

The Assembly met at 10:00.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a final number of petitions to present on behalf of a number of people on the east side of the province concerned about access for seniors to health care. And the petition 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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures to these pages of petitions are from Kamsack, Veregine, Norquay, and Canora.

I so present.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the conversion of paved highways to gravel. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to set aside any plans to revert Saskatchewan highways back to gravel, commit that the government will not download responsibility for current numbered highways onto local governments, and to consult with local residents, and to co-operate in finding and implementing other alternatives.

And this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Regina, Spring Valley, North Battleford, Moose Jaw, Avonlea, Pense, and Wilcox, as well as Calgary, Alberta.

I so present.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents of the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are concerned about the closure of more hospitals. And the prayer reads:

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Weyburn and Stoughton.

I so present.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of citizens of the province a petition regarding EMS (emergency medical service) service. 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 intentions to work to improve community-based ambulance services.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed from . . . many people, from many different communities such as Maryfield, Storthoaks, Redvers, and many, many more. I'll present them all.

I so present.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, I also have petitions dealing with 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.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions come from the communities of Antler, Alida, Storthoaks, Redvers, Manor, Carievale; Reston, Manitoba; Sinclair, Manitoba; Kenosee village, Mr. Speaker; Wauchope, Maryfield, Bellegarde, Carlyle, White Bear Reserve, Bear Lake, Mr. Speaker; from Wauchope, Fertile, and Gainsborough, Mr. Speaker.

I so present.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise again to present a petition from citizens concerned about the high price of power and energy. The prayer reads:

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 more substantial power and energy relief to Saskatchewan customers.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Battleford, North Battleford, and Cochin.

I so present.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition

to address 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 signators, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Churchbridge, Atwater, Bangor, Kamsack, Wroxton, Veregin, and the city of Regina.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here signed by the citizens concerned about the significant rate increases by SaskPower and SaskEnergy.

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 in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the citizens from Elbow and Saskatoon.

I so present. And Davidson.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order a petition on July 5 regarding repair to Highway 22 between Cupar and Dysart has been reviewed and pursuant to rule 12(7) is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 12(7) are hereby read and received. These are petitions on the following matters regarding the centralization of ambulance services, energy rebate to consumers, maintenance of the Redvers Health Centre, repairs to Highway 339, provision of reliable cellular service in Shellbrook-Spiritwood, subsidies to non-profit personal care homes, and maintaining the Kelvington health centre.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy today to be able to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly, my constituency assistant, Donna From, who is in your gallery, and her daughter, Kathy.

And I'd just like to give a bit of an introduction for both. Donna has been a tremendously hard-working, conscientious constituency assistant, very compassionate with the constituents and thoughtful, and very effective in helping them deal with their needs. And I'm very fortunate to have her for a constituency assistant.

Her daughter, Kathy, has just recently returned from Australia, and she, I understand, is planning to set down roots here in Saskatchewan again. Following high school, she took courses in

cosmetology and then moved out to Vancouver to study especially special effects and make-up for film and TV. And I expect that in the next year as she looks into and hooks into the prosperous future of Saskatchewan, she'll probably work somewhere in the film industry which is burgeoning in this province, or in the . . . possibly in the new sound stage area which we're hoping will be ready in the near future.

So welcome to you folks and hope you have a good day here observing the session. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, Shelley Hengen. Shelley is a small-business woman working in the Idylwyld area as a consulting psychologist.

Shelley was nominated on June 20 as the Sask Party candidate in the Idylwyld constituency, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Shelley and the Sask Party are ready just in case there's a by-election there, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the Assembly welcome Shelley to the galleries. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly seated in the east side of your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order, please, order.

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank all members for coming to order so quickly.

I would like to join with my colleague in welcoming Donna From and her daughter Katherine to the gallery today. I first met Donna when she was providing support services to Suzanne Murray, and we all miss Suzanne's whistling and smiling face, and particularly as she was a seatmate of mine for quite a while, I do miss her as well.

And would like to say thank you to Donna for all the services she provides, and for Katherine, who's come back and I'm certain would find that Saskatchewan is a place that she'd like to stay from here in with so many opportunities available to her.

I would also like to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to all members of the Assembly, 10 students from the English as a Second Language Program at the University of Regina. They're seated on the east side of your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and they've come to observe the proceedings today. They will know it's the near the completion of our duties together and so it may be a spirited observation today as they view the proceedings.

They're accompanied by their teacher Loretta Paoli and they will be also having a tour. And I would ask all members to join me in giving them a very warm welcome to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the member from Regina Wascana Plains in welcoming the students in your gallery on behalf of the official opposition. I would welcome them to Saskatchewan, and I'm sure they will enjoy the session that they will be witnessing here this morning, and I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them here.

The Speaker: — Colleagues, it's my pleasure to introduce a visitor who is sitting in the front row of the Speaker's gallery this morning. Some of you may have had an opportunity to meet him in the past years. I would like to welcome Binx Remnant to the Assembly today.

Binx served in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as Clerk of the House for 17 years, and prior to that was Clerk of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly for 17 years. So when he retired in the year 2000, he was the longest serving Clerk of the House in the Commonwealth.

Since retirement, Binx has continued his parliamentary service by working with the parliaments of South Africa and Kenya. Binx's parliamentary expertise and great love for his work has benefited his colleagues and elected members across the Commonwealth.

Please join me in welcoming Binx Remnant to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with you in personally saying welcome to a personal friend and a friend of parliamentary democracy, Mr. Remnant.

In addition to his outstanding contributions to parliamentary democracy, it may be of interest for members to note that Binx Remnant joined with our very own Clerk, Gwenn Ronyk, and former Clerk of the House, Gordon Barnhart, as part of the training for parliamentary democracy practice in Russia as a result of a program that was sponsored by our nation some years ago. And so there was not only a close working relationship between our neighbouring provinces, but also together with that in the interest of democracy in the world.

I would also like to join with you, Mr. Speaker, in wishing Mr. Remnant a very happy retirement. He's made a major contribution to parliamentary democracy, and it should also be noted, although this is not part of his resumé, that he is of a significant melodious at voice as well when called on on special occasions.

And I would once again like to ask all members to show their appreciation to Mr. Remnant for his contribution to parliament democracy in our nation.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(10:15)

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Social Assistance Caseload Lowered

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. More good news for Saskatchewan. The social assistance caseload is now 20 per cent lower than it was seven years ago.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — And the number of people receiving assistance is dramatically lower than it was in 1992. Mr. Speaker, province-wide, the number of social assistance cases dropped from 40,793 in June 1994 to 32,574 in June of 2001, a decrease of 20.1 per cent.

Even more to cheer about, the decrease in the number of people dependent on assistance is even greater, Mr. Speaker. The number of beneficiaries dependent on social assistance has declined by 27.7 per cent from June of 1992 to June of 2001.

Mr. Speaker, this phenomenon is also not localized to any one region of the province. This decrease has been seen all over the province. From Lloydminster . . . have caseload decreases of 60 per cent to Regina and Saskatoon experiencing an 18 and 26 per cent decrease respectively.

Mr. Speaker, while this historic decrease in the number of people on social assistance is impressive, there is still much more that we can do and we will do, Mr. Speaker. This government will continue with phase 2 of "building independence . . ." and make the jobs the real solution for poverty in this province, not welfare, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Carrot River to Host 5th Annual Can-Am Bowl

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the town of Carrot River was successful in its bid to host the 5th Annual Can-Am Bowl. The Can-Am game will be held Saturday, July 7 in Carrot River.

The Can-Am Bowl has become an annual football game in which the American stars of a six-man team travel to Canada to play the Canadian all-stars. Graduating players of six-man teams are eligible to play.

The Can-Am Bowl began after a connection was made between American teams and Bjorkdale, Saskatchewan through Rocky Chysyk, coach of the Bjorkdale Bandits. Bjorkdale sent two of its players to participate in the All-American Six-Man All-Star game. This later resulted in the Bjorkdale team travelling to play Texas.

In July 1997 an American all-star team made a return trip to Canada playing a Saskatchewan all-star team in Porcupine Plain. This spawned the creation of the Can-Am Bowl.

The Canadian team for Can-Am V was chosen through a selection camp held in May at the Hilltop training facility in

Saskatoon. Players throughout Saskatchewan tried out for 1 of the 20 positions on the roster.

The Canadian team includes players from Kenaston, Rose Valley, Bjorkdale, Loreburn, Carrot River, Raymore, Hague, Eatonia, Hanley, Meath Park, Saskatoon, Codette, Plenty, Porcupine Plain, and Wishart.

The United States team includes players from the following states: Nebraska, Colorado, Montana, and Texas.

Hundreds of volunteers have come together with sponsors to make this year's Can-Am Bowl the most successful one yet.

I would like to wish all the players and coaches the best of luck in a challenging and rewarding Can-Am game.

And also would all members join with me in congratulating the town of Carrot River for being such a gracious host for this prestigious international event.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Tax Cuts

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to draw the attention of this place to Saskatchewan tax cuts — the real facts and not the phony fiction that some would put about.

Mr. Speaker, six of the last seven Saskatchewan budgets have included significant tax cuts. We've reduced our sales tax 9 per cent to 6 per cent. In 1992, an average Saskatchewan family had the second highest tax bill in Canada. This year, Mr. Speaker, that same family will have the fourth lowest tax bill in the country. Those who would claim we have the highest taxes in the country are simply wrong because of either ignorance or malevolence.

Mr. Speaker, a backup document to Alberta's 2001 budget shows that an average Saskatchewan family pays either the third lowest . . . third or fourth lowest taxes in Canada. The *National Post*, which I believe some of the members opposite are familiar with, says:

Our top marginal rate on personal income tax will be the third lowest in Canada in 2002.

And now, Mr. Speaker, the Fraser Institute says that Saskatchewan's tax freedom day advanced six days in 2001. When resource revenues are excluded, our tax freedom day is earlier than the national average.

Mr. Speaker, the government of Alberta, the *National Post*, and even the Fraser Institute all agree — taxes are coming down in Saskatchewan and those are the facts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Party Position on No-Fault Insurance

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the reviews for the Saskatchewan Party position on no fault are coming in, Mr. Speaker. The Coalition Against No Fault says the Saskatchewan

Party seems to realize that politicians have a responsibility to speak for the people and to control the bureaucrats.

Another group says in a press release:

We're delighted that the Saskatchewan Party has decided, after careful consideration, to put its muscle behind this document. We see it as a major breakthrough.

And the headline of their press release, Mr. Speaker, says:

Saskatchewan's Party promise to scrap no-fault insurance and restore justice viewed as a victory for the people of the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's a much more important victory on the way that we want to tell them about. It will be a victory of vision for growth over the menu for mediocrity, Mr. Speaker. It will be a victory for innovation over the failed notions of the past. It'll be a victory of democracy in the workplace over forced unionization. It'll be a . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it will be a victory of diligence over complacency. It'll be a victory of competence over incompetence, Mr. Speaker.

This is the most important victory yet to come, Mr. Speaker, on the soon and coming day when the people of this province rise up and get rid of the NDP (New Democratic Party), Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — So, Mr. Speaker, while we are grateful to those who call our position on no-fault a great victory for the people of the province, we've got a message for them: thank you very much but, Mr. Speaker, wait; you ain't seen nothin' yet.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Groundbreaking Ceremony for Prince Albert Visual and Performing Arts Centre

Mr. Thomson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Moving from fiction to fact, I'm very happy today to rise as a former citizen of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. And I'm particularly pleased this morning to recognize an important event that's happening back home in my hometown.

This morning the member for Prince Albert Northcote is speaking at a groundbreaking ceremony for the new P.A. (Prince Albert) Visual and Performing Arts Centre. This new \$9.5 million facility is the culmination of hard work and planning by the citizens of P.A., who will now have a focal point for community entertainment, for visiting performers, for participation in the performing and visual arts by young and mature artists, and of course, Mr. Speaker, it will provide yet another, another excellent reason to visit the beautiful city of Prince Albert as it'll be a fine tourist attraction.

Mr. Speaker, many individuals and groups helped bring this

project to fruition. Many people have been involved in this project, and as such, congratulations go to Mitch Holash, Chair of the P.A. Arts Board, members of the board, and the many people who have contributed to this project.

The operating costs for the centre will come from money from the Diefenbaker Trust and from the Prince Albert Kinsmen Club, as well from a generous grant from Rawlco Communications, which the member for P.A. Northcote paid tribute to a few days ago in this Assembly.

I am particularly pleased that the Assembly could show its support for this project by contributing \$2.3 million from the Community Initiatives Fund. And I am proud but not surprised that my hometown raised nearly \$4 million locally to help fund the construction.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself, I am sure on behalf of you, the member for P.A. Northcote, and all members in this Assembly, I want to offer our congratulations to the good people of P.A.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Annual Playoffs in Birch Hills

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, although it appears that this may be the last day of the sitting for this spring session, today actually marks a beginning for the town of Birch Hills. Today, July 6, the provincial Squirt D girls and the northern Pee Wee C girls begin their annual playoffs to be hosted royally by the town of Birch Hills.

Mr. Speaker, in the Pee Wee division, teams from as far away as Kindersley will attend, and in the Squirt division, teams from as far away as Edam will converge upon Birch Hills. The two host teams, Mr. Speaker, will be trying to use this hot July weekend to cap off what has been a very successful spring campaign.

The Squirt girls, coached by Ralph and Merle Pratt, finished second in league playoffs, losing only to Osborne in the finals. The Pee Wee girls, coached by Denis Engele, Marlene Manson, and Blair Stephan, finished first in league playoffs. This is the second year in a row the team accomplished this feat.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, visiting teams to Birch Hills this weekend will be facing two formidable opponents. Let's all hope this weekend shapes up to have the kind of weather conducive to good ball.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in congratulating the Squirt girls and Pee Wee girls softball teams from Birch Hills for their successful year, and to wish the best of success for all the girls competing in Birch Hills this weekend. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

National Old-timers Baseball Tournament in Regina

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Speaker, if you build it, they will come. Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is time to talk baseball. The Regina Ghosts

baseball team has been awarded the national championships for the Canadian National Old-timers Federation. The tournament running from August 2 through 6 will play host to teams from almost every region in this fine country. Only two provinces and one territory will not be represented here in Regina,

Mr. Speaker, there will be 12 teams competing for the over-35 division and 14 teams battling for top spot in the over-45 division. This top-notch action will be witnessed all over Regina and the surrounding area, from the field at the Optimist Park over to Lumsden and all the way out to Moose Jaw.

This ninth annual tournament is going to bring about some major league plays, Mr. Speaker, and I would encourage all members and people all over this province to go out and watch some world-class baseball.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I would like all the members of the Assembly to join with me in wishing all the teams the best of luck, especially the Regina Ghosts who I know can go the distance. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Job Loss Statistics

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, well, well, well, well. On day 71 of the session finally we get an insightful comment from the NDP. Have you ever been whitewater rafting? We're to the point where we've lost our paddles, lost control, and about the only thing we can do is hang on for dear life.

Mr. Speaker, we're just wondering, was it the House Leader who said it? Was it the Justice minister who made those comments?

Mr. Speaker, once again the captain of the NDP dinghy has turned in the worst job numbers in Canada. Saskatchewan lost 15,800 jobs in the past year, by far the worst record in the country.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP killing so many jobs? Will the Premier admit that he has no plan to create jobs in our province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of something I think we all read in *The Leader-Post* just days ago, a commentary written by Mr. Marty Klyne, president and chief operating officer of the Regina Regional Economic Development Authority. In that article he said the following. Speaking of the job numbers of which we are all deeply concerned, Mr. Klyne said:

There are those who will take some inexplicable pleasure in playing this up and scaring others into believing the sky is falling. While the job losses make for bad news, it seems bad news makes for good reading and idle, or unproductive, conversation.

Well we've had a dose of idle and unproductive conversation in here, that's for sure.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, and this government is concerned about the job circumstances in our province. But did the Leader of the Opposition point out in the House today that month over month, from May to this month, the jobs in this province have grown by a total of 6,500.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier by downplaying the importance of this is showing that he's all wet from his wild dinghy ride. Mr. Speaker, it's the NDP's own members that are speaking up. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan families are paying the price.

Mr. Speaker, these job losses aren't just a one-time thing. Over the first six months of 2001 the NDP is averaging 13,000 fewer jobs than last year. Mr. Speaker, the Premier doesn't realize it but that's an absolute disaster.

What is the Premier doing? Well according to his own members, he's dropped the paddles; he's hanging on for dear life. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan deserve better. Why is the Premier content in killing so many jobs in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The Leader of the Opposition trends into some very dangerous territory for he and his friends over there when he starts talking about being all wet and whitewater rafting, and I hear on the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) radio this morning he plans to do a little water skiing this weekend.

Well we all know about that other leader of the Alliance Party that joined the wetsuit and got himself all wet, where he's gone to.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, this government, this Premier, this government is concerned about the circumstances facing job opportunities in our province. We know, as the Leader of the Opposition will well know, that of the decline we've seen over the last year over year that fully 75 per cent of that decline is a result of the difficult circumstances faced by our farming families and the agriculture industry. He above all should know that.

But, but, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what does not assist. What does not assist is the constant voices of doom and gloom, negativism that comes from those members over there. In fact the private sector in this province are having to launch their own campaign to compete against the doom and gloom, the negativism, that's coming from the Saskatchewan Alliance Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(10:30)

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier's in trouble and he stoops to name calling and deflecting attention from his miserable record. The Premier had better tighten the straps on his water wings because there's more rapids ahead.

The TD (Toronto Dominion) Bank is now forecasting Saskatchewan will have the worst job losses, the worst retail sales growth, and the worst disposable income growth in the entire country for the rest of 2001. Mr. Speaker, this Premier is leading the province into an economic nose-dive. And he has absolutely no plan to turn it around.

Mr. Speaker, why is the government plunging our province into an economic nose-dive?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, here in fact are the accurate numbers reported today by the labour force statistics. Month over month, from May of 2001 to June of 2001 in this province, an increase of 6,500 jobs. In this province, Mr. Speaker — these are the facts — month over month, this unemployment rate has dropped 1.1 per cent; now down to 5.3 — 5.3. Which, Mr. Speaker, is well below the national average of 6.7.

The Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about the prediction of the Toronto Dominion Bank, another prediction that appears in the paper today. Let me talk about a prediction that was recently brought to our attention by his Finance critic. Their own economic forecaster, which they paid good taxpayers' dollars to get, says this province is going to grow next year by 2.8 per cent. What about your own prediction of 2.8 per cent?

Again, I make this point, Mr. Speaker: the economy of Saskatchewan is not well served by the nattering nabobs of negativism from across the way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker. What's happening — and the Premier should recognize this — is as economic forecasts are updated, the situation becomes worse and worse because of the mismanagement of his government.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are looking for an economic plan from the government but all they ever hear are excuses and blame. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Economic Development . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. The noise . . . background noise level is just a little too high for the Speaker to be able to hear the questions in total. I would ask the members just to modulate your voices somewhat.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Economic Development, and today the Premier himself says it's the farmers' fault. No solutions, just blame the farmers. The farmers aren't a problem in Manitoba or Alberta, but in Saskatchewan the farmers are the problem.

The NDP promised to create 30,000 new jobs; there are 13,000 fewer jobs in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, is the Premier going to take responsibility for this economic disaster, or is he going to blame the farmers or anyone else he can think of pointing a finger at?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I want to report to the House today, and through the House to the people of Saskatchewan that while the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues are strategizing tricks in this House, now hiding in the bushes, I'll tell you where I've been.

I'll tell you where I've been in just the last few weeks. I was in Weyburn, Mr. Speaker. Weyburn for the opening of the Nexan Cable expansion, a significant and major expansion of Nexan Cable in the community of Weyburn.

I was up, Mr. Speaker, in Hudson Bay, with the member from Carrot River Valley and to his credit he . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I was up in Hudson Bay to share in the very happy ribbon-cutting of the new Weyerhaeuser OSB (oriented strand board) plant employing hundreds of people in the community of Hudson Bay.

I was happy to stand with the ministry of Forestry and the Minister of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) to announce the plan for a similar development on the west side of the province near Meadow Lake — a huge employment in OSB.

And do you know where I'm going to be tonight, Mr. Speaker. Do you know where I'm going to be tonight? I'm going to be in the community of Assiniboia cutting a ribbon on the Prairie Rubber, an innovative, job-creating, environmentally sensitive endeavour in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan. And following that, I'm going to be meeting with maybe 175, 200 people in Assiniboia. These are not people negative about the future of the province; they're doing something about this province in their communities, unlike our friends across the way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is likely the last day of the spring session so let's review the new Premier's record.

In his first six months of office, the Premier promised to create jobs — he failed. The Premier promised to cut waiting lists — he failed. The Premier promised to deliver \$500 million in farm . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order. Order. Order. We must reduce the amount of braying and yelling in order to be able to hear the questions.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I assure you the braying came from that side.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier promised to deliver \$500 million in farm aid. He failed. And the people of North Battleford are still boiling their water. Mr. Speaker, this session of the legislature has seen failure after failure from the NDP government, to the point where his own members, his very own members, are questioning his leadership.

Will the Premier admit, what his own members are saying, that he has lost control and is hanging on for dear life.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, we're going to have more time today to debate some of the issues that the Leader of the Opposition raised, but I want to bring to the attention of the House one illustration. This administration made a commitment to fix the roads of Saskatchewan and fix the highways.

Now I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I have in my hand a very happy letter. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, as do all members of the House, about a year ago now, the mayor of Val Marie and the community of Val Marie set out to patch the potholes in Highway No. 4 around the community of Val Marie.

Mr. Speaker, I want to read a letter to you and to the House that I received yesterday, a very happy letter to me as Premier from the current mayor of Val Marie, Mr. Robert Ducan. He says to me:

This is a letter of congratulations to the government for the great improvement in our Highway No. 4. We can now meet tourists without embarrassment and safety is much improved. It is very uplifting (says the mayor) to see the government and its employees performing in such an efficient manner.

We usually only criticize and never let anyone know when things are working. So with that thought, I say a big thank you from the people of Val Marie.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Premier, but before that I have a comment for him. The highways are still a mess in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. The continued loss of thousands of jobs in this province is very, very discouraging because it means that people have to look elsewhere for work. Most of the people in the job market are young people. They are mobile, they may or may not have a family yet, and they will look elsewhere for a good job with a good income if they can't find it here in their home province.

Mr. Speaker, day after day Saskatchewan families are saying goodbye to their young people as they leave for other provinces. And even though it breaks their heart, they realize that their family members must go to where the best opportunities lie.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: will you tell Saskatchewan . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. You'll rephrase your question.

Ms. Eagles: — Will the Premier tell Saskatchewan families today his plan to stop the job losses and create opportunities so that our kids can come home.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to judging the state of the roads, I'll take the word of the mayor of Val Marie everyday over the word of the member from Estevan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate the member perhaps was not listening to the debate in this House yesterday when I shared with this House the results of a survey that was completed last year indicating that in all of Canada — in all of Canada — Saskatchewan ranks third as an opportunity place for young people; third in all of Canada. An improvement, if I may say, Mr. Speaker, over 1999 when we stood as fourth.

Are we finished the work? We are not finished the work. We have outlined in this session what we have described as the *Partnership for Prosperity*, a document, a plan with action steps, with targeted goals, unlike an opposition who day after day in this House can find it in their hearts to criticize but can't seem to find it in their hearts to come up with one positive or progressive suggestion.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget alone we have created over 2,000 opportunities for Saskatchewan young people through the Centennial Summer Student Program, a program that over the course of its life will create 10,000 opportunities for young people to work and learn in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will take the Premier on a tour of my constituency but I will assure you we will be using his car.

Mr. Speaker, the continued loss of jobs in Saskatchewan has a huge effect on every sector. We have a great education system in this province yet we are educating our kids just so that we can see them leave Saskatchewan because they want jobs elsewhere. How are we going to sustain this education system if our tax base keeps shrinking? How are we ever going to rebuild our health care system and recruit health care professionals we so desperately need if Saskatchewan is seen as a place people leave, not where they go?

Mr. Speaker, the Premier and all of his ministers keep saying they are working on these problems but we never hear a solution. What is the Premier's solution to the continued economic slide Saskatchewan is experiencing?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, we are providing the best educational opportunities for our young people from

pre-kindergarten to post-secondary, I will say of anywhere in the country. In this budget alone, we've dedicated, through the ministry of Education and my coalition partner, 9.1 per cent increase to the Education budgets of the province of Saskatchewan to provide that kind of training for our people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've got the doom and gloom artists over there. But here are some facts — here are some facts — not from government but right here, from the Canada West Foundation in their Western Landscapes newsletter this spring. Mr. Speaker, here's what's going on, here's what's going on in western Canada. Growth in real GDP (gross domestic product) 1999 to 2000: growth in British Columbia, 5.7 per cent; growth in Manitoba, 17.4 per cent; growth in Alberta, 27.4 per cent; growth in Saskatchewan, 27.8 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the Canada West Foundation aggregate productivity: growth in British Columbia, 3 per cent; growth in Manitoba, 10 per cent; growth in Alberta, 17 per cent; growth in Saskatchewan, 20 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the headline in *The Leader-Post* "More gloom predicted" says it all. The TD Bank has downgraded its forecast for the performance of our provincial economy. Doug Elliott with *Sask Trends Monitor* says that if these trends continue, he expects the provincial population to drop by 10,000 due to the out . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order. Order, once again. Once again members, I would ask for your courtesy to the member who's asking the question. Order, please.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They're a little testy over there today.

Mr. Speaker, Doug Elliott with *Sask Trends Monitor* says if these trends continue, he expects the provincial population to drop by 10,000 people due to out-migration by the end of the year. Mr. Speaker, that's virtually equivalent to the population of the city of Estevan — 10,000 people. Mostly our young people and our young families who feel there are better opportunities elsewhere.

If the Premier and this NDP government believe that people support their government and their economic development policies, he is wrong, because people are voting with their feet.

Mr. Speaker, is the Premier going to stand by and do nothing while 10,000 people leave this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(10:45)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, if in fact it says in *The Leader-Post* today, if there's a headline that says "More gloom predicted", perhaps it was, perhaps it was a prediction that we're going to hear more from the opposition party, because that's what we hear day after day after day is gloom from the

opposition party.

Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated in this House and very publicly, we take this matter very seriously. We take this matter very seriously. We are working on a daily basis to strengthen and build the economy of Saskatchewan, and I can point to example after example after example of success, Mr. Speaker.

Now has the opposition in the session given us a positive suggestion about what to do with the economy? Well they talk about cutting taxes. They talk about cutting taxes. They don't tell us how much, where, or when or how this is going to get paid for.

But in fact the Leader of the Opposition early on in this session, in Friday, April 6 edition of that same *Leader-Post*, unveiled their economic game plan. And I review it again, Mr. Speaker. He said on that page of *The Leader-Post*:

If the Saskatchewan Party wins the next election, Hermanson said the population outflow would be stemmed within a year or two and the province would then grow, if the weather and the national economy cooperated.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well I'll tell you, this plan of ours is not a weather-permitting; this is an all-weather kind of plan we've got.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier's answer is precisely the problem with this government today. This NDP government has no idea how to stop the job losses and how to stop the people from leaving this province. But they say, we've cut taxes, when in fact, Mr. Speaker, they've raised taxes for Saskatchewan families. They have become so lost in their own rhetoric that they have no idea how Saskatchewan families really feel.

Mr. Speaker, people are tired of paying more — more for taxes, more for energy, more for power, and more for telephone. They are tired of waiting for this government to take some action to improve health care. They are tired of hearing this government say over and over that they are meeting and listening, listening and meeting, but never ever making a decision. They are tired of hearing this NDP government blame everyone else in the province for this province's poor economic performance.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier finally stand up and take his responsibility? Will he commit to Saskatchewan people that he will take some action to at least stop the continued loss of jobs in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, this budget which they oppose on every front, this budget which they oppose on every front continues the reduction of the tax load on Saskatchewan people.

It continues the personal income taxes being paid by

Saskatchewan households and families. It knocks two points . . . 2 per cent off the small-business corporate tax, from 8 to 6, and it has raised the theory, a move which I may say — contrary to the voices we hear in here — is much appreciated in the business community as they generate employment opportunities.

What are we doing through the budget that they are voting against? We're rebuilding our transportation infrastructure in highways. We're investing in our young people so they might be equipped to seize the economic opportunities of the future. We're linking the communities of Saskatchewan through the information technology network so we can seize the 21st century opportunities.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, in all of this we're not forgetting people. And perhaps the happiest statistic we have heard today came from the member's statement — from the member from Dewdney — when he told us that over the last several years we've seen a decline of 27 per cent; 27 per cent of people dependent on social assistance in this province. That, Mr. Speaker, is result of a creative and growing economy and a darn good government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP says that the Saskatchewan Party doesn't bring enough good news to the House. Well here's some good news, Mr. Speaker. We're now one session closer to the next election. Mr. Speaker, that will give the Saskatchewan Party the opportunity to turn the economy around, to create jobs, and bring hope back to Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, when will the NDP allow the Saskatchewan Party to get on with the job? When will they allow us to turn this province around by calling an election?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well I guess the final question from the Leader of the Opposition is when do I intend to let that group of men and women take over the reins of government? The answer, Mr. Speaker, is never.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, isn't this interesting. The NDP's own members admit that they have lost control of their government and all they can do is hold on for dear life.

Mr. Speaker, you know the saddest thing about the NDP record is? It doesn't have to be this way. Saskatchewan will be great again. Saskatchewan will grow our economy. Saskatchewan will bring our children home. Saskatchewan will deliver a health system that provides proper health care for our families and our children and our grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, this will happen. And it starts the day that we get rid of this NDP government that is out of control.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, my question is when is this day? It can't come too soon. When is the Premier going to call the election and allow Saskatchewan to move forward?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are leaving their seats. You know it is an interesting question, it is an interesting question. They want me to call an election. Well you know what, I called one. It was called the Elphinstone by-election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well we know what happened to them there. I called one. It was my own, the Riversdale by-election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now they want me to call another one. Well, Mr. Speaker, that day will come, that day will come, very soon or later, that day will come. And I am very confident that when that day comes and when that period is past, I'll be in this seat. I'm not sure who'll be in that seat, but I'll be in this seat, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Agriculture and Food Vote 1

Subvote (AG01)

The Chair: — I invite the minister to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — My officials with me today are Mr. Hal Cushon, who is the director of policy and planning. Seated right beside me, Mr. Doug Matthies — behind me — is the general manager of the crop insurance corporation. And Mr. Jack Zepp is directly behind Mr. Cushon, who is the director of administration services.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Chairman, I have one question I'd like to pose to the Minister of Agriculture on your permanent cover program. Is that still eligible? And how many . . . Is there still money in that program? And how many people have applied for it so far? And how many people have been approved?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — The answer, Mr. Chair, is that there still is money in the, in the account. There are now 6,000 applications that have gone out or have come in, and we've already paid out a substantial number on that 6,000 number of applications.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I wanted to speak with you this morning about crop insurance and the procedures. If you would — you and your officials — outline,

for farmers who are faced with drought, exactly what the process and the procedures are in terms of what their responsibility is, first of all, as a farmer when they are in a situation where their crop is clearly drought-affected and they want to make claim. I'd like you to, in the best fashion possible, lay out the complete procedure and what kind of coverage they can expect, how it influences future coverage in terms of whether it's summerfallow or stubble coverage, and what effect it has on their premium, Mr. Minister.

I think we all recognize, Mr. Chair . . . Mr. Minister, I should say, the importance of the ag sector and we are experiencing a widespread drought in Saskatchewan right now. We're all hopeful that that will be alleviated if we get some rainfall soon, but I think in many areas of the province the feeling is that the crop is gone and we might as well admit that and outline the procedures that farmers will follow and that Crop Insurance will follow, following that.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Chair, to the member, the member raises a very important question. Clearly as we experience in the province, some parts of the province, some concern about an intensified drought.

The current program, the Crop Insurance program of course, as the member will know, the amount of premium that you pay is based on your historical year of participation in the program and whether or not you in fact have had loss payouts over that period of time. And one's premium is discounted throughout the course of the life of their involvement with the Crop Insurance program. However, various different times, you may need to collect on the program and of course it will impact your premium accordingly.

Say to the member opposite that, Mr. Chair, that the farmer really will make the decision about whether or not they want to write off their crop. And if that decision of course is made, then of course inspectors from the Crop Insurance agency would then go out and do the inspection of the crop and then make a decision.

(11:00)

If the farmer decides that he wants to continue on with the current crop that he has and hope that in fact he'll be able to recover something from it, we do an inspection on it. We provide some appraisal numbers on it and then come back for a re-inspection later in the fall.

If the farmer decides that he wants to put the crop to another use, whether he wants to bale it or whether he wants to put in into . . . take it off or to graze it, we will pay out the claim and there would be then a . . . guaranteed production is already provided because he would have a history. It would be appraised on that basis and then there would be a coordinate payout.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I wonder if you could explain as well the dates, the important dates, that must be met in terms of the establishment benefits — and I think that date may be already gone by — what the procedure is in terms of making a claim to qualify for a summerfallow coverage for next year.

I think it's incumbent upon Crop Insurance and I would say, Mr. Minister, that perhaps a public awareness campaign to the crop insurance contract holders would be in order to make clear to them their obligations and what kind of coverage they can expect, the important dates that they have to keep in mind to qualify for any changes in coverage or any . . . not changes in coverage but any changes in opportunity for coverage next year.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Chair, to the member, the establishment date is June 20 and then the summerfallow policy is as follows. If the general rules are that the land must be worked by July 11 and kept in good shape for the following year if in fact there's a decision here to summerfallow. If the crop was seeded and the field is to be worked under in the same year, the adjuster may recommend granting summerfallow coverage for the next year if he assesses growth was minimal or the crop was destroyed due to excess moisture conditions. That's the way in which the policy is crafted today.

Mr. Boyd: — Am I understanding correct, Mr. Minister, when it comes to the establishment benefit . . . I had a farmer call me the other day about it and he was quite concerned about what Crop Insurance people had been telling him. He had seeded a crop of canary seed and the crop had germinated and there was evidence of germination, clear evidence of germination, but the crop had basically flat-out ran out of moisture and withered and died in the field and then Crop Insurance officials came out and viewed the crop and said that they were writing the crop off and would provide him with a \$20 an acre establishment benefit.

Now clearly there was no reason, or no opportunity to reseed because there was no moisture available whatsoever in the soil, and he said to them he would prefer then to take the crop through to yield coverage, through to completion. And then he would have considerable higher coverage.

The Crop Insurance officials told him that no, he didn't have an option under that circumstance and that he only qualified for \$20 worth of establishment benefit; when indeed through his what-if forms that every farmer gets to establish what their benefits will be at the other end, at the yield conclusion, he would have somewhere in the neighbourhood of 80 to \$90 worth of coverage, and considerable higher coverage obviously.

And he would have much preferred to take it through to the conclusion rather than accept the establishment benefit. And in fact he was told that he had no option in that regard that he . . . the Crop Insurance people were indeed writing the crop off and he had to take the establishment benefit and could not take it through to yield.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Chair, to the member. In each case there is a decision made based on the strength of the particular crop that has been seeded and whether or not it has any ability actually to make the crop season.

And of course the adjuster would be, in consultation with the farmer, would be attempting to establish that kind of a understanding.

If in fact, there is a decision made that the crop has not established itself adequately — has not established itself adequately — if that decision has been made by the adjuster,

then in fact, as the member points out, there would be then the kind of payout that the member has indicated.

Sometimes on an individual basis, what the adjuster might say is that if the growing season still remains and sufficient time, there could be some discussion about whether or not you could seed an earlier harvesting crop. But the establishment of the viability of the current crop is really very much the issue here.

And much of that discussion is based on a series of questions that they would go through in terms of what would be the viability of trying to get another crop seeded and whether or not the current crop that they're examining or reviewing in fact has established itself in the kind of fashion where you still have some other options. And this really is a discussion on a case-by-case basis with each of the individual producers.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, will Crop Insurance through your department be notifying contract holders of their options that are available to them prior to the July 11, I believe, and I hear rumours that you may be extending it to July 15, the opportunity to burn off or plough down a crop to allow for summerfallow coverage next year? Will you be outlining in a public awareness campaign to contract holders the importance of those dates, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — I just want to say to the member opposite that we have currently, as the member knows, a fairly significant information program that Crop Insurance puts out. Today they have of course the existing policy we haven't changed as it relates to the summerfallow piece.

The member also would, if he is a crop insurance holder, will also receive a calendar in the mail that comes early in the year which describes the kinds of benefits that the crop insurance program provides. And on an individual basis of course, through our extension offices, our folks are available to provide that kind of information for individuals.

I think that, particularly on the forage program that we announced about three weeks ago or two weeks ago, we had a large public campaign on that piece which is separate and independent from, I think, some of the discussion that we're having this morning. And from our perspective I think farmers have a pretty good idea of what it is that we're doing or understanding of what we're doing on the forage hay piece.

And on the crop insurance side, as I say, we already have a fair amount of information that we've put out there. If there is some sense here that the member believes that there's something else we might do to enhance that, we'd be happy to take that under advisement.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I think that . . . I think you should very seriously consider that because fortunately, very, very fortunately in this province we suffer these kind of weather-related activities not all that often. There are always parts of the province where there are problems, but this year it appears to be particularly large in nature, large in area, and as a result of that, I think that we need to strengthen our efforts to make people aware of the important deadlines that they are faced with.

Mr. Minister, as you know, farmers are faced with a number of forms from NISA (Net Income Stabilization Account) to AIDA (Net Income Stabilization Account) to CFIP (Canadian Farm Income Program) to CSAP (Canada-Saskatchewan Adjustment Program) to you name it — it goes on and on and on. And frankly, a lot of farmers, I don't think, have the time necessary to go through these things word for word.

A letter from the Crop Insurance department, I think, would be a good reminder of them, particularly under the circumstances that they are faced with, just so they can clearly look at the options that they have available to them and once again, make the decision that's going to be very, very important in terms of what kind of coverage levels they have.

Mr. Minister, following through from there, there will be many, many, many crops in Saskatchewan, and particularly on the west side, that will be taken through to yield. And at that point, farmers again will be faced with another decision, whether or not they should harvest the crop or not harvest the crop. And part of that decision will be based on . . . part of that decision will be based on what kind of coverage levels they have and also on the minimum yield requirement to harvest a crop that Crop Insurance has in place.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would explain for the farmers of this province that are affected with drought what the minimum yield requirement to harvest a crop will be that they must keep in mind later on this year.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Chair, to the member, we don't write down the crops or write-off the crops. What we would do of course is we would sit down or have a discussion with the producer, look at what their yield appraisal is. Then the farmer would make a decision as to whether or not he wants to retain that crop or whether he wants to work it down.

And then of course at the end of the crop year the payout would be made based on the historical amount of coverage that the farmer would have insured for, and based on his particular yield is the way in which that decision would be arrived at.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I may not have explained myself properly to you. Now let's remove the spring season here that we're in, or early summer, and look at the other end, at fall, at harvest here.

I am under the understanding, and correct me if I'm wrong, that Crop Insurance has a minimum yield that you must harvest a crop. So if the crop is less than five bushels to the acre, is there a requirement that the farmer still harvests that crop and goes through the expense of harvesting that crop, or at what level is the crop written off entirely and they aren't required to harvest the crop?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Chair, to the member, there is a low threshold and each crop that the member would speak of, each would have a different type of . . . with low threshold. Now the expectation is of course that there would be a harvest here, unless it's below the threshold or if in fact the farmer decides to, I think, to bale it or to graze it, and so that would then provide for a different option.

So the reality is that in fact the farmer would be expected here, unless he makes the decision to abandon it, to harvest it and use the thresholds that would apply for each of the various different crops. And I can provide you with a copy of what those thresholds are, particularly if there are particular farmers who are asking you what that threshold might be. I'll send this over and make sure that you will have a copy of this.

I also want to say to you, Mr. Chair, to the member, that the suggestion that he makes about providing information — and I should have answered that in my previous occasion or previous question — we will give the undertaking today to provide some radio ads to the farmers across the province. We think that written correspondence . . . we have a very short timeline now and we have I think about 800 appraisals that are already out there and we best can address that I think by just doing the radio ad as opposed to any kind of a written correspondence.

(11:15)

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I think we would certainly support that. I think that's a good step in the right direction. You're indeed correct that the timelines for any kind of written correspondence with farmers would be very, very tight.

For the situation in the spring, I think those yield thresholds . . . that information would be of value to farmers as well so that they can assess for themselves at what point they want to go through the additional, extra cost of harvesting a crop that may not meet that yield threshold. So if you were to provide radio ads to outline their obligations and their options right now, and provide either in written or radio ads as well the threshold requirements for the end of the year, I think that that would be helpful too.

And that undertaking I think could go out with some of the publications that regularly are sent out from the Crop Insurance Corporation or through the Canadian Wheat Board or other channels as well, Mr. Minister. And we would certainly support your efforts in that area to make aware of the situation to farmers what their obligations and what kind of coverage levels they can expect under these types of situations.

Mr. Minister, I want to turn my attention . . . or want to continue with perhaps a couple or fewer questions on the drought situation. I see in today's newspaper you are saying that the programs in place will be — and I want to know this — will be the only programs in place. Or are you looking at, for the grains and oilseeds sector, and speciality crop sector, any further top-up or any further assistance that might be looked at for the farmers that are faced with a very serious drought situation?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — I think, Mr. Chair, to the member, in my scrum yesterday or the discussions that I had yesterday with the media, what I'd indicated in it is that in the province today we only have three programs that can assist producers as it relates to the grains and oilseeds or even to the livestock side, and that being in the NISA, the Crop Insurance, and certainly the Canada Farm Income Program. And I know that from time to time across the province we have certain areas that will

experience either drought or we'll have too much moisture in some parts, as was the case a couple of years, and that the dependency, of course, is on the safety nets that are in place today.

I have, in my recent meetings with my colleagues in the Yukon and with the federal government, indicated that there is a real need here for us to review those programs and we have a commitment now to get a better understanding and appreciation of enriching some of those.

I said to the media yesterday, we're working closely with Alberta and Manitoba on a readjusted Crop Insurance program and that will be the route that we're tending to go over the next couple of months.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I've forgotten to ask a couple further questions on the Crop Insurance program while we have the officials for that available. It's my understanding that Crop Insurance is looking at, specifically for chickpeas, I am told — I don't know this — but I am told that they have put in place a monitoring program to assess the crop that's out there.

There's considerable amount of concern with regard to disease, ascochyta, in the Shaunavon right through to Weyburn-Estevan area. And I'm told that you have implemented a monitoring program to ensure that the crop is being handled properly by their producers in terms of spraying the crop with products like Bravo or Quadris or . . . is that indeed correct, Mr. Minister?

Have you put in place a monitoring program, and what is the purpose of the monitoring program, and is it to simply assess the amount of liability that Crop Insurance is faced with?

Is it to advise farmers on what kind of requirements they have to properly maintain that crop? Or is it . . . what is — I guess my question is very simple — what is the purpose of it if it is in place and what goals do you hope to achieve by that program?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — To the member, as the member can appreciate, this is a very new crop to the province and a very important crop to the province. And what the adjusters are doing and Crop Insurance is doing is working very closely with the industry and with the producers. And there is a monitoring program, in fact, in place that we're a part of today.

And what we're looking at is trying to understand where and how the crops are most successful, what makes them most successful, making sure that the kinds of . . . we have an understanding of the kinds of weather conditions that are assistant in making these crops the kinds of value that they provide. So as much as this is a learning process for many of the producers who are getting into these crops in a more extensive fashion, so it is for our Crop Insurance agency and corporation.

And so we're working closely through the monitoring program to try to understand that, and to be sure that in the future we can provide benefit coverages that will be responsive to what the producers are wanting to see in the program.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. So we can assure

farmers when they call us that this is not to try and absolve Crop Insurance of any kind of coverage, or any kind of obligation. It's simply to compliment management, and to perhaps even advise management practices, and to monitor the crop as it progresses through the season.

I think that reassurance from you and your department, and from the Crop Insurance people would be of benefit right now. It's a very, very high value crop, but it's also a very, very high input crop. And I think farmers are wanting to protect it to the degree that they can. And they also, I think, believe and want an assurance from you, Mr. Minister, that this monitoring is not to try and sort of trip them up for any management practices that they might be undertaking, or to try and absolve Crop Insurance of any kind of liability under these very, very stressful drought-related situations.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Chair, to the member. It's exactly as he's highlighted. This is not about providing any kind of restrictive measures on the producer or on the industry as it relates to the . . . this very important crop.

It's really about the pulse development working closely with the Pulse Development Board. And it's also to ensure that our adjusters are far more efficient in their work in the future because, as I've said, this is a very important crop to the industry and our working relationship with them will be to enhance the work of our corporation, and certainly the work of the adjuster. And we can assure the producers accordingly.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, Mr. Chair. In Saskatchewan certainly agriculture's has always been and will always be a very, very important component of our economy here in Saskatchewan. And as you know, as Agriculture Minister, we're always faced with some very serious challenges as to how we implement policies to put our farmers into a position, the most advantageous position we can, relative to other producers throughout the world.

I want to just finally say to the Minister of Agriculture on behalf of the farm people of this province, we sincerely believe that you and your department do try and implement policies that will benefit them. We have a challenge — and we all face this challenge, whether we're on that side of the House or on this side of the House — in terms of putting in place the long-term safety net program that is necessary and very much needed. And I think you would agree with me on that, Mr. Minister.

So we certainly will support efforts made in that area to put in place that program as quickly as possible. We will always and we will never not reserve the right to criticize that and to offer comment on it. You can also expect, you can also expect certainly support when we believe support is warranted, as we supported your efforts for livestock producers here most recently.

But there are some very, very serious challenges that we are going to be faced with not only in agriculture, but indeed all of this province if we see the level of drought that we unfortunately are looking at right now. The economy of this province is going to be very, very dramatically impacted and we better brace ourselves for that impact, Mr. Minister.

So I would implore you and your department and your cabinet and the Premier to very, very seriously look at what kind of efforts can be put in place to address that very unfortunate situation as it unfolds, and to very, very seriously put all efforts forward, all efforts forward to get in place a long-term safety net that is desperately needed.

And, Mr. Chair, with those closing comments, I want to thank the Minister of Agriculture and his officials for answering our questions throughout estimates and throughout this past session.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Chair, I too want to echo some of the words of my colleague, the Agriculture critic from Kindersley, because as he has identified, I think appropriately, we have a number of challenges in this industry without any doubt. But we have a tremendous opportunity which, I think, he too has indicated in his address just a couple of minutes ago.

Saskatchewan, as we know, has a tremendous potential for growing our agricultural industry, and our communities, be they rural or urban, are highly dependent on how we make this industry grow into the future. So I appreciate his comments as it relates to the notion that we need to work together around some fronts.

I appreciate the fact that just recently the member was able to attend the standing committee in Ottawa with us. And I would say made a strong presentation as well about the importance of working together and not only trying to fix the safety net issues in this province but also looking at a whole host of other agricultural requirements that will help improve our economy.

So I appreciate his words and the questions that we've had on this file, not only through the course of our discussions over the last three or four occasions that we've been up together but also during question period where he's raised a number of very important issues around this industry.

So I too, Mr. Chair, want to thank the officials of my department. Consistently this file makes its way near the top of the discussion through the course of the budget debates and it requires a great deal of hard work and energy on the part of my officials.

And I want to thank them too for the way in which they've been able to present in my view not only a good budget but a future direction for our department, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

Subvote (AG01) agreed to.

Subvotes (AG02), (AG05), (AG04), (AG06), (AG07), (AG12), (AG03), (AG08), (AG09), (AG10) agreed to.

Vote 1 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Agriculture and Food
Vote 146**

Subvotes (AG02), (AG03) agreed to.

Vote 146 agreed to.

(11:30)

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan
Vote 147**

Subvote (AG01) — Statutory.

**Supplementary Estimates 2000-01
General Revenue Fund
Agriculture and Food
Vote 1**

Subvotes (AG08), (AG10) agreed to.

Vote 1 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Environment and Resource Management
Vote 26**

Subvotes (ER09), (ER10), (ER05), (ER07), (ER03), (ER11), (ER14), agreed to.

Vote 26 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Environment and Resource Management
Forest Fire Contingency Fund
Vote 72**

Subvote (FF01) agreed to.

Vote 72 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 2000-01
General Revenue Fund
Environment and Resource Management
Vote 26**

Subvotes (ER10), (ER07) agreed to.

Vote 26 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Health
Vote 32**

Subvotes (HE01), (HE02), (HE03), (HE10), (HE04), (HE06), (HE08) agreed to.

Vote 32 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Health — Transition Fund
Vote 69**

The Chair: — The next item is Vote 69, (HT01) and there is no amount required. Are there any questions? Seeing none, we'll move on.

Supplementary Estimates 2000-01

**General Revenue Fund
Health
Vote 32**

Subvotes (HE03), (HE04), (HE06) agreed to.

Vote 32 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Saskatchewan Housing Corporation
Vote 143**

Subvote (SH01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
SaskEnergy Incorporated
Vote 150**

Subvote (SE01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation
Vote 153**

Subvote (ST01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Vote 152**

Subvote (PW01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan
Vote 165**

Subvote (CI01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Executive Council
Vote 10**

Subvote (EX01)

The Chair: — I invite the Premier to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the same group of officials as yesterday: Dan Perrins, my deputy minister; and from Executive Council, Bonita Heidt; Jim Nicol; and my chief of staff, Kathie Maher-Wolbaum.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and welcome to your officials this morning, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, I would like to revert back to a few of the questions I asked you yesterday regarding The Constituency Boundaries Act, more for clarification, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, yesterday we talked about a timeline that might be in effect for reviewing the census report. And you indicated yesterday that you expect that your department . . . the Clerk will receive the census report next spring, maybe March, April.

Mr. Minister, in light of the various clauses that talk about the creation of the commission 30 days after receiving the report, an interim report is to be produced by that commission within three months after being established and then a process for a public consultation. Could you indicate to the people of Saskatchewan how you would see the review of the census data that will be presented through the report and The Constituency Boundaries Act and all of the obligations, as you indicated yesterday, that the Act of course would be followed. What timeline do you see occurring for the final report coming to the Legislative Assembly for debate and discussion? Could you indicate what that timeline would be.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the legislation itself sets some timelines. It does use phraseology for instance in 19(3), “As soon as is practicable . . .” And so some of the timelines I think will be determined by the commission itself as they do their work, and it’s not a circumstance where you’d want to intervene with the work they’re doing.

But as I read the Act, the interim report prescribed in section 19(1) of the Act indicates that:

A commission shall prepare an interim report within three months after the date the commission was established.

And so the first timeline on the interim report is a three-month deadline by legislation. And I think we’d all hope that it could occur sooner than that but at the same time, as the Act points out, as soon as practicable.

And then in terms of the final report, the ultimate deadline as prescribed by legislation in 22(2):

A commission shall prepare the final report within six months after the date it was established.

And so if my assumption is correct that we would have the census data in the hands of the Clerk in March or April of next year, that within 30 days of that occurring, the commission process is put in place under the legislation, then the furthest deadline would be a six-month period after that.

Now again, as soon as practicable, as soon as the commission could do its work, I think we’d all appreciate that work being done as soon as possible. But the deadlines themselves are prescribed in the legislation.

(11:45)

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Premier, in light of the various clauses that you’ve referred to, would it be fair to say then that the final report would not be presented to this legislative session until probably the spring of 2003? Is that a fair assessment?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — It is hard to say. Again, Mr. Chair, it’ll be an independent, totally independent commission who would

do their work and I can't guess.

What we do know from the legislation is that the deadline would be six months. If they went to the extent of the deadline, it would be highly unlikely, therefore, that we would have it in a spring session of the legislature next year. It could fall within the purview of a fall session, if there were a fall session in 2002. If not, it could then fall into the purview of a spring session in 2003.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Premier, for clarifying that.

Mr. Premier, yesterday, and I note from *Hansard*, you indicated that and I quote:

I have indicated that we do not have any plans at this time to open the Act or change the Act.

And I think you were referring, of course, to The Constituency Boundaries Act.

Mr. Minister, there still seems to be discussion or suggestion from members on your side of the House that your government might be considering changing the number of constituencies in the province, as was the case back prior to 1995.

Mr. Premier, there is of course no set election dates in the province of Saskatchewan. The normal four-year mandate will take your government to the year 2003 and I think you've indicated that in the House, that your plan is to be here for your full term of the normal term of four years.

So, Mr. Premier, in light of what you just said about the Boundaries Commission doing its work and being able to present its final report to the Legislative Assembly late 2002 or early 2003, if indeed you are looking at staying within the Act, not changing the Act, as you indicated yesterday in your remarks that you have no plans to do that, then of course we will be debating the report that will, I guess, do two things. It will either maintain the current 58 constituencies with the current boundaries if the population shift isn't too significant and doesn't go beyond what is required by the Act, or there will be 58 constituencies redrawn with different boundaries and we will still have 58 constituencies.

The other option, Mr. Minister, and I want you to indicate whether your government has plans to indeed present to this Legislative Assembly for the next session — since we may be ending today and there will be plans being put in place by your government — is your government planning to make changes to the Act that will indeed reduce the number of constituencies so that when the census report is received and the Boundaries Commission is established that they will be working hand in hand? Is that the plan of your government, Mr. Premier?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, to be quite frank with the member, I have not individually. Others may have been giving this thought. I have given this as much thought as we all would in passing, and there are conversations in the public sphere and so on. When we made the decision some years earlier, '95 or whenever it was, to reduce the number of seats in this House to 58, I think there was a sense of public acceptance of that decision.

I have not, I repeat, made any decisions or determination of legislation that would affect The Constituency Boundaries Act. I'd appreciate it from the member if he has a recommendation . . . perhaps he is recommending that we should lower the number, or leave it at 58, or in the alternative I guess increase the number of seats in the province. And I suppose one could make a cogent argument for each of those positions. If he or the opposition have a position on this, fair enough, we'd appreciate hearing it.

But I repeat, as I said yesterday, certainly no decisions have been made and I have not given it sufficient thought to enunciate a position today.

On the question of the timelines, as I indicated, the Act itself prescribes the maximum timelines — three months for the interim; six months for the final report after the work of the commission. These are of course maximum timelines, and essentially the timeline for delivery of the report, in my view, should ought to be in the hands of the independent commission of this legislature following the adherence of the Act.

And if they felt in two months they could have an interim report, fair enough. The Act does indicate "as practicable". If they could have the complete work done in three months or four months or five, fair enough. The maximums are outlined in legislation so it's very difficult to pinpoint exactly when their findings could be brought to a debate in this House.

Now it's highly unlikely given the three-month, six-month timelines set out in the legislation that they would be done their work as early as a spring session, but then again, who knows. Then again, who knows.

So I'd appreciate if the member has some suggestions that he wants to outline today for consideration, I'm happy certainly to hear them.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Premier, I'm pleased to hear that your response regarding the commission being able to do its work and to prepare a report that would reflect what is found in the census and it will take, you know, as you have indicated, the maximum amount of time that it could take would be six months.

Mr. Premier, in reference to the 1999 election, I think it was noted in some of the documents that have been circulated in the press that the number of eligible voters in what is referred to as the 30 rural seats was about 10,856 and that the number of eligible voters in the 26 urban seats — the 11 for Regina and 11 in Saskatoon, 2 in Moose Jaw and 2 in Prince Albert — as about 10,809. Not a whole lot of difference in the '99 election and I'm probably speculating that that hasn't changed a whole lot to the May 15 census that has just occurred.

So the comments being made by some of your members, Mr. Premier, suggesting that indeed there will be a redrawing of the number of constituencies and a lessening of that number, you've indicated today that you currently have no plans for that and as far as you know no legislation is being prepared for delivery next spring or possibly even this fall, if indeed you're going to recall the session for this fall, that no such legislation amendments are being proposed to lessen the number of

constituencies in the province of Saskatchewan. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, as we speak today that is correct. There is not legislation being prepared. Obviously these considerations go on in political circles and in public circles about the numbers of constituencies across the province.

As I said, there are those who would propose we have fewer members in this House; those who propose we should perhaps have more members in this House; and those I guess who would accept that 58 would be the appropriate number.

Maybe it's entirely fair to say that, as we speak today, there is no legislation being prepared and I have not given serious, serious thought to any particular change one way or the other.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And again welcome to the Premier and his officials for the conclusion of the Executive Council estimates.

I think we both have an anticipation that this session is drawing to a close within a matter of not too many minutes or hours from now. And I understand that the Premier has some priorities here. I don't want to mix my metaphors; I'm not sure whether to talk about the dinghy that's out of control in the whitewater or about the bus that he's going to go out and either buy or lease and polish up immediately following this session.

But there were a couple of areas that I wasn't able to . . . didn't have time to touch on yesterday and I would like to deal with today, Mr. Premier.

Turning to the issue of the province's finances, there is growing concern — and this concern is not just a partisan concern, not just a concern that's being expressed by the opposition — but there is concern that the current patterns of funding, revenue versus expenses, in the government is unsustainable. As you know, Mr. Premier, you've drawn heavily in this fiscal year from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

There is speculation — I don't know whether it's true or untrue — but there is speculation that the deputy minister for Finance was displeased with the budget and has since left Saskatchewan. There is growing concern in the business community that the budget is unsustainable. And there is serious concern by families in Saskatchewan who are concerned about the ability to fund health care and education and other social programs in the future.

Could the Premier indicate how he plans to sustain a balanced budget when he has been growing the size of government, government revenues have been increasing, the tax base is shrinking — people are leaving Saskatchewan and there are fewer jobs — and he is borrowing from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to address some of the issues that the Leader of the Opposition raises, and they are indeed important and fair questions in this process, because at the heart of what government is about is the budgetary process.

Let me say this as an opening comment. This represents, as the

public of Saskatchewan knows, a balanced budget in a succession of balanced budgets. One of the greatest challenges that this government faced in the '90s was to restore fiscal stability to the province of Saskatchewan after years and years of huge deficit financing led by some of the members opposite and their political party.

So we had a real challenge in this province, and it wasn't a challenge, Mr. Chair, that was simply a challenge for government. It was a challenge, a challenge if I may say, for the entire people of Saskatchewan who, as a result of the horrendous deficits and debt that were run up over those years of the '90s, really had to, really had to sacrifice to put the province right.

It was this government, Mr. Chair, as you well know and the public well know, that was the first government in Canada to restore balanced budgets. This is a commitment that is very deep in this government, Mr. Chair, to maintain that fiscal stability that comes with balanced budgets.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in this current year . . .

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. My friends in the opposition, Mr. Chair, want me to repeat that answer and I'll be most happy to do so.

In the current budget, we have demonstrated, I think, the results of fiscal prudence. Over the last several years, particularly last year, we were the beneficiary in this province of some, in a sense, one-time money that came to us through the, particularly through the significant growth of revenues from the energy sector. Which enabled us, as a people, as a province, to set some monies aside in terms of fiscal stabilization and to provide for the future stability of our province a Fiscal Stabilization Fund, which as members know is limited where it should be kept.

That Fiscal Stabilization Fund, Mr. Chair, has in fact been utilized this year because it had grown as the result of these one-time revenues. And so essentially, Mr. Chair, what we've done is to take some of those one-time revenues in this budget and invest them in important infrastructure for this province in the long term.

So you take your one-time money — not your operational monies but this kind of one-time windfall revenue — and place it, in my view, into infrastructure that will serve this province for many years. So here's what's happening, Mr. Chair. Here's what happening.

We have undertaken the largest maintenance and rebuilding program for Saskatchewan highways and roadways in the history of this province; utilizing, utilizing, Mr. Chair, the one-time revenue money.

(12:00)

Now the fact of the matter is I spend a great deal of time on the highways and roadways of Saskatchewan. The fact of the matter is it seems to me wherever I travel these days, I am meeting construction crews, I am meeting detours. I need to be tonight in Assiniboia and I know I'm going to have to leave a

little early because of the amount of construction that's happening just right adjacent here on the No. 1 Highway. As a result of this budget and the careful utilization of the fiscal stabilization dollars and these one-time dollars for infrastructure, we're doing to have this No. 1 Highway twinned by 2004. We've advanced the plan.

Now it is not simply us, Mr. Chair. It is not simply members of the government benches who have looked at this recent budget and spoken highly of it. There are reports from the business community, there's reports from . . . well let's just listen, let's just listen: from the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, this is from the CIBC World Market report, March 30, 2001, quote:

There may be a new Premier at the helm, but Saskatchewan's 2001 budget revealed very familiar fiscal results. The province expects to balance its books for an eighth consecutive year with a sizeable Fiscal Stabilization Fund available.

From the Scotiabank:

Premier Lorne Calvert's government maintained a large portion of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund instead of using it (Mr. Speaker, as we're called upon to do by the Leader of the Opposition) to fund deeper tax cuts, a move, quote, "Webb agrees with."

I'm going to reread that, Mr. Chair, I'm just going to reread that so the member from Cannington might take note about it. This is Mary Webb, chief economist, the Scotiabank, chief economist of the Scotiabank said, and I quote again:

Premier Lorne Calvert's government instead maintained a large portion of the provincial Fiscal Stabilization Fund instead of using it to fund deeper tax cuts, a move Webb agrees with.

Here is my point, Mr. Chair. We have provided balanced and stable fiscal government for these past seven, now eight budgets, balanced budget, brought to us by this Minister of Finance and ministers of Finance in front of him.

We were able this year to make some very important investments in the infrastructure of Saskatchewan, whether it be in our roadways, in our community infrastructures, in programs like the infrastructure program that is assisting with the community of North Battleford to ensure that their water is safe. We're taking some of those one-time monies that we were able to, through careful stewardship, put aside and invest in the future of our province.

Because that's our task, Mr. Chair. Our task is to turn our attention, not to the past, but to that future which can be a very, very bright future for this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Premier really did not get the point that I was trying to make. I'll try and explain it as simply and as straightforwardly as I can.

The deputy minister of Finance has quit. The current budget is

unsustainable in future years because the Fiscal Stabilization Fund will be drained. The Crown dividends are not as high as they were in the past. The Crown debt is increasing. Saskatchewan will soon be back into a deficit position. In other words, Mr. Premier, you're heading back into the Devine era — the era that we were trying to get out of.

And just for . . . The writing is on the wall, Mr. Premier. It's as clear as clear could be. Now, Mr. Premier, just to set the record straight. In 1998, in 1998 I entered politics. And I've always been in favour of fiscal responsibility. And when the Premier . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I'm having difficulty hearing the person speaking and the person speaking is having difficulty hearing the Chair. I would really like to hear the question as I would like to hear the answer, so would the committee please come to order and keep the level so that I'm able to hear the speaker.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate your intervention. I think the Premier was trying to listen but certainly his colleagues were not. They don't like the truth.

And what I was stating, Mr. Chairman, and you asked me to repeat it is, the current funding of the . . . the current budgetary trends which depends on increased amount of resources from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund are not sustainable. That fund will run out perhaps next year, perhaps the year after; depends on how long the windfall oil and gas revenues continue in this province.

Mr. Chair, to the Premier. The writing is on the wall as clear as could be that we will be back in a deficit position very soon. It's serious enough, Mr. Premier, that the deputy minister of Finance has left and returned to Alberta. It's serious enough that the business community is losing confidence in the government's ability to manage the affairs of the province.

Now, Mr. Premier, your fiscal plan — this is very important — your fiscal plan is based on an increase of I think 3,500 jobs, if I remember correctly, but definitely an increase of jobs in Saskatchewan. Right now the numbers are negative and substantially negative. This month it's 15,800 job losses. That means that even under the government's projections, which were unsustainable, now it becomes less sustainable, and in fact sooner rather than later, Saskatchewan will be back in a deficit position.

Now NDP governments have entertained deficit financing in the past. Mr. Blakeney started it out, particularly causing the Crowns to be in serious deficit positions. Half of the provincial debt that we now hold was accrued by Mr. Blakeney and his government. The other half was accrued by Mr. Devine. They both amassed too much debt in the province of Saskatchewan.

We will be back into that trap under your budgetary planning. Your budgetary planning is false.

Mr. Premier, you need to be spending these windfall revenues on fundamentals that will make our economy stronger. Making government bigger, making government bigger, hiring more employees will not create a stronger economy.

We just have the job numbers, we just have the job numbers that have come out and every . . . in many instances, the job numbers are down in Saskatchewan, but there's one glaring omission and that's public administration. Jobs are up in public administration.

What that means is that government is getting bigger and the tax base is getting smaller. Now even under your projections your budget will not be . . . your ability to balance the budget will not be sustainable many years into the future. And given the current reports that we're getting from Statistics Canada, that's going to happen sooner than your government has projected.

What are you going to tell the people of Saskatchewan to indicate that you're going to change your fiscal planning? Are you going to bring in a new economic statement in the fall that will correct this problem, because it's a very serious problem.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, it was very interesting that the Leader of the Opposition started his line of questioning here by suggesting that this government is following the lead of his colleague and friend, Mr. Grant Devine, when he was in government.

Now this, Mr. Chair, is an interesting observation from across the way. Bizarre, someone says, a bizarre observation.

As I said earlier, one of the greatest challenges that this government had to face and the people of Saskatchewan had to face with government was to mop up after the wrecking crew that occupied these benches in the 1980s, that ran us \$15 billion dollars into debt — \$15 billion.

The Leader of the Opposition refers to his friend and colleague, Mr. Devine, when he knows full well that in this budget that we are now debating . . . How much are we spending on debt this year?

An Hon. Member: — \$650 million.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — \$650 million we are still paying out of this budget year to pay for the debt run up by his friend, Mr. Devine. And let him not deny it, as he tried to do in a certain leadership debate, let him not deny it. I mean he's got folks right in his backbench here who worked for that administration. He's got MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) who sat in that administration.

So if he wants to talk about Mr. Devine's record I'm more than happy to talk about Mr. Devine's record because we're living with it, we're living with it. In this budget, \$650 million of the taxpayers' money going to pay up the interest . . . the interest payments on the debt those people rang up.

Now do you know what we could do with \$650 million, Mr. Chair? Do you know what we could do with \$650 million? Well I don't need to begin to document it.

Now the Leader of the Opposition who follows about the same economic platform and principle as his friend Mr. Devine did while in office, the theory is, the theory is — and we hear it on a daily basis from over there — the theory is somehow you can

cut all the taxes. They say this every day, cut all the taxes.

But what do they also say every day? Spend more money. They say cut the taxes. Everyday they say that. Then every day they get up and say we need more money for roads, we need more money for health, we need more money for education, we need more money for this, more money for that.

So somehow the theory is you can cut the taxes and you can spend more money and you can continue, you can continue to pay up the interest debt that their friends ran up here. And somehow this is all going to come out in the black.

Well I'll tell you, Mr. Chair, it never added up when Mr. Devine was here. It never added up when they proposed this theory to the province during the last election. And, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't add up today. It just doesn't add up.

Now the Leader of the Opposition will have his view, his view of this budget — fair enough, fair enough. But again I just turn . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order. There's a number of personal conversations going on that is overarching the actual debate that's going on right now, so if those members would like to take that conversation behind the bar I think it would be appreciated. I'd like to be able to hear the questions and also hear the answers.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, we can take the view or we could take the word of the Leader of the Opposition or we can take the word of well let's take the word of the senior economist from the Toronto-Dominion Bank. Now what did the senior economist of the Toronto-Dominion Bank say about the budget which we're now debating?

Well I'll just quote, Derek Burleton, Derek Burleton "definitely a good grade on this one," definitely a good grade on this one, referring to the budget. He goes on to say "the government is making progress in making both its economy and its fiscal position more competitive." That's the kind of a review you get from the Toronto-Dominion Bank.

In the Leader of the Opposition's comments he almost slipped, Mr. Chair. You might not have missed it or caught it, but I did. He almost slipped. He almost said in his comments here today you should take that Fiscal Stabilization Fund and spend it on tax cuts. That's about what he said. He didn't quite go there but I think that's where he meant to go.

He says take your Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Don't fund one-time expenditures like a highway. No, don't do that — put it into ongoing expenditures like tax cuts. That's what he was saying here, Mr. Chair.

Well you know what that will do, you know what that will do. It will send us straight back, straight back to the '80s, straight back to the days of deficits. And I'll take the word, I'll take the word, Mr. Chair, of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and I'll repeat it, I'll repeat it. The member opposite wants to hear it again.

So here's the report from the chief economist of the Scotiabank

of Canada, chief economist, Scotiabank of Canada, Mary Webb, she says, and I quote again:

Premier Lorne Calvert's government instead maintained a large portion of the provincial fiscal stabilization fund instead of using it to fund deeper tax cuts, a move Webb agrees with.

The chief economist at the TD says we're doing the right thing. The Leader of the Opposition says we're doing the wrong thing. I'll take the opinion of the chief economist of Scotiabank every day.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Premier quoted an economist with the TD bank. This is what's happening today: "More gloom predicted." And this is from an economist with the TD Bank. Let me quote for the record, Mr. Chair, what the TD Bank is saying about Saskatchewan today, under the current NDP government.

"We've downgraded our growth forecast by half a percentage point and slightly downgraded our outlook for 2002" to three per cent, bank economist Derek Burleton said . . .

"Employment growth is very weak," Burleton said. "That's going to have an impact on consumer spending, housing starts, (and) retail sales."

Mr. Premier, the TD Bank is saying today, July 6, 2001, "More gloom predicted." That's the current situation.

Now he can quote from the past when the outlook was a little brighter. But the fact is, because the job numbers are lower than your government predicted it was going to be, because the tax base is shrinking, because windfall oil and gas revenues may not be sustainable, you are in serious danger of squandering the fiscal surplus by making a larger government, a bigger government, a government that lets the Crowns run out of control, spend money willy-nilly, compete with taxpaying firms, then driving them out of Saskatchewan, further shrinking the tax base. It's a recipe for disaster.

(12:15)

Mr. Premier, can't you see the writing on the wall? People leaving Saskatchewan; businesses located in Saskatchewan moving out of the province to escape higher taxes and a government that doesn't recognize it shouldn't be competing with them. Mr. Premier, this is serious and you have not responded to my question.

Now you've talked about Mr. Devine in the '80s, and you're welcome to do that, but political rhetoric is not going to get you out of the mess that you're in today.

Now, Mr. Premier, the job numbers are pathetic — 21,000 jobs lost, May to May; 15,800 jobs lost, June to June. The numbers for the year 2001 are far below the job numbers for 2000. That represents . . . And the unemployment rate is not increasing. So what that means, Mr. Premier, is that there are fewer people

working, but they're working out of the province. They've left the province of Saskatchewan.

They haven't gone onto the unemployment rolls, thankfully, because Saskatchewan people want to work. They do want jobs; they don't want to be on welfare. And so if they can't get a job in Saskatchewan because your government and its Crowns are competing with the private sector and because taxes are higher in Saskatchewan, they will leave and they will get jobs outside of Saskatchewan. That's a recipe for disaster.

Nine thousand people left Saskatchewan in a year's time. *Sask Trends Monitor* is predicting that 10,000 people are going to leave Saskatchewan this year. Pretty soon we'll be under a million people. And the demographics are also working against us because more of the people remaining will not be people who are contributing significantly to the tax base.

Now, Mr. Premier, you haven't answered the question. I have a feeling you won't answer the question, and so I'm going to move on to another issue that's probably going to be much more easy for you to answer.

Just to set the record straight in regards to Executive Council, my information tells me that there are currently 88 employees in Executive Council, that this is an increase of four from a year ago.

I would like the Premier to confirm those numbers are correct. And if they are correct, I want to know if his entire cabinet is in agreement with increasing the size of Executive Council.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The numbers that the Leader of the Opposition have, Mr. Chair, are correct. A year ago there were 84 employed in the Department of the Executive Council; there are now 88.

One of the positions is a position in the correspondence unit that deals with the voluminous amount of correspondence that's received through Executive Council. One is in media services, and two are positions related to our coalition agreement and our coalition government.

Mr. Hermanson: — Will the Premier confirm that all of his cabinet is in agreement with the larger Executive Council?

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, I request leave of the committee to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, with thanks to the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, I appreciate the opportunity to introduce some guests that have joined us in the Speaker's gallery today.

The one who has travelled the farthest to be here today is a young man by the name of Louis Doom who is a Rotary exchange student here for the summer in Moose Jaw. And Louis comes to us, joins us from Belgium. So we're very pleased to have him here today.

He's joined in the gallery by his host student with whom I believe there will be . . . they'll have an exchange returning to Belgium later on in the summer, Heather McMaster. And Heather is joined here today as well by her brother Iain and her mother Joan McMaster who is, by the way, one of the school board trustees in Moose Jaw. Good to have them here.

They're also joined by Anne Millar and Lindsay Millar from Regina, who I suspect are connected to the world of Rotary exchange. Good to see them here as well.

And I'm also pleased to introduce, joining them in the gallery, Andre Cowon, who is a summer student working in my office.

Members of the Assembly, and members of the committee, I would ask all to extend a warm welcome in particular to Louis Doom and to say welcome to Canada.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Executive Council Vote 10

Subvote (EX01)

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I was in the process of asking the Premier a very short question just to clarify from his comments that his cabinet is in total agreement with a larger Executive Council. Would he clarify that?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, I have not polled individually members of cabinet on each of the positions in Executive Council. I've not done that. But I tell you what. This cabinet is in absolute solidarity in supporting this budget, which provides for these employment opportunities.

Mr. Chair, just while I'm on my feet. As a Rotarian I also want to extend my greeting to our Rotary exchange student who is with us here today. I know this a life-changing and a life-enriching experience and I wish him all the best.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the Premier: I'd like to know what the rationale was for splitting the position of deputy minister to the Premier and cabinet secretary into two separate positions, currently held by Dan Perrins and Judy Samuelson. That's a job that used by done by one person, Greg Marchildon, the former deputy premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, and I don't at all fault the Leader of the Opposition for this; it's structures within Executive Council, in the current . . . in the former regime when Dr. Marchildon served as the deputy to the Premier.

And you know, Mr. Chair, the member from Rosthern and the member from Cannington, I mean they have not asked one question during my estimates, except they've asked dozens from the floor, from their benches.

So I invite them, if they have these very important issues they want to raise, they should just jump up . . . just jump up and ask . . . see, it gets them going doesn't it?

Anyway, I'll say again to the Leader of the Opposition, when Dr. Marchildon served as the deputy to the Premier, the chief civil servant of the province, he adopted the title of deputy and cabinet secretary. But the fact of the matter is another individual served that role within the cabinet, at one time, most recently, a Mr. Perry Erhardt.

Now my reorganization, as small as it is in terms of these two offices, the functions are still held by two people, but I wanted to clearly differentiate their titles. I wanted to ensure that my deputy could be seeing to and devote his full attention . . . full attention to building the strongest public service and administering the best public service that we can possibly have for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you. Mr. Premier, does the deputy minister to the Premier attend cabinet meetings?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Yes, appropriately so, Mr. Chair, the deputy to the Premier will attend almost all cabinet meetings as his schedule permits. It is entirely appropriate in my view that the deputy to the Premier, the chief of the province's civil service should be present to hear cabinet discussions, to understand the policy directions that are being set by cabinet. And therefore to . . . as he so adequately does . . . therefore then implement the policy decisions made by government.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you. Mr. Chair, I'd like to again change course a little bit. There is a lot of unfinished business that is still on the books as a result of actions by this government, issues that need to be addressed.

My background federally was one where there was both a fall session and a spring session of the House of Commons. Many times legislation was introduced in the fall session. There was time for public evaluation. Groups interested in the legislation could review it. And then a budget would be brought forward in the spring session and more meaningful debate would occur.

Right now we still have many urgent issues facing the province of Saskatchewan that need government direction and action. There is the whole issue of the health care crisis in Saskatchewan, with waiting lists extremely long. The fact that the Fyke Commission has reported and there's been no response yet from the government because of ongoing study.

There is the issue of the drought in much of the agricultural sector here in Saskatchewan and there's still . . . while it's obviously very severe, the full extent of the severity will be known in the fall.

And then there is the disaster of jobs being lost and a population that is decreasing in our province and, as I mentioned to you earlier, Premier, that's a recipe for economic disaster in this

province.

So I would like to ask the Premier if he intends to call a fall session of the legislature to deal with these very, very important issues.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, as I reported moments ago to our friends in the media, I have not, not decided on the recall of the legislature for the fall. I have certainly not written the idea off, but we certainly have not made a decision to recall in the fall.

One, we will recall this legislature in that circumstance where there is sufficient work to be done by the legislature. We will today, I am hopeful, pass the budget for this fiscal year, which is a very, very, very significant piece of work for this legislature. We have in this session dealt with, my count was 58, I believe — 60? — 60 Bills; some of them of less import, but many of them of high significance to the people of Saskatchewan. We've had a good legislative agenda here and it's been, it's been complete.

As we look to the fall it will be a circumstance of judging, as we approach those months, of the work that could be done in this House at that time, if it's appropriate that it be done at that time or if it's possible to do the work or appropriate to do the work in a spring session.

What I want to conclude by saying, Mr. Chair, is this: that because this House is not in session does not indicate that this government is not at work. In fact, this government will be at work over the course of this summer, through every month of the fall, developing and delivering good public policy.

We're going to leave this place; we're going to spend a little bit of time, I assume all of us, taking a bit of a summer break. And I can say for members on this side of the House, we are going to be using the days and weeks of this summer to be talking to Saskatchewan people, not here, but where Saskatchewan people are in the summer — in their communities, in the parks, in the fair days and the rodeos and the powwows.

This government will be on the road, and I'm very pleased to say many of us will be travelling the highways and byways of this province in a very nice STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) bus.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, Mr. Premier, that's again very disappointing to think that the Premier thinks that everything is fine in Saskatchewan. We should all be just enjoying the rodeos while people are leaving Saskatchewan. You know, we should go to the fairs and, you know, read a good book at the cabin at the lake while jobs are being lost.

Mr. Premier, I think that the signals say that it's imperative that we have a fall session of the legislature because a change in direction is imperative for the province. The clock is ticking, and it's ticking against this province right now and it's ticking against the viability of a strong economy and a quality of life.

Mr. Premier, we've come to the end of this session of the legislature and I want to make a few observations. We've been looking for leadership from the other side of the House and

we've seen none. We have seen leadership come from this side of the House. We saw leadership when it came to child sex abuse. We saw leadership when it comes to dealing with fiscal matters. We've seen leadership when it comes to addressing the crisis in health care.

We have seen leadership when it comes to insisting on government accountability. Certainly we saw no leadership from the Premier of the province when it came to ministerial accountability.

We have seen a very thorough review of the estimates, a professional review of this government's action — or more often inaction.

And we have seen a positive alternative presented by the Saskatchewan Party with regard to almost every issue whether it be the Crowns, whether it be no-fault insurance, whether it be ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan), whether it be the quality of water in Saskatchewan. It was the Saskatchewan Party that initiated the motion, the emergency debate and motion that we all agreed to here in the legislature.

That was a Saskatchewan Party initiative that showed that the leadership in Saskatchewan right now is coming from the opposition, and that we're handicapped in that we don't have enough members to actually — except for one night — make a difference here in the Legislative Assembly.

Now given that vision from this side of the House, given the leadership the Saskatchewan Party has shown . . .

(12:30)

The Chair: — Order, order. I'm having difficulty hearing the speaker. Would the Minister of Labour please come to order. Thank you. I would like to hear the question and also hear the answer.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. While the leadership has been coming from this side of the House and by all of my colleagues on this side of the House, the opposite is becoming very obvious on that side of the House.

The NDP have given up. They've given up on Saskatchewan. They expect school enrolments to drop by 30,000. In their minds, it's a *fait accompli*. We're going to lose families; people are going to leave Saskatchewan. We're going to close schools; we're going to fire teachers. We're giving up on education; we're giving up on the future of our province.

Mr. Chairman, the NDP have been unaccountable. They have allowed their ministers to wander away and deal with every crucial issue as though it was an arm's length issue.

We've seen from the minister responsible for the Crowns, he has no control — not even any knowledge in many cases — of the actions of his own Crown corporations that are supposed to be working for the people of Saskatchewan but have been working against the people of Saskatchewan.

We have seen a government that purposely mislead the people of Saskatchewan about the quality of their water. That's a

terrible, terrible indictment on this government. It not only shows lack of leadership but it shows a terrible lack of responsibility.

Mr. Chairman, we have seen a government that has shown no leadership with regards to health care. Mr. Speaker, health care is deteriorating in this province — the waiting lists are getting long; doctors, specialists, nurses leaving the province of Saskatchewan; people going to emergency and not receiving proper attention within a reasonable amount of time; ambulance service not addressing the needs of the people of Saskatchewan.

Everyone recognizes that health care is deteriorating in every part of Saskatchewan, including the city of Saskatoon and the city of Regina. Health care is a serious issue; it's an expensive issue for Saskatchewan people. It affects families. Families hurt if good health care is not provided. Families in Saskatchewan are hurting. Parents are concerned about whether their parents, grandparents in Saskatchewan, and even their children are going to have adequate health care.

Mr. Chairman, the Premier seems to have given up on health care, he seems to have given up on education, he seems to have given up on agriculture, he's given up on rural Saskatchewan, he's given up on a sustainable budget, he's given up on the people of Saskatchewan.

People in Saskatchewan are a hopeful people. People in Saskatchewan want . . . they think highly of their province and they want the best for their province, but their hopes have been deferred by the actions of the Premier.

Mr. Premier, the people of Saskatchewan, the media in Saskatchewan have recognized that the Saskatchewan Party has presented a good opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Even members opposite, even the Premier this morning on CBC radio acknowledged that the Saskatchewan Party has been a good official opposition.

Well, Mr. Premier, most people recognize that if you're good at one thing, you're probably good at a number of things. And the people of Saskatchewan are recognizing that if the Saskatchewan Party can be a good opposition, they would also be a good government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — They are recognizing that if the NDP government is a bad government, likely they'd be a bad opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — So we better not see too many of them around after the next election.

The Premier, the Premier over and over and over again in this legislature, rather than defending his terrible record, rather than sticking up for his ministers, has stood up in his chair, when he has, and it hasn't been often, but he stood up and he's

reminded about the '80s and about how terrible the Saskatchewan Party is, without a shred of evidence, without a shred of proof.

I challenge the Premier, I challenge the Premier. If he really believes that, if he isn't just playing political games, why doesn't he just test his theories with the people of Saskatchewan? I ask the Premier to be bold, to be strong, to either do something or call an election so we can do the job for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his presentation in the House today and for work that he has done over the course of the session, and his colleagues.

He makes a fair point. This opposition in this session has done some good work, in one role — in one role — which role is to put the government on the test, to make government accountable, to ask tough questions, to call for accountability.

In this score, Mr. Chair, this opposition has done not bad work in this session. I'll give them that.

But there are some other areas that this opposition might have scored just a little higher in the session in my view, Mr. Chair.

Now let's just rehearse the circumstance around their non-participation, their non-willingness to deal with the Fyke Commission in a way that would approach it to the people of Saskatchewan. I'll tell you it took a lot of work on this side, a lot of work on this side to find a mechanism by which we could have this opposition be part of perhaps the most historic health care planning process in the history of the province. If we had to drag them kicking and screaming — I'm glad they finally came — I don't think that's the kind of response that people want from an opposition.

And the excuse I heard earlier today was that well it wasn't a . . . it was a special committee, not a standing committee. Once it was a standing committee, well we could be there. I do not understand the argument.

I know what happened here. I know what happened, Mr. Chair. The people of Saskatchewan told them you doggone get on to that committee and get to doing the work of the people.

Now fair enough, fair enough. They're good critics. But I also ask, Mr. Chair, at the end of this session how many progressive, positive solutions have we heard proposed from the opposition in this session? Well someone suggests none. I'm not sure it's none but it's pretty thin.

It is pretty thin, Mr. Chair, of the kind of positive suggestions, progressive solutions that you might expect to hear from a party who claims, who claims to be on occasion a government-in-waiting. They make that claim. Well you know, Mr. Chair, whenever I hear that claim you know what I'd like to say? I say well they're a government-in-waiting all right and they're going to be waiting an awful long time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, as I review the course of this session, this has been an extremely significant session in the life of this legislature and in the life of the province of Saskatchewan and I'll tell you why, Mr. Chair. Because during the course of this session what has happened — significant change has begun. A significant change has begun.

I evidence again the nature of that change. You'll remember, Mr. Chair, about a year ago now how this legislature was dominated, dominated by the issue of the state of the Saskatchewan roadways and highways. That was the dominant issue a year ago in this legislature. Our friends in the opposition were running little stunts. There were bringing in pieces of asphalt. They were holding contests about the worse road and on. And fair enough, there's a problem with our highways — a problem.

Well this is a government that recognizes problems, find solutions, implements them, and solves the problems. Now we all have the memory I'm sure, Mr. Chair, of the circumstance around Val Marie a year ago, where the mayor of Val Marie and the citizens of Val Marie went out, given the circumstance of Highway No. 4 near their community, went out themselves and patched that road. We had Highways folks participating with them, but they were down there; they took the initiative. They're like Saskatchewan people; they took the initiative and they patched the road because of the concerns that were raised by the mayor and by that community.

And that's why today, Mr. Chair, I am pleased to put on the record the full, the full text of a letter that I received yesterday from the mayor of Val Marie, and I hope that members across will listen to this letter. He writes to me as Premier, saying:

This is a letter of congratulations to the government for the great improvement in our Highway No. 4. The earlier start time and extra employees have made a great difference in that highway.

And I want to pause there, Mr. Chair. The mayor of Val Marie, His Worship Robert Ducan, compliments this government in terms of the rebuilding of Highway No. 4. He knows, and he says, again:

The earlier start time and the extra employees have made a great difference.

He understands. He understands if we're going to rebuild the infrastructure of our Highways, if we're going to provide good public service, it takes people. Through this budget we have been able to put new employees into highway construction and do the kind of work that the mayor recognizes.

Who opposes that? They oppose that. Day after day they stand up and say you shouldn't be hiring those new people. Well, the mayor of Val Marie understands what they do. He says:

Highway 4 is now patched from the US border to Swift Current, which is two months ahead of years past. Also the patching is of a higher quality, with sections having been dug out and a gravel base put in to fix continuous problem

areas so they will not be a problem in the future.

Mr. Chair, listen to what he says:

We can now meet tourists without embarrassment, and the safety is much improved.

I would like to add and this is an important paragraph, Mr. Chair, he includes in his letter:

I would like to add that Martin Kuntz, the local area manager in Swift Current, told me that the road would be patched by June the 1st, and it was.

And I say congratulations to Mr. Kuntz, to the entire crew down there in Swift Current, in fact to the entire crew in the Department of Highways who are out there today repairing the highways of Saskatchewan.

It is very uplifting to see the government and its employees performing in such an efficient manner. (Finally he says) We usually only criticize and never let anyone know when things are working. So with that thought, I say a big thank you from the people of Val Marie. Yours truly, Robert Ducan, His Worship the Mayor, the Town of Val Marie.

Now, he says, he says as a public official of our . . .

The Chair: — Order, order. I'm having difficulty hearing the answer to the question. Order. Order. Will the committee please come to order. I would like to hear the question and now I'd like to hear the answer. So would the committee please come to order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, it'll be an interesting response that the mayor of Val Marie will have, I'm sure, when he finds out that no one across that House seems to value his opinion or wants to hear his letter. And the member from Rosthern wants me to read it again. I will read it again if he's not careful.

Mr. Chair, this has been a very productive session for the people of Saskatchewan. A session that has taken our attention from the past, turning it squarely to the future. We're rebuilding to the . . . we're rebuilding the infrastructure of our province. We're connecting to the future through the internet, CommunityNet. We are connecting to the future of this province through the investment in our people, in our children, in our young people in record numbers. We are investing in health care in record numbers. We are providing quality public services.

We have identified in this session the *Partnership for Prosperity*, a game plan for economic development. In a vacuum presented over there, except you know their thought that we should just cut the taxes and everything will miraculously happen.

Mr. Chair, we've had some challenges in this session. Important challenges having to do with water quality, having to do with energy rates, having to do with the negotiations in our health care sector and our public service sector. We've had challenges. We've met those challenges, Mr. Chair. We have succeeded. Just as the people of Saskatchewan are doing today and will do

in the future, we meet our challenges and we succeed.

And the key to that success, Mr. Chair, the key to that success is that spirit of Saskatchewan, that attitude of believing in ourselves and believing in our future that is prevalent in this government. It's prevalent in the business community. It's prevalent among working people. It's prevalent among farming people. It's prevalent across this province. Only one group of people where it's not prevalent, and they occupy the benches across this House.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, in the close of his comments desires an election. He says we should call an election tomorrow. Well I'm not going to do that, Mr. Chair.

But someday, someday I'll go to Her Honour and we'll have an election in this province. And I repeat, as I said earlier this day, when that election is completed, I know where I'll be sitting — right here. I'm not sure who will be sitting in the bench across the way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(12:45)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, one small but important unfinished piece of business that I would like to do as we complete the session. Members will know that I had requested, of our Conflict of Interest Commissioner, a report on the concerns that had been raised about the current Minister of the Crown Investments Corporation during his service and time as Minister responsible for the Liquor and Gaming Commission.

I would appreciate the opportunity to table the report of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner on that matter today in the House. I have provided a copy to the Leader of the Opposition.

Subvote (EX01) agreed to.

Subvotes (EX02), (EX07), (EX04), (EX03), (EX08), (EX06) agreed to.

Vote 10 agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I would seek leave for an opportunity to thank the officials who have served us during these estimates.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, thank you for the opportunity. I do want to sincerely extend our thanks as legislators to the officials who have served us in these estimates, that being Mr. Perrins, Ms. Heidt, Mr. Nicol, and Ms. Maher-Wolbaum.

But because the Department of Executive Council, as these estimates have shown, in some ways represents the totality of government, I want to say a word of thanks through the deputy to all of those public servants across Saskatchewan who serve us, who serve the people of Saskatchewan, to thank them for their work on a daily basis wherever they may be employed in this broad, broad public service.

Our thanks to these officials but our thanks through them to all

who serve the public of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. On behalf of the official opposition, we too would like to thank the officials, not only the ones who came faithfully day after day to help the ministers with estimates but all of the public service in Saskatchewan. We do know that the province would not be able to function at all if we did not have a public service that was very dedicated.

And I think it's very important that all members know and the House know and the public service of Saskatchewan know that the official opposition does appreciate the work they do on behalf of all Saskatchewan citizens.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motions for Supply

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to make the following motion:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2001, the sum of \$213,005,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to make the following motion:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2001, the sum of \$4,136,815,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

And I so move.

Motion agreed to.

The committee reported progress.

FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the resolutions be now read the first and second time.

Motion agreed to and the resolutions read a first and second time.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By leave of the Assembly, I move:

That Bill No. 59, An Act for granting to Her Majesty

certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Years ending respectively on March 31, 2001 and March 31, 2002, be now introduced and read the first time.

Motion agreed to on division and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill read a first time.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly and under rule 55(2), I move that the Bill be now read a second and third time.

Motion agreed to on division and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill read a second and third time and passed under its title.

ROYAL ASSENT

At 13:00 His Honour the Administrator entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bills:

Bill No. 56 - The Tobacco Control Act

Bill No. 47 - The Miscellaneous Statutes (Domestic Relations) Amendment Act, 2001

Bill No. 48 - The Miscellaneous Statutes (Domestic Relations) Amendment Act, 2001 (No. 2)/Projet de loi n° 48 Loi correctrice (relations domestiques) de 2001 (n° 2)

Bill No. 58 - The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2001

Bill No. 42 - The Métis Act

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name I assent to these Bills.

Bill No. 59 - An Act for granting to Her majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Years ending respectively on March 31, 2001 and on March 31, 2002.

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I thank the Legislative Assembly, accept their benevolence, and assent to this Bill.

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 13:02.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, with leave to make a statement of a personal nature.

Leave granted.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Tribute to Member for Saskatoon Idylwyld

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, as we part today and this House rises, I think we all recognize that one of our colleagues who has served this legislature for many years, exceptionally over the past 10 years, is perhaps not likely to rejoin us in this Chamber in her current capacity. So I would very much, Mr. Speaker, like to say just a few words about the member for Saskatoon Idylwyld and her contribution.

I think it is fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that over the past 10 years this member has seen a very significant amount of change. Her constituency has changed. It initially was Saskatoon Westmount; now Saskatoon Idylwyld. Her portfolios in government changed over the years: first Social Services; then CIC, the Crown Investments Corporation; and then notably, her service as Minister of Finance; and Co-operative Development; and then again back to CIC. If I may say, talking about change — even the Premier's changed during her tenure.

But I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, there's one thing that has not changed over these years and that is this member's commitment to the legislature, to this province, and to the people of Saskatchewan. This member in her cabinet portfolios has served in each with poise and professionalism. She has always done, no matter what her undertaking, a very thorough and diligent job and gave her duties as a minister of the Crown the most diligent of attention.

And if I may say, Mr. Speaker, this member made history, Canadian history. This member was the first woman in Canada to ever be appointed as a Minister of Finance. She served that role, Mr. Speaker, from 1993 to 1997 and as members in this Assembly well know these years were not an easy time to serve as Minister of Finance in this province. Our province was faced with a seemingly unmanageable debt and there were very, very many difficult decisions to make, sometimes unpopular decisions, but always necessary decisions.

That Finance minister dealt with those challenging decisions just as she has dealt with every responsibility she has been given — with decisiveness, with a great strength of character, and a constant regard for the well-being of Saskatchewan people. She did, Mr. Speaker, in my view, and I'm sure that history will judge, an incredible job of managing the finances of this province. And so for years to come the inheritance of the work of this member in her capacities in cabinet will serve the people of Saskatchewan — not just ourselves and not just our children, but in my view our grandchildren.

Now we understand that the member of Idylwyld at some point will take her leave from elected office primarily to teach and to write a book on Saskatchewan politics. Her book will most certainly play an important role in recording the history of these most recent years and in sharing that history and educating people within the province and far beyond the province.

Mr. Speaker, I know that here in the legislature we're not by rule to refer to members by their proper names, but I'd ask the House's indulgence and further to ask all hon. members to join me in thanking Janice MacKinnon for all her work.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, with leave also to make a few comments.

Leave granted.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank all members of the House for leave.

On behalf of the official opposition, I too would like to express

our appreciation for the efforts of the member from Idylwyld over the past decade. She has played an important role in the political life of the province of Saskatchewan.

We don't always agree on the issues and we've had different views on different issues over the past number of years — for myself personally, over the last two or three years since I entered provincial politics — but we do respect her commitment to the province of Saskatchewan and we too wish her well in life after that of an MLA serving Saskatchewan. I'm sure she'll report back to some of her colleagues that it may not be so bad and some of them may follow her.

In politics, of course, we keep very close account of promises made and promises kept. And I want the entire House to know that the member for Idylwyld did make a promise several months ago to provide me with a sample of brown salve that her mother says cures everything. And during this session of the Assembly I did receive that brown salve, and so the member did keep her promise — I thank her for that — and do wish her well in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melnychuk: — Mr. Speaker, by leave to make a few comments as well.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Melnychuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, I too would like to join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in thanking the member from Idylwyld for the service to the people of Saskatchewan.

Having had the opportunity to work with this member in caucus, in our coalition government and also at cabinet and Treasury Board, I know how persevering she can be when it comes to an issue she strongly believes in. But that is what the people of Saskatchewan need, and I hope that we can have more members that can reflect the strength and depth of character that we saw from the member of Idylwyld.

And I would join with all members in this Assembly in wishing her very well in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with leave to make a very brief statement.

Leave granted.

Ms. MacKinnon: — I promise, Members, I will not be long. I have to drive to Waskesiu and I think my twilight tee time is becoming a midnight tee time. And if you knew how I play golf, that's probably an appropriate time to be out there.

Don't you sometimes wish that after hearing all these nice things, the person would stand up and say, oh, by the way, I was just kidding; I really don't plan to quit.

I don't want to start saying thank you's because I'm afraid that if I do begin to say thank you's, I'll leave people out. And also in the last few months I've spent a fair bit of time with civil servants who I've worked with over the years. And to each and every one of them I'd say, well you know when I say my thank you's, I'd like to mention you. And they all say: no, no, no, no, please don't, we never want our names mentioned in the legislature.

So I have only two things to say, one a comment and another a story. And the story is important because it is the one piece . . . it leads to the one piece of advice I leave with members.

The only thank you I want to say is to the people of Saskatchewan. I'll tell you if you want to pick a decade to be in politics and to be the Minister of Finance, you couldn't have picked a more exciting, interesting, turning point in the province's, and in Canada's history.

So I say a great thank you to those people who allowed me to do that. And as my son, who is my research assistant is going over the record, his first comment is: boy, this is boring. And I say: William, it's not boring, it's my ten-year career.

But his second comment is: you know people actually were quite decent to you considering some of the decisions that you had to make; they let you off pretty lightly. So that's my comment.

My story has to do with . . . and it's kind of a bipartisan story. It has to do with the 1997 budget, and the member from Kindersley will remember that budget because it was his very wise decision to stand in this legislature and to support that budget.

Well, now what is on the public record about the 1997 budget is what happened from January to March. And in January the member from Kindersley started saying: gee, if only this government would drop the sales tax from nine to seven, that's what the province needs to get itself going.

I knew that in December we had already decided to do that, so I was watching with great interest as he dug himself further along this road, to the point where he said: and in fact, if that government drops the sales tax from nine to seven, I'll vote for the budget.

And you know, I have to confess, I've always had a soft spot for the member because he did live up to his commitments and he stood in the legislature . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. MacKinnon: — But what I have to confess today is what happened between September and December. How in fact did we get to make this astute political decision to drop the sales tax from 9 to 7?

We started our Treasury Board deliberations, as the Leader of the Liberal Party knows, in September, and I knew we had to do something with the sales tax. It had to be dramatic and we didn't have much money. So we all started with this wonderful idea, six Treasury Board ministers, that we would broaden the

base of the sales tax. And in September it was so exciting. I mean we could take that sales tax from nine to six, nine to five had a nice ring to it. But another political party had used that and not to great effect so that wasn't working too well. So we were all excited about how far we could drop this sales tax down.

By December when decision time came, we were in total despair because what we had looked at is all the things that we were going to have to tax — the new taxes that we'd have to put on — to get the sales tax from nine to seven or five or whatever.

And the other thing that had happened, was we were in total gridlock. There was still a group of the high-minded Treasury Board ministers who said it's the right thing to do, let's do it. But our politicians and our polls and our focus groups said the public isn't going to thank you for this. Then there was another group that said look, cutting taxes is too complicated; let's not even bother cutting taxes. And quite literally, we were sitting there gridlocked.

My deputy minister said come on outside. And he looked at me and he said, boss, lower it to seven, just take it from nine to seven, that's the easiest way. And, a total role reversal — I said, but can we afford it? And he said listen, I've been listening to those ministers, take this, this, and this piece of spending off the table — they'll be so relieved to have a solution that you can get away with it.

So the wise political choice did not come from any of the six politicians sitting around the table; it came from the deputy minister of Finance.

So the only piece of advice I leave everyone with is: in politics surround yourself with the very best people that you can find. Let them know that you trust their judgment and their ability to give you advice and they'll get you where you need to go.

So thanks very much for the comments and all the best to all of you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask for leave of the Assembly to move a motion of adjournment.

Leave granted.

(13:15)

MOTIONS

House Adjournment

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I intend to move a motion, seconded by the member from Cannington. But I would like to take a few brief moments to thank the people who are involved in the operation of this Assembly when we're in session.

First of all I'd like to thank all of my colleagues in the legislature for their work during this session. I think it's safe to

say that we don't always agree on issues but we do share a common commitment to represent our constituents and all of the people of Saskatchewan to the best of our abilities. And I think it's this commitment and dedication that leads to lively debate and an interesting session to say the least.

I would like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your hard work during the session. I think members will agree that you performed admirably in your first session as Speaker of this Assembly, and I think that all members would also agree that your job is not an easy one even though the members were always on their best behaviour as was attested to a little earlier this morning.

You were asked to make several rulings during the session and I believe your rulings were fair and thoughtful. You should also be commended for allowing members to express their constituent's views with the emotion and the enthusiasm that this place brings to it while maintaining as much decorum as possible.

And I also want to thank the Opposition House Leader and the member from Cannington for their assistance in putting together the business of the Assembly, of this House, each day. And I'd like to thank the Clerk of the Assembly, Gwenn Ronyk, Greg Putz, and the Clerk Assistant, Meta Woods and Viktor Kaczkowski for all their hard work during this session. And I guess thanks as well to Monique and Zorka and Sandra in your office, Gwenn.

To our pages, Nikki, Pam, Amanda, Loni, Sarah, Jennifer, and Lori, I want to thank you for your assistance and we really do hope that you've enjoyed your experience working in the legislature during the session.

And I also want to thank the dedicated staff of all three of our caucuses, the ministers' offices, the Executive Council who assist in carrying out our duties in this Assembly. And just a little inside joke from the Government House Leaders' Committee, I want to thank Mur the Purr Manz for his attendance to his duty.

Also I want to thank our constituency assistants who represent us in our constituencies when we're here working in Regina. And you, Patrick, I want to thank you and your staff and the commissioners for keeping this building safe, keeping us safe, providing security in a very professional manner.

The staff of *Hansard*. They worked some very long hours to make sure that everything we say in this chamber is recorded accurately, which may in some cases not be the best thing, but that's their job and that's what they do.

And I want to thank the Journals staff, the visitor services staff, the library staff, for providing their assistance to the members and the caucus staff. And also the Law Clerk, Ken Ring, and his staff for their assistance to ensure that our legislation is written properly. Also to Ian Brown and his staff in legislative drafting and in assisting our government to prepare our legislation.

And a special thanks to the friendly and hard-working cafeteria staff who help us pack on these extra pounds that we generally do gain when we're here in session.

And a big thanks to the SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) maintenance staff, ensuring that we keep our offices in tip-top shape, and the building itself of course.

And we also have to pass on thank you to the visitor services who help make our building open and accessible to school groups and tourists and to the general public.

And recognizing as well the work of Gary, Ihor and Kerry in broadcasting services who provide television coverage of the session to the people of Saskatchewan.

I think all members would like to recognize the contributions of their staff and officials from the government departments for their assistance in Committees of the Whole and of Finance. They work very hard in trying to make us look as good as we can be in answering some of these difficult and tough questions that have been posed by the opposition.

Lastly, but certainly not least, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the media. They may not always get the stories as we would like them. They may interpret the facts somewhat differently than some of us do, but they do report the daily activities of the House to the people of Saskatchewan and I want to thank them for that.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all of my colleagues in the legislature a safe and a relaxing summer with their families and constituents. I look forward to seeing all of you again in the next session of the legislature.

And I want to as well thank all of the families of members who . . . it is quite an imposition, as members will know, to be away from your homes and your families as much as we are. And so I want to thank all of our families on behalf of the government side for their tolerance.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move, seconded by the member from Cannington:

That when this Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, it shall stand adjourned to the date and time set by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government, and that Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven clear days notice, if possible, of such date and time.

I so move.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, on this final day of a 71-day session, I too would like to take the opportunity to thank various people.

We've had a very good session, Mr. Speaker; at least the people in the opposition believe so. We've had lots of action in the House. The fact is we've had historical votes, Mr. Speaker. And we even passed good legislation, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to say thank you to the Speaker, to yourself, and to the Deputy Speaker. I know that at times we challenged you. We challenged you in the positive sense, Mr. Speaker, in various points of order and privileges and votes that create an atmosphere in the House, Mr. Speaker, that is a historical events

that happen that are recorded here, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's important that the work that you and the Deputy Speaker did was fair, with integrity, and we appreciate the hard work that you put into maintaining the decorum of the House under trying circumstances at times, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we'd like to thank the Clerks of the Table. They are the people who know the rules of this Assembly, that we rely on in asking questions to make the exact determinations on how things work and how that both sides, Mr. Speaker, can utilize those rules to the best advantage of the people of Saskatchewan.

To your staff, Mr. Speaker, who have been very co-operative in dealing with all sorts of manner of business.

To the Sergeant-at-Arms and to the commissioners and the other security staff of the building, they are very pleasant, they are very efficient, and they do the job, as the Government House Leader said, very well of protecting us. And we thank them, Mr. Speaker.

To the pages, who are almost invisible to the public in the House, Mr. Speaker, but are very, very important to us. We utilize them in all manner of way to communicate across the floor, Mr. Speaker, to our offices, and to keep our water glasses full, Mr. Speaker, which allows us to filibuster much longer.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also thank the library staff who provide us with again all manner of information. They're here to provide service to the members and they do an excellent job of it, Mr. Speaker. And when you ask them to get you information on virtually any subject, you can count on them supplying you with information and knowing that that information is accurate, Mr. Speaker.

I'd also like to thank the people that make it possible for our constituents across this province to actually see what we do in here on a daily basis. That's the broadcast staff. They do an excellent job, Mr. Speaker. And I know that in this session they have had some difficulties with the equipment but they get it up and running again very quickly, and we look forward to working with them more in the future.

To the guide staff, Mr. Speaker, that help not only ourselves when we come in, Mr. Speaker, but the people of Saskatchewan who like to stop in and visit this Assembly. And it's a very beautiful building indeed, and we're proud to show it off, and the guides are those that have the history and communicate with the people that come into the building and let them know what is happening here and the history behind the building.

To the *Hansard* staff, Mr. Speaker, who record our every utterance whether or not we actually mean to have them record it. They do that and they do it excellently.

There is a tradition though, Mr. Speaker, in the House which perhaps most members are unaware of and that's the tradition of the cinnamon bun, Mr. Speaker.

Every year, sometime during the session, the people at *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, supply me — as an individual, Mr. Speaker — with a cinnamon bun and I would like to thank the

Hansard staff this year for lastly providing me with that cinnamon bun. It was an excellent, excellent homemade one, Mr. Speaker. So they not only do a good job of recording our words — also excellent cooks, Mr. Speaker.

Talking about the cooks, Mr. Speaker, as my colleague heckles in the background, you're buttering them up for next year — absolutely, Mr. Speaker. The cafeteria staff, Mr. Speaker, that keeps us feed and watered do an excellent job. You can tell, Mr. Speaker, that a good number of the members utilize the services downstairs and that they are appreciated.

To the SPMC staff that keep the building clean, keep our offices working, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

And, Mr. Speaker, most importantly, to our office staff — to the office staff, Mr. Speaker, on both sides of the House — we rely on those staff people to a huge degree. If, Mr. Speaker, and I say this with a big if, if we look good, Mr. Speaker, in doing our jobs it's because of the staff that have supported us, provided us with the information.

I'd like to say, in my case, a very special thank you to Paul who works with the Government House Leader person, Darwin, in organizing the House. So a big thank you to Paul and Darwin, and to the Government House Leader, Mr. Speaker, in working together. He challenges us, Mr. Speaker, and I enjoy matching wits with him to try and gain a slight advantage.

Mr. Speaker, to our constituency office staff who deal with all the issues that come forward on a daily basis to our offices when we're in here doing our duties in the Assembly, a big thank you.

I'd like to also say a very big thank you to the media. As the Government House Leader said, they don't always get the stories right, but I think most of the members on this side of the House would say that they generally get the stories right, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have to say a thank you to each and every one of ourselves, to the MLAs, who through their dedication and hard work make Saskatchewan a better place. We represent our constituents in here; we represent their needs and desires, their wants; and hopefully we're building a future for them.

I'd like to specifically, Mr. Speaker, point out two members. The member from Battleford-Cut Knife who is currently in the hospital with leukemia. And he spent his time in the House, Mr. Speaker, until the day he had to go in for chemotherapy.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the member for Humboldt, who spent her time in the House doing her duty even though her father was extremely ill.

I know that many of the other members, Mr. Speaker, have faced crises or personal difficulties in their lives during session, and they too have spent their time working in the House, doing their duties on behalf of their constituents. I think we need to thank them also.

Last, but not least, Mr. Speaker, there are people who support

us but who receive no formal recognition in the House on a general basis, who we do not see around the Assembly, but . . . those are our families. We need to say thank you to them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — So, Mr. Speaker, all of the members of the opposition, along with I'm sure the members of the government . . . I know that the Government House Leader mentioned this . . . we wish all of the members, all the legislative staff, all the people of Saskatchewan, a good and safe summer holidays, and I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to being back here sometime early in the fall. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:30)

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly before I put the questions, I think it would be appropriate if I used this occasion to put some comments on the record.

I feel that too often we do not thank everybody so it may be a . . .some redundancy, but please bear with me.

From the Speaker's perspective the people of Saskatchewan expect three functions of this legislature: first of all that members scrutinize and pass laws necessary for a civil, modern society; second, that members scrutinize and appropriate necessary funds to implement government programs; and third, that the many and varied views of constituents be brought to the Assembly by the members who represent them.

Although every person in the province cannot have his or her way, they should be permitted through their members to have their say. And I want to express today that I've been privileged to preside as Speaker while members have fulfilled these duties.

For members to be able to do their work, the three functions that I mentioned, they have the support of their respective caucuses and staff and the employees of the Legislative Assembly Office and the independent legislative officers. So today, in addition to the remarks from the Government House Leader and the Opposition House Leader, I too want to thank all those who have provided parliamentary service or advice to members. And I'm talking about everyone who works for the Legislative Assembly.

And before that I should also mention I would like to thank publicly the maintenance and cafeteria staff who look after our very, very basic needs.

And I'm talking about the pages who — they are the only people that I will mention by name because I expect that most of them will be going on to other interests in the following year — and that is Pamela Yungwirth, Lori Rosom, and Nicole McNaughton, Amanda Lawson, Loni Schick, Jennifer Simair, and Sarah Theaker. Thank you very much for the service that you have provided and the help with the information and paper flow.

I want to thank the Clerk and all of those who work in the Clerk's office. The Clerk serves as sort of the deputy minister to

this department, and all of the members rely on them for procedural advice.

I want to thank the *Hansard* and Journals management and staff. They're the ones who, it has been mentioned, capture all that is said in this legislature for posterity.

The Legislative Law Clerk and staff who provide us with the technical expertise in writing the law.

The librarian and library staff who provide access to information on any topic, any time.

We're very conscious of people in financial services. The payroll is a very important function in this legislature.

People who work for information services, who keep our computers and programs updated.

People who work in administrative services, who coordinate behind-the-scenes work to keep the legislature and in some cases the constituency offices functioning.

The visitor services, who make visitors to this building welcome.

To our Sergeant-at-Arms and his staff who provide security service with a smile.

To our broadcast services, who provide TV coverage now province-wide and also on the Internet.

And of course my staff from the Speaker's office, who is sitting in the Speaker's gallery today, who meet everybody that they see with enthusiasm and courtesy and competence to support the functions of the Speaker's office. These are the people that I want to acknowledge today.

Anybody who works in this building has a sort of a unique position. First of all, I believe that they all feel privileged to work in this building in support of the work done by the members elected by the people of Saskatchewan.

The attitude they bring to this building is important. It's important that they exercise their work professionally. Like the Speaker, they must serve all members who are elected. They must do so in a non-partisan, impartial manner, even though at every turn they are bombarded by partisanship. But that's the requirement of our system. We demand competence; we demand professionalism. In this case that means being even-handed.

So on behalf of all members seated in the Assembly, in addition to the remarks we've heard, I want to express my gratitude to the employees of the Legislative Assembly and the independent officers for their manner, decorum, good will, and dedication that they give to their work. Thank you for providing all members with the legislative infrastructure.

Of course I want to mention also, in addition to those who get paid by the legislature, the media who diligently interpret the works of the Assembly at all hours of the day.

Members, at the opening of my remarks, I mentioned the public expects three functions of this legislature. That laws under which we are governed be scrutinized and enacted. During this session you've passed more than 60 Bills. That funds be authorized for the carrying out of government supported programs. You have scrutinized and passed the budget. That the varied and diverse views held by the people of Saskatchewan be given voice in the legislature. To that end people watching the proceedings or reading the newspapers or watching the electronic news or referring to *Hansard* can attest that a great abundance of opinions have been heard.

I commend all members for the diligence they have put to their jobs.

The people of Saskatchewan are indeed fortunate to have elected such talented, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and hard-working MLAs. I believe that the members elected to the House have strived to show that being a politician is an honourable calling. And I am honoured to have presided over your deliberations.

As you probably noticed during question period, I feel you have done your constituents proud. So I want to extend to all — politicians and staff — a safe and relaxing holiday and time for family and friends. And then be able to reinvigorate yourselves for the intensive work that will be challenging you in the year to come.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — The House stands adjourned until the call of the Chair.

The Assembly adjourned at 13:38.