell Day who had a big shortage of long-term thinking. All they think about is what is cute and clever today.

And I think we've seen plenty of evidence of this short-term thinking, evidenced by their performance in question period over this session. It's shown an absence of any plan, any strategy, any real understanding of the issues. We had very few questions on agriculture; one of the major challenges facing this province. We've even had very few questions on health care. And so, not only do they not have the answers, Mr. Speaker, they haven't seemed to have had any of the questions either.

And I'm going to go back to the '80s. Now I know the opposition doesn't like this, but for people who have had a long time involvement in politics, I ask them to pay attention because I'm going to mention a name, Mr. Speaker, that will probably cause them to sit up and take notice. Because this is a small town and people see people doing things that people might rather they didn't see them doing. But they can wait for a minute to hear that name. They'll notice it when they hear it.

For people who've had a long time involvement in politics, the opposition has not been ready to recognize that some ideas come and go, some people come and go, but when you've been involved long enough, which someone who's at the grandmother stage that I am, you learn to recognize certain trains as they're coming down the track.

And the train opposite, Mr. Speaker, is a train filled with those like the old Devine Tories, like the Alliance, and like the Sask Party. The people on this train, Mr. Speaker, have a superficial understanding and believe that there's so much more that we can be.

Well the fact of the matter, there is a small element of truth in that, Mr. Speaker. We can all do a little better than we're doing and sometimes even a lot better. But the difference is when you have too much dependence on the slogan and not enough on the substance.

The train opposite is the train of those who are all sizzle, Mr. Speaker, or maybe I should say attempted sizzle and no steak. Cheap political stunts to achieve what they can't achieve by presenting clear alternatives and thoughtful debates. Yes, Mr. Speaker, they are more games than solutions.

And who else is on that train? There's a large group of people who think they can have their cake and eat it too, Mr. Speaker. They think they can have large tax cuts, and large increases in spending, even though in their own election platform the members opposite advocated zero increases in health care and zero increases in education.

I think the attitude was reflected last night when they thought they could play little games and have no real consequence resulting from that. And I want to speak just for a moment, Mr. Speaker, some of the impacts of their little charade last night.

Because the Economic Development Department budget has not been approved, REDA (regional economic development authority) funding would be cancelled, which would have an impact on rural Saskatchewan. Tourism Saskatchewan will not have funding. The Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership would not be able to operate, playing a key role in exporting Saskatchewan products.

Mr. Speaker, the synchrotron project would be delayed, research projects would not proceed. We would find that projects under the Western Economic Partnership Agreement would be stalled, and that includes things like the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) Museum and tourist attractions like the Duck Lake Interpretive Centre.

We would find that because of their actions last night small-business loans associations would not receive funding. Since 1994, the small-business loans associations have created 8,342 jobs.

We would find that because of their actions last night neighbourhood development organizations would be shut down, and the impact that they have on inner-city families and helping people get jobs.

(16:30)

And the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that because of their actions last night any new projects might be put on hold, like the NATO flight training centre in Moose Jaw, the Staples Call Centre in Regina, and the Alberta Garment Manufacturing expansion in Saskatoon. But they didn't think about any of that, Mr. Speaker, because these are short-term thinkers.

Now on this particular tack of theirs, they also chose to pull this little stunt while the Agriculture minister is away trying to get support for farmers. And instead of supporting his efforts, they undermine his efforts by pulling a stunt at the legislature. Hiding in the bushes, not only undermining the Minister of Agriculture but undermining all the people who are working in Economic Development.

But I'm going to return to my theme, Mr. Speaker. And the theme is that the Saskatchewan Party creates problems and the New Democratic government solves problems.

Now this train that the Sask Party is on is a long train. It goes all the way back to 1980. It's the same philosophy, same ideas, and many of the same people. I know that the members opposite suffer from short-term memory, but I remember because I was there then and I'm here now. So I want to

provide a few facts.

During the '80s under the Devine Tories, the political relatives of our members opposite, we found that during the '80s this opposition set many records. They set the record for the number of people who have ever left the province in almost every year they governed.

