

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present petitions on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan that would like to see SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) waive the \$700 deductible for vehicle owners whose cars are damaged but not stolen as a result of using an anti-theft device. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to work with SGI to develop more fair guidelines for deductibles on vehicles that are damaged as a result of an attempted car theft.

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Allan, Hanley, Elstow, and Saskatoon.

I so present.

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

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

And this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Avonlea, Regina, and Calgary, Alberta.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my petition, the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to work with the federal government, First Nations representatives, and with other provincial governments to bring about a resolution in the Lake of the Prairies situation and to ensure that our natural resources as a whole are used in a responsible manner by all people in the future.

The communities involved, Mr. Speaker, are from the city of Yorkton and the village of Willowbrook.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present regarding the condition of our highways in this province. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to make the necessary repairs to Highway 35 in the Indian Head-Milestone constituency in order to prevent injury and loss of life and to prevent the loss of economic opportunity in the area.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people in the Kendal, Yellow Grass, and Odessa area.

I so present.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — The following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby received.

A petition concerning the reverse of the government's decision to eliminate child maintenance as income;

A petition concerning high-speed Internet service for the community of Lanigan;

A petition concerning car thefts; and

A petition concerning the resolution in the Lake of the Prairies situation.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Wiberg: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 10 ask the government the following question. To the Minister Responsible for SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation):

What percentage of the building located at 800 Central Avenue in Prince Albert is leased by Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation? How many square feet does this represent? What portion of this government lease is presently vacant? And what is the square foot cost for this lease?

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day 10 ask the government the following question. To the Minister of Health:

How many public health inspector positions are currently vacant, and in what communities? And in respect to these vacancies, what inspection services are not being completed in the communities where these positions are unfilled?

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 10 ask the government the following question. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs:

Which towns and municipalities have not paid their RCMP service agreement bills for the 2001 year? And how much does each of these municipalities owe?

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 10 ask the government the following question. To the minister responsible for SGI regarding cellular phone related motor vehicle related accidents:

In how many motor vehicle accidents was the use of a cellular phone a factor in the year 2001?

Mr. Speaker, I have parallel questions for the years 2000 and 1999.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to draw your attention and that of the members of the House to a group that is seated in your gallery. It's a group of 18 students who are from the University of Regina.

They're enrolled in the Faculty of Education; they are in fact fourth-year secondary teachers. They will be graduating this spring. And one of the chapters in the course textbooks deals with the concept of democracy and it was felt that the Legislature was the best classroom to experience it. And I hope this will be true today, Mr. Speaker.

They are accompanied here today by their professor, Dr. Garth Pickard. I would ask all the members of the Legislative Assembly to make these people feel very welcome here today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peters: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you my nephew, Bruce Reimer, and his colleague from North Battleford. They're here at the SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations) convention and they thought they'd come in and watch the proceedings for the day. Welcome here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Merci, Monsieur le Président.

J'ai le plaisir de vous présenter ainsi qu'à tous les députés de l'Assemblée législative une délégation qui est ici aujourd'hui pour souligner La Journée internationale de la Francophonie, dans le cadre des fêtes qui se déroulent durant Les Rendez-vous de la francophonie et la Semaine nationale de la francophonie. Elle est assise dans votre tribune, Monsieur le Président.

Voici les membres de cette délégation représentant un large éventail d'organismes communautaires fransaskois, Monsieur le Président:

Monsieur le Président, je vous présente: Denis Desgagné; Francine Proulx-Kenzle; Francine Lacasse-Powers; Martin Samuels, qui est un visiteur d'Ottawa, Monsieur le Président, mais il est de la Saskatchewan originalement; Sasha Przytyk; Ronald Labrecque; Donna Thibeault; Réda Lounis; Michel Hamon; Michel Vézina; Françoise Landry; Lisa Hounjet; Céline Desrosiers; Robert Jerrett; Nathalie Bernier; Marie Patterson; Claude Martel; Robert Therrien; Catheline d'Auteuil; Joanne Bonneville; José Deschênes; Janice Murphy; Luc Martin; Lionel Bonneville; Paul Héppelle; deux, deux officiels de notre Office de coordination des affaires francophones, Monsieur le Président, Florent Bilodeau et Terina Abrahamson, Monsieur le Président.

(Translation: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is my pleasure to introduce to you and to all members of the Legislative Assembly a delegation here today to mark La Journée internationale de la Francophonie, as part of the celebrations during Les Rendez-vous de la francophonie and La Semaine nationale de la francophonie. They are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

The members of this delegation representing a variety of Fransaskois community organizations are: Denis Desgagné; Francine Proulx-Kenzle; Francine Lacasse-Powers; Martin Samuels, who is a visitor from Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, but he is from Saskatchewan originally; Sasha Przytyk; Ronald Labrecque; Donna Thibeault; Réda Lounis; Michel Hamon; Michel Vézina; Françoise Landry; Lisa Hounjet; Céline Desrosiers; Robert Jerrett; Nathalie Bernier; Marie Patterson; Claude Martel; Robert Therrien; Catheline d'Auteuil; Joanne Bonneville; José Deschênes; Janice Murphy; Luc Martin; Lionel Bonneville; Paul Héppelle; two officials from our Office of French-language Co-ordination, Mr. Speaker, Florent Bilodeau et Terina Abrahamson, Mr. Speaker.)

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to introduce, seated in the gallery opposite, my good friend, Vice-Chief Greg Ahenakew, vice-chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, who was elected to that post in October of 2000.

He is, as many will know, Mr. Speaker, a member of Ahtahkakoop First Nations . . . First Nation. He is responsible for land and resources, SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association), and many other aspects of activities and affairs which are important to First Nations, Mr. Speaker. With him is his assistant, Leeanne Anderson.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, Vice-Chief Ahenakew is the famous son of a famous father, Dr. David Ahenakew. Please join me in welcoming Greg Ahenakew.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition I would like to join with the Minister of Justice in welcoming the representatives and the people from the Francophonie to the legislature in Saskatchewan.

We've been observing francophonie week in the legislature since Monday and I would like to ask my colleagues to again welcome the delegates to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to join with my colleague from Battleford-Cut Knife in welcoming Bruce Reimer from North Battleford to our Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take the opportunity to, on behalf of Saskatchewan Party official opposition, to welcome First Vice-Chief Greg Ahenakew to the Assembly today. And I'd also like to welcome his assistant.

And I'm presuming that there are some young people that are attending the Assembly with you today, and I would like to welcome them to the Assembly too. I do hope you enjoy the day. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you I'd ask all members of the Assembly to welcome a former colleague and the former member for Last Mountain-Touchwood. With my stature, he's a man I've always looked up to.

But I have to say that Dale continues to do an admirable job in keeping us in touch with the issues out in Last Mountain-Touchwood and we are glad you are here to join us today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with my colleagues in welcoming Vice-Chief Greg Ahenakew and Lianne Anderson. I consider them both very close personal friends. And I would also like to tell the Assembly that Vice-Chief Ahenakew taught me a fair amount of Cree in my time as minister of Aboriginal Affairs. And so, Greg, to you I would like to say . . .

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you to the rest of the Assembly I'd like to welcome 21 grade 7 and 8 students from the Odessa School. They've made the trip in. They're sitting in the east gallery. Their teachers are Bernadette Gavin; chaperones are Yvette Anderson, Donna Wild, Colleen Hamilton, and Joanne Herman.

I will be meeting with them after the question period and the routine proceedings to hopefully try and explain what they have just witnessed. So I'd like to welcome them all here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the rest of this House I would like to introduce a couple of young men who come and study this Legislative Assembly from time to time, and I think also gather for our youth parliament. And they're sitting up in the gallery opposite.

I'd like to welcome them not only on behalf of myself but the member from Regina Elphinstone and all of our colleagues. Kelsey Rose and Tanner Morrison, welcome to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to rise as well with my colleagues in recognizing Vice-Chief Ahenakew and to point out that while many of them consider him his friend — certainly I consider him my friend as well — but he's also very tough. And I would point out that this Assembly quoted his great, great grandfather.

And I would like to join my colleague from Saskatoon in welcoming him in our Cree language.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

So I'm just saying in Cree I'm glad that he's here to see the challenge that we have in this building as we're sitting here, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with my colleague from Regina Qu'Appelle and ask all members to join me in welcoming the two young parliamentarians that have joined us today. I had the privilege just a few weeks ago to serve as their lieutenant-governor for the mini session that they held in Swift Current, and it was an enjoyable experience.

I know their session covered an array of topics and the province is in good hands if the future of it was represented in Swift Current over that weekend. I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

North Saskatoon Business Association Business Builder Awards

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, last night the Minister of Economic Development, the member from Saskatoon Meewasin, and myself were at the Saskatoon Inn to attend the fifth annual Business Builders Award banquet sponsored by the North Saskatoon Business Association and very ably emceed by Paul Martin — our Paul Martin.

Mr. Speaker, the NSBA (North Saskatoon Business Association) has about 675 members. Many of those businesses are in my constituency of Idylwyld.

The awards are designed to recognize specific achievements of member businesses. As well the banquet provides us — business, media, and government — with an opportunity to recognize the important role the NSBA plays in promoting business in our fine city, the best small city in Canada in which to live, as the member from Greystone documented in this Assembly yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quickly congratulate each nominee and especially the winners by announcing their names.

For New Direction, the award went to CJWW/Hot 93/Magic 98.3 radio. For Job Creation, Days Inn. For Team Building,

Cover-All Building Systems. For Management Quality, North Ridge Development. The award for Small Business went to Cardwell Human Resources. Business Builder is HandyMan Rental Centre. And the Member of the Year was awarded to Wendy Portfors, the NSBA executive director and branch manager of the Circle Drive Scotiabank.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Nomination of Saskatchewan Party Candidates

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this first day of spring one's thought turns to renewal of life, greener pastures, and warmer weather as old man winter loses his grip. It also reminds us that the expiration date of the NDP (New Democratic Party)-Liberal coalition is fast approaching. The Saskatchewan Party must start nominating candidates to replace NDP MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) who have long since passed their best-before date.

Today I am very pleased to announce that on June 5 in the constituency of Saskatoon Southeast there will be the first of many more contested nominations. Although the deadline for nominations is May 29, we already have two prominent community leaders declared as candidates: Mr. Don Morgan and Mr. Kevin Waugh.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Both of these people will be excellent Saskatchewan Party MLAs for the constituency of Saskatoon Southeast — and the race is just beginning. We will be announcing more nomination dates in the near future and we expect hotly contested races in every one of our urban ridings.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are coming together and they are prepared to roll up their sleeves and work hard to make sure that the Saskatchewan Party forms the next government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

La Journée internationale de la Francophonie

Mr. Kasperski: — Merci, Monsieur le Président.

Aujourd'hui, 20 mars, est un jour important pour les Francophones partout dans le monde. Cette journée marque l'anniversaire de la signature historique, il y a trente ans, du traité qui devait créer le premier organisme francophone qui unit les pays de langue française. La Francophonie, tel est son nom, comprend plus de 50 pays et gouvernements qui ont le français en partage.

Les Fransaskois, les francophones de la Saskatchewan font partie de cette francophonie internationale. En signe de reconnaissance, mon collègue l'honorable Chris Axworthy a officiellement proclamé le 20 mars 2002, Journée internationale de la Francophonie en Saskatchewan.

Au Canada, nous avons choisi la quinzaine qui entoure ce jour

pour célébrer le patrimoine, la diversité et les réalisations de nos propres communautés francophones, durant le Rendez-vous de la francophonie et la Semaine nationale de la francophonie qui reviennent chaque année.

La contribution de la communauté fransaskoise au développement social, culturel, et économique de la Saskatchewan est sans l'ombre d'un doute digne de mention. Le thème provincial de cette année: «Bilinguisme et employabilité», vient souligner le désir des Fransaskois de continuer à contribuer.

En terminant, j'encourage tous mes collègues à soutenir activement et à fêter les Francophones dans leurs circonscriptions et je les invite dès maintenant à se joindre à moi pour souhaiter aux Fransaskois et Fransaskoises: Bonne journée internationale de la Francophonie.

(Translation: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today, March 20, is an important day for francophones around the world.

It marks the historic signing over 30 years ago of the treaty to create the first intergovernmental organization linking French-speaking countries. La Francophonie, as it is now known, comprises over 50 countries and governments with French as a common language.

The Fransaskois, Saskatchewan's francophones, are part of this international French-speaking family. As a sign of recognition, my colleague the Hon. Chris Axworthy has officially proclaimed March 20, 2002, as La Journée internationale de la Francophonie in Saskatchewan.

In Canada, we have chosen the two weeks around this day to celebrate the heritage, diversity, and accomplishments of our own francophone communities during the annual Rendez-vous de la francophonie and the Semaine nationale de la francophonie.

The Fransaskois community's contributions to the social, cultural, and economic development of Saskatchewan are certainly worthy of note. The provincial theme this year, "Bilingualism and Employability," underscores the desire of the Fransaskois to continue this contribution.

In closing, I encourage all my colleagues to be active in supporting and celebrating the francophones in their constituencies and ask them to join with me now in wishing all Fransaskois and Fransaskoises: Bonne Journée internationale de la Francophonie.)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order for a minute.

I too would like to welcome all the guests to the legislature today; and seeing as how we have some students here looking at the political process and democratic process, one of the processes is that we invite people to come to the galleries but ask them not to participate — even if they get excited about a member's statement — but to listen diligently.

Two New Radio Stations Launched

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past 36 years, CJVR radio in Melfort has established itself as an essential component of our community. The station's efforts have been earned . . . have recognized them as a Canadian Country Music Association's radio station of the year for six consecutive years.

Recently radio CJVR has demonstrated its commitment and faith in our community and the rest of the province by launching two new radio stations. The country music format of CJVR radio will be broadcast from three positions on the FM (frequency modulation) band, providing the largest FM coverage of any area in Canada and positioning CJVR as a country FM station on a predominantly rock FM band.

The second station, 750 on the AM dial, is now CK750, playing a mix of rock and roll hits and filling the void for rock on the AM band. CK750 will be capable of broadcasting to the majority of the province, Mr. Speaker.

Our community was proud of our local station before, and we now have even more reason to be proud. Would the Assembly please join me in congratulating CJVR Radio on their accomplishments.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Yorkton Renal Satellite Program

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday I welcomed the Minister of Health to my constituency who came with some very welcome news for the Yorkton Regional Health Centre.

As of mid-April, the renal dialysis program at the health centre will be increased from four to six stations. Now this will take extra pressure off Regina and Saskatoon health districts, but more importantly, Mr. Speaker, this means that the quality of life will improve for an extra eight patients in the Yorkton area who require dialysis three times a week.

Once the expansion is completed, 24 people will receive treatment in this facility. That means, of course, that 24 people will be driving much shorter distances, Mr. Speaker; and that is good news, Mr. Speaker, and also that's very good health.

The Yorkton satellite centre is one of five located in the province and I am proud that our government is expanding the life-saving procedure to communities close to home for dialysis patients.

In all there are 87 people who are being served in five different stations across the province — in Prince Albert, in Tisdale, Lloydminster, Swift Current, and in Yorkton.

And, Mr. Speaker, I am proud that my regional health centre and I am pleased to be part of the government which provided on that day 344,000 to the renal satellite centre for the extra stations. And most of all I'm happy, Mr. Speaker, that all those patients whose life has been made a little bit less complicated by the services that we're providing in that region.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hanley Elks Provincial Curling Champs

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the honour today to rise in the House to talk about the recent achievements of the Hanley Elks Club curling team. Last month this team succeeded in winning the Elks provincial curling title at the event hosted in La Ronge.

The team consisted of three Grindheim brothers — Dean, Darren, and Daryl — as well as Lorne Peek. These gentlemen have done very well curling together over the years and should do well in the Elks national playoffs beginning this week in Kindersley.

As a member of the Elks Club in my hometown of Bladworth — of which if there's any Elks members watching, there's a meeting tonight — I am proud to see these successful curling events taking place here in Saskatchewan.

Hats off to the organizers and volunteers both in La Ronge, and this week in Kindersley, who have worked hard to host these events. Funds raised by these events will be used to assist community charities across Saskatchewan, providing a benefit to all those in need.

We have seen our sport of curling continues to enjoy increasing recognition, both at this year's Olympic Games in Salt Lake City and across Canada. I see a bright future ahead for curling Saskatchewan, and I hope the Assembly will join me in wishing the Hanley Elks all the best in their quest for national Elks championship. Best of luck, gentlemen. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Western Blind Curling

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Speaker, the Western Blind Curling Championships last week celebrated a milestone, 30 years — a testament to the volunteers that make this happen every year. Curling is the official sport of Saskatchewan, and it brings joy to everyone who gets a chance to pick up a broom or throw a stone.

Mr. Speaker, 40 curlers, comprising two teams each from the prairie provinces, took part in the championship. Teams are mixed with an open age class and have five members. Each team has a sighted second and sweeper.

Mr. Speaker, this event was hosted here in Regina. And I would like to take a moment to thank the Lions Clubs throughout the province, SaskTel Pioneers, Redhead Equipment, and all those others whose sponsorship made this event possible. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

West Central Pelleting

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one never knows who may be watching the legislative channel. The other

day in my response to the Speech from the Throne, I mistakenly referred to the town of Unity as the home of West Central Pelleting. As I was speaking, my CA (constituency assistant) received a phone call from an observant constituent calling to inform me that West Central Pelleting is located in the community of Wilkie.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank this observant constituent for being . . . bringing this oversight to my attention. Wilkie is indeed the home of West Central Pelleting. And, Mr. Speaker, we soon hope to see a second pelleting plant in the community of Wolseley.

Recognition of Athletic Achievements

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, as well, I would like to take a moment to recognize the achievement of two young ladies from our community. Mr. Speaker, we've had the opportunity of watching these young ladies hone their skills in hockey throughout the years as they've played on the same team my son did during their minor hockey days.

Mr. Speaker, I speak of Colleen Sistorics, a defensive star in Canada's women's gold medal winning hockey team. And I also speak of Brandy West who just recently was a finalist for Saskatchewan Female Athlete of the Year. I wish to extend my congratulations to both young ladies. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

SaskTel Investment in Retx

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we confirmed yesterday that this NDP government has now spent \$20 million on an Atlanta, Georgia dot-com company called Retx. We confirmed as well, Mr. Speaker, that that company has made no profits for SaskTel. In fact in their first year of operation, the loss . . . just the Saskatchewan share of the loss was \$265,000. We confirmed, Mr. Speaker, that no jobs had been created as a result of this investment in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party believes we shouldn't be in this deal in the first place, but we are in it nonetheless, Mr. Speaker. And so, in the spirit of being constructive, we have a suggestion for the government.

If they're going to run this dot-com, and it appears they are — the minister yesterday said he's prepared to lose money maybe up to five years in this particular deal — if they're prepared to run a dot-com, which by the way, with dot-coms it doesn't really matter where they're located, Mr. Speaker, so if they're prepared to run it, and if they now own 60-plus per cent of the company as they do, will the minister tell the Assembly when he will direct that company to relocate to Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know what the first thing, if they ever relocated in Saskatchewan, that they would say — they're competing with the private sector,

Mr. Speaker. That's the first thing they'd say.

Mr. Speaker, the suggestion is ridiculous. Mr. Speaker, SaskTel and our Crown corporations make investments inside and outside of Saskatchewan. I said yesterday, I stood in my place here last Friday and announced that in Saskatchewan we would be investing in 191 communities in Saskatchewan; we'd be putting in high-speed Internet, Mr. Speaker.

And I asked the opposition: how do we pay for that, Mr. Speaker? We pay for it by investments, Mr. Speaker. That's how we pay for it. SaskTel — \$157 million we bring back into Saskatchewan to pay for high-speed Internet in communities that they represent, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, that minister just said that the suggestion that they use their majority share interest in this company to relocate to the province of Saskatchewan is ridiculous. The only thing, the only thing that's ridiculous, Mr. Speaker, is the attitude and the approach of that government.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very reasonable suggestion. It's true we don't like this deal, but we're into the deal. The government says they're not backing off; their CEO (chief executive officer) says he's prepared to put millions more into the company — more coming this summer.

So here's the question. Here's the question: why wouldn't that minister use the government's 60 per cent plus majority share position in this dot-com — because, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't really matter where dot-coms are located; they're Internet based — why won't he use that influence and at the very least relocate this company back to Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, what is ridiculous is their vision of Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. He would have that company come to Saskatchewan while at the same time their party's vision is to move every one of our Crowns outside of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They want to sell all of our Crowns — move all the employees in Saskatchewan out of Saskatchewan, move all of the people with expertise, all of our head offices — they want to sell them off, move them out of Saskatchewan.

So why would you want to move our Crowns out and sell them off — at the same time, having some investment that we have in the United States move back into Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? It's a contradiction, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the minister is once again trying to announce opposition policy. And he need . . . he ought not to do that, Mr. Speaker, because all he has to do is ask, and we're prepared to tell him about the choices that we're going to make, Mr. Speaker, for this province.

We're going to choose places like Nipawin over places like Newcastle, Australia. We're going to choose places like Moose Jaw over Mexico, Mr. Speaker, to build in and to invest in. That'll be the choices we make and if he'd like us to go on to that length, we're more than prepared to do that.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, shortly after SaskTel first invested in Retx, they announced plans to set up a Canadian office — in Calgary. Retx CEO Ross Malme said the plan was for a Calgary office, with about 10 employees moved there in 2001. It's on their Web site. SaskTel certainly knew about it; they were the largest shareholder at the time. We don't know if the move happened or not, but we'd like the minister maybe to elaborate a little bit on that. And if Calgary was good enough for this SaskTel investment, why isn't Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, last year all through the session they attacked SaskTel — one of our strongest Crowns, one of the Crowns that provides services in virtually every community in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They attacked it on a daily basis; they attack it here again today.

Mr. Speaker, I have one question for them: are you going to . . .

The Speaker: — The member would rephrase his last part of his statements — he's got 10 seconds to do so.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You can understand why Saskatchewan people today are questioning the NDP's priorities. They've got \$80 million for Australia; they've got nothing for property tax relief. Mr. Speaker, they've got \$30 million for Chile and Mexico; they've got nothing for safe drinking water in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, they've got 20 million for a dot-com in Atlanta, Georgia, and they have absolutely nothing for spot loss hail insurance. And the CEO of SaskTel says, and I quote:

If there was no other capital available to Retx, we would not allow the company to starve.

Community and farmers in this province can go without water but the NDP won't allow an Atlanta-based company to starve, Mr. Speaker. When is this government going to get its priorities right?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, I asked the question as to whether or not they would keep SaskTel under the constant attack on SaskTel, and he wouldn't answer the question. I'll tell you why he wouldn't answer the question. It's right here, Mr. Speaker. I refer to the Moose Jaw *Times-Herald* of March 7. And I quote, Mr. Speaker, referring to the member from Thunder Creek:

Stewart said the party is not committed to maintaining or selling Crown corporations. An independent review would determine their future (Mr. Speaker).

That's why, Mr. Speaker. They're going to put it under review, Mr. Speaker. They know the results of the review, Mr. Speaker.

They know the results of the review. They would sell every Crown in the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Municipal Revenue-sharing Grants

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today the people of Saskatchewan are finding out the real priorities of this worn-out NDP government.

Over the past 10 years the NDP have cut municipal revenue-sharing grants in half. Mr. Speaker, the NDP has no money for municipal priorities like safe water and good roads but they've got a wagonload of money for high-risk American dot-com companies like Retx.

Mr. Speaker, is that what the Municipal Affairs minister meant when he promised to champion the interest of municipalities in cabinet — more money for American dot-coms but no new money for municipalities in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased that the member has asked me the question that allows me to once again remind the members opposite that all municipalities throughout the province know that this government has in fact been very supportive of municipalities over the years.

Five years ago there was no such thing as grants in lieu of taxes. Over \$13 million up to the last year, Mr. Speaker. So I ask the member opposite, would he prefer that we do what their cousins to the west of us are doing? They're raising taxes.

And when he talks about ignoring municipalities in this province, the amount of money that's now being on hold for infrastructure in that province is nowhere near, Mr. Speaker, what the amount of money and support we've been giving to our municipalities in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of being dumped on by this NDP government, you can understand why municipalities are getting a little tired of empty promises. For 10 years the NDP has been downloading on municipalities, which by the way might be news to the Municipal minister, and for 10 years the NDP is promising next year will get better.

Well, Mr. Speaker, municipalities are saying enough is enough and property taxpayers are saying no to yet another NDP tax increase. Mr. Speaker, the NDP has taken a hatchet to municipal revenue sharing but spent a boatload of money — \$80 million, Mr. Speaker — \$80 million to build a cellular phone system in Australia. Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Municipal Affairs agree with the NDP's priorities — millions of dollars for an Australian phone system and more broken promises for Saskatchewan communities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the opposition . . . municipalities know that in 2001, 2000-2001, they received over \$93 million in support from this government. Five years ago — once again I'm going to repeat — the grants in lieu of taxes afforded a substantial amount of return of money to those municipalities; the Centenary Fund, Mr. Speaker. But I guess what the members opposite would sooner hear is that infrastructure projects such as roads, schools, and hospitals worth \$631 million have been delayed until the economy improves. That's happening in Alberta, not here, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister might be surprised to know that in the last 10 years municipalities are receiving less than half the dollars they were when these people came to power. Mr. Speaker, if the NDP's plan was to drive municipal and education property taxes through the roof, their plan is working perfectly.

According to the minister's own Department of Municipal Affairs, property taxes are going up across Saskatchewan. Here's a summary, Mr. Speaker. Property taxes for all municipalities up 7 per cent in 2001; urban property taxes up 4.3 per cent; rural property taxes up 7 per cent; and property taxes on agriculture land up a whopping 10.3 per cent. And what is the NDP government doing about it? Absolutely nothing.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Municipal Affairs explain to this House and to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan why his NDP government is blowing millions of dollars on American dot-coms, on Australian telephone systems, while they keep driving property taxes up at home in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I just want to commend the people of Saskatchewan for investing in this province and continuing to invest in this province and believe in this province and appreciate the support that they are receiving from this government. I talked to those people as well, Mr. Speaker, and they are appreciative.

I guess, once again, what the members opposite would like to hear is lifting a freeze on school property tax that will cost property owners \$45 million. I'm not sure where those questions are coming from. Are they coming from the neighbours to the West as a result of their recent release on the demands they are going to place on their taxpayers? Not here, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Funding for Water Quality Improvements

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Municipal Affairs as well. The recent Throne Speech by the NDP said this government plans to introduce legislative changes and direct action to ensure that the people of Saskatchewan have safe, sustainable, clean, drinking water. We all remember safe drinking water was a major issue last session, particularly when the people of North Battleford

began getting sick.

And we learned that the NDP government was not listening to advice by its own department officials who warned that the health of Saskatchewan people was at risk because of unsafe drinking water.

Mr. Minister, communities aren't looking for legislative changes, they're looking for financial help to improve water treatment in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: How many communities in Saskatchewan currently, today, lack minimum water treatment and distribution facilities, and how many municipalities are not meeting water quality objectives and standards? How many, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — There's a lot of work being done to meet the water challenges of the province as a whole.

And that member very well knows that in the last couple of years we have made tremendous progress in meeting some of the water challenges, Mr. Speaker. Not only are we putting millions of dollars in meeting some of the water infrastructure budget needs across this great province of Saskatchewan, but we have also, Mr. Speaker, put forward a number of proposals to work with the municipal governments to make sure that all their operators are certified, to make sure that we do inspections, Mr. Speaker, to get more lab tests done so to make sure the water samples are up to date.

We've done that last year, Mr. Speaker, and that party across the way, and that member across the way, Mr. Speaker, they voted against that budget, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't think that rambling response is going to cut it with the village of Perdue. The village of Perdue has applied to the Canada/Saskatchewan infrastructure program for the last three years, and every year they have been turned down for their request of \$150,000. They need this money for improvements to their water treatment system.

In fact, Mr. Dale Bonke of SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management) sent the town council a letter on February 6 that says, and I quote:

Failure to correct these problems immediately could result in serious safety issues for your citizens and liability issues for your council.

Lyle Hosler from Sask Water toured the plant recently and told the Perdue council that their lift station would be condemned by occupational health and safety if they saw it.

Well last week the town's well collapsed and the situation for the community is now desperate.

Mr. Speaker, if two government departments say that Perdue

seriously needs new water treatment facilities, why can't they get any help from this government to supply safe drinking water to their citizens?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I will point out again that this government has been very upfront with some of the challenges that we have with water quality across the province.

And I will point out, Mr. Speaker, that we have told every municipality, if they have a problem, they will hear about it from this government, Mr. Speaker. We have told them time and time again, get your water tested. If you're a private well operator, if you're a community, test your water. And if you have any problems, Mr. Speaker, we're going to help you address those problems. And that this problem of making sure that the water quality across the province is good . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. I'm just having a little difficulty hearing the minister. I would ask the minister to finish his statement. About 20 seconds.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this government responds, Mr. Speaker. Not only going to make sure that all water operators are certified within the 5-year time frame, Mr. Speaker; not only going to make sure there's inspections, Mr. Speaker, at the plant; not only going to make sure we put millions of dollars into infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. We're going to respond alongside of the people that own and operate these water plants, Mr. Speaker.

And I would point out, all the workers that we hired last year, they voted against them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the minister could try telling that to the mayor of Arran in eastern Saskatchewan. The mayor of Arran is now personally hauling water for the town because their water system is down. And they didn't qualify for funding. And they have been told by this government that there is no compensation for their hauling expenses. And do you know where some of the water may be coming from, Mr. Speaker? Roblin, Manitoba.

Hundreds of other communities in both large and small are facing water and waste treatment expenses, basic infrastructure needs here in Saskatchewan, not in Australia. Yet all they get from the NDP is a commitment for new legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this government has \$200 million to blow on a risky dot-com venture in Atlanta, Georgia, but can't come up with \$150,000 for the town of Perdue. No new money for drinking water in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: which is more important, the people of Saskatchewan or your investment in Georgia?

The Speaker: — Just want to remind the member to complete

his statement, speaking through the Chair.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I . . . obviously it's a . . . the investment and the return on investment is completely lost by members on the opposite side of the House.

CIC's (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) dividends to the General Revenue Fund were in the vicinity of \$200 million, Mr. Speaker. That's money that goes to our municipalities, that goes to creating Internet — high-speed Internet — throughout our small communities.

The question that the member raises with respect to the village of Arran. We have been . . . Sask Water has been in touch with that mayor, and other mayors, and other communities, to discuss the problems that they have and offer support to them and suggestions on how we resolve those problems, Mr. Speaker.

What I would suggest to the members, if they do have other specific villages throughout the province, individual situations, I would be pleased to