They set the record for the amount of debt added to . . . and deficit added to the provincial budget in every single year that they governed. No other government has added a billion a year to the debt of the province.

They set a record for the number of members found guilty of misuse of government funds. They set a record for the highest government debt per capita in Canada.

Now you would think all this record setting might cause them to be a little more thoughtful about their positions on things. But what did they do instead? Well they did the equivalent of what they did last night. They hid in the bushes. They tried to hide under a new name.

But see, we don't tend to take this too seriously, Mr. Speaker. Because who were they seen with having lunch yesterday? Does anybody know? A certain Mr. Peter Whitmore. Now if anybody knows who Peter Whitmore was — he was with the firm of Lane and Whitmore.

Now does anybody remember Mr. Lane? I bet the members opposite would know who Mr. Lane was, Mr. Gary Lane.

Now I think it's only a coincidence that you would just happen to be having a strategy dinner with Mr. Peter Whitmore on the day that you're busy planning your stunt. But of course you don't know any of those people because you're a different group of people. So I'll just let you cogitate on that one for a minute.

And you can continue to hide in the bushes and hide behind a new name, but we know that you are with the same . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. I would remind the member to address all of her remarks through the Chair.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for reminding me because I do enjoy having a conversation with the Chair at any time.

So I just say that here they are amongst the bushes and the brambles . . . you know there's an old civil war song like that. You might have heard it. "They ran through the bushes and they ran through the brambles and they ran through the brier where the rabbit wouldn't go." Well that's where they are.

Meanwhile, while they were running through the brambles, the NDP and Liberal coalition government was busying fixing the problems that they and the likes of Mr. Lane and others created in their previous incarnation.

Now what problems did we fix, Mr. Speaker? Because I don't want you to just take my word for it. I want to point out some of the problems that we fixed.

Eight consecutive balanced budgets, following nine \$1 billion deficit budgets. We have in this year; the total debt has declined by 75 million between March 31, 2000 and March 31, 2002.

We've had nine credit rating upgrades since 1995. Now, Mr. Speaker, I may not know much about high finance, but I know that a credit rating is important and I know that a credit rating upgrade is important. And I know that investors pay attention to credit rating upgrades.

We've made solid progress on reductions on government debt as a per cent of GDP.

So, Mr. Speaker, what about economic development? What about the future? Well, we know that we had a reduction in the small business corporate income tax rate from 8 per cent to 6 per cent effective July 1, 2001. We increased the annual amount of income to which small business income tax rate can be applied from 200,000 to 300,000. The extension of the right to incorporate for all regulated professionals in Saskatchewan.

Now I'd like the members opposite to tell me whether there's a single one of those things they believe won't help the economy? I want to hear the answer to whether there's a single one of those things won't help the economy?

On personal tax reform we've doubled the education tax credit amount to \$400 per month for full-time study and \$120 per month of part-time study; increased disability and caregiver tax credit; increased senior supplements; child tax credit; reduced personal income tax rates. And I want the members opposite to tell me if they think reducing personal income tax rates is not going to help the economy. I'm not hearing anything, Mr. Speaker, from over there. They've gotten very quiet all of a sudden.

On non-renewable resource initiatives, the 10 per cent tax credit for individuals on their purchase of flow-through shares of eligible mineral exploration, retroactive to October 18, 2000.

Mr. Speaker, there's incentives for enhanced oil recovery projects using CO₂ effective midnight budget night. A new capital incentive to promote more efficient production technology in sodium sulphate. And I want to hear the members opposite tell me which one of those things don't make the economy grow. Boy it's quiet over there. They must be heading back out to the bushes for a mid-afternoon visit.

This budget, Mr. Speaker, was full of support for economic development — CommunityNet, the synchrotron, energy and mines, enhanced geoscience, orphan wells program, wind energy, climate change, K to 12 education, highest budget ever, highways and transportation.

I'd like the members opposite to go through this budget document piece by piece and tell me which of these things do not support growth of the economy. And I'd be pleased to send this document across to the members opposite because I'd like them to check off which of these things they don't think help the economy to grow.

So, Mr. Speaker, what are their proposals? They propose to hide in the bushes and pop out occasionally. And when they pop out,

what do they do? It's not even that they pop out and do anything helpful. They pop out and they do damage.

We know. We have a letter here to the editor from one of the economic development folks in Regina that is chastising the opposition for creating doubt amongst customers and business owners. And everybody knows that this is a very negative thing to do. Now these people working on economic development will not be able to function because of these folks voting against the budget.

We have the highest rate of American tourists visiting Saskatchewan in our history. The number of visitors from other States had been increasing. The total number of US (United States) visitors who stayed overnight or longer increased from 200,000 in 1999 to 218,000 in the year 2000. Travellers spend 1.16 billion in the province annually.

Well, Mr. Speaker, with their little vote last night, they scuttled the funding for the Tourism Authority. We have a new Web site in Saskatoon to boost city tourism. Are these people locked in the past, complaining and whining and hiding in bushes? No, they're getting on with creating a Web site to promote tourism.

We have ethanol development going on in this province called a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. And the continued development of ethanol depends on the budget that these folks saw fit to play games with last night.

PAMI, the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute, received provincial support to build a road test . . . (inaudible) . . . and I don't think PAMI's very thrilled that the opposition have caused their funding to disappear through their antics last night.

We have co-operatives working to support small rural businesses, and the vote that we had last night undermines the work of our rural co-operatives.

We have an OSB (oriented strand board) mill that was announced, a \$200 million partnership creating jobs in the Meadow Lake area. And I tell you the member from Meadow Lake is not pleased that these folks have stopped this development through their antics last night.

And we have a centre for entrepreneur success that has celebrated an opening recently. And likewise, these entrepreneurial centres are not going to receive funding if the opposition continues pulling the kind of tricks they did last night.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's no need to sit on the sidelines or hide in the bushes. These guys could come out and play a meaningful role in Saskatchewan's development. There's a whole bunch of other people who are doing that — like some students I met in Gravelbourg last weekend, Mr. Speaker. I was at the perspiration awards. And the perspiration means you actually put a little effort behind what you're doing. It's not just all inspiration, it's more perspiration.

And these young people were very excited about the opportunities in rural Saskatchewan. At least half of the group of 17 already had businesses that were up and functioning, and these were high school students, Mr. Speaker. They were under

the motivation and tutelage of one Monica Coneys, who's a motivational speaker, but she calls Saskatchewan entrepreneurial heaven. And she says the only thing preventing anyone from being successful in Saskatchewan is the absence of the decision to do it and a can of paint.

So she feels there's no reason to sit on . . . and all these young people, by the way, at this conference agreed with her. And they're doing a wonderful job on revitalizing main street, setting up restaurants, theatre, mini malls. But unlike the opposition, they're working hard at what they're doing — they're not hiding in the bushes.

And with my new department, Mr. Speaker, everywhere I go — whether it's in the sports community, the cultural community, youth, recreation — everybody's excited about the opportunities of the work that we can do together.

And I'm just going to have to go back to my theme again, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party creates problems and the New Democratic government solves problems.

And I want to close, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I have absolute confidence in the government and I want to just quote our Minister of Finance here, the Hon. Minister of Finance:

With this eighth consecutive balanced budget this government reaffirms its commitment to effective public service, lower taxes, a declining ratio of debt to GDP. This commitment will support continued growth in our economy and ensure a high quality of life for Saskatchewan people.

That kind of sums it up, Mr. Speaker.

I know my history, I know my present, and I know my future, Mr. Speaker, and I have absolute confidence that on this side of the House sits the group of people that are going to keep moving Saskatchewan forward. And I put my support on the side of confidence in the government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was surprised after the vote last night and again some of the comments we have heard today suggesting that it is somehow the opposition's fault that the government lost a vote last night.

Well the government it seems can't count people leaving — 9,000 in the last year. They can't count the job losses — 21,000 in the last year. And now apparently they can't count the number of members they have in the House.

The NDP's failure to develop the Saskatchewan economy and provide employment opportunities is resulting in an exodus of our people. Between 1992 and 2001 Saskatchewan suffered a net loss of roughly 50,000 people. These are the best of our young people and with them we are losing our future taxpayers.

Canada West Foundation has forecast that another 42,000 young people will leave the province within five years. If that sad prediction comes true, that would be a loss of 90,000 wage

earners.

In effect we are paying the cost of educating our brightest and best only to export them to other jurisdictions to fuel their economic growth and prosperity.

(16:45)

Mr. Speaker, 90,000 income earners in Saskatchewan, if we were to calculate an average income level of 45,000, would result in an annual taxable income to Saskatchewan of \$4 billion. And of course we would also have to calculate the demand for goods and services that that 90,000 consumers and income earners would bring to this province.

The government tells us that the opposition is spreading gloom and doom. Well it is Statistics Canada and Canada West and trends west that is telling the story of failure.

With a declining population of one million, we will become increasingly reliant on things other than economic growth on the federal government. And with our accumulated backlog of infrastructure repairs and upgrades to roads, water and sewer repairs, schools, and hospitals and universities, Saskatchewan simply will not be able to have a competitive tax level and have the services, the public services and the infrastructure that a modern society requires.

However, Mr. Speaker, I wish to emphasize that it is not my agenda to defeat the government in order that the Saskatchewan Party can come into office. I realize that what went on last night is that we had a government trying to cling to office and we have an opposition which wants to take office. I wish, I wish to enforce changes on this government which will benefit the people of Saskatchewan.

All members know that I have taken a strong position against the foreign investments by our Crown corporations. I believe our Crown corporations are fundamentally on the wrong path. They are on the wrong path when they attempt to buy up companies for the purpose of competing with private corporations in this province for the simple reason that when you use the public dollar to compete with private companies, first of all it is unfair, but secondly it does not create new jobs. It does not build the economy. A transfer of jobs from the private sector to the public sector is not net growth for this province.

And certainly when we invest in companies in Nashville and in Chicago and in Chile and in Charlottetown and in Toronto, nothing is built for this province. And specifically . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I hear the hon. members saying about pork-barrelling.

In the case of Government House in Battleford, we have the most historic building in Western Canada, which is in danger of being lost. Think of the tourism that would be built in this province if it was restored.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the restoration of Government House would do far more to build the economy of Saskatchewan than buying an insurance company in Toronto, or a Web site in Ottawa, or a music mix company in Nashville,

and I forget what it is we're buying in Atlanta.

So this is called pork-barrelling. Well who are they pork-barrelling — my question, Mr. Speaker — who are they trying to pork-barrel when they buy a company in Toronto? Well they've protected 20 jobs in Toronto that apparently were at risk. Are they hoping that those people will be grateful enough to vote for them? I don't know.

So by my saying that the emphasis should be on building Saskatchewan and doing things in Saskatchewan, they say I'm pork-barrelling. Instead of, according to them, what we should be doing is buying companies outside of the province and creating employment outside of the province.

Well the figures are in, Mr. Speaker. When we use our wealth to generate income outside the province and jobs outside the province, we end up with a net loss of 21,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I have been shocked the last few weeks to see that Premier Klein has been in Washington and in New York to talk about the importance of the new pipeline from the far North coming through his province of Alberta. Now we know that there is likely to be a very major project on the . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Pursuant to rule 19(8) it is incumbent on me to now put the question.

The division bells rang from 16:50 until 17:00.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 28

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

Nays — 25

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, leave to move a motion with respect to sitting hours.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS**Hours of Sitting**

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Cannington:

That notwithstanding rule 3(4) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly* of Saskatchewan that when this Assembly adjourns on Thursday, June 28, 2001, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, July 3, 2001 at 1:30.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 17:05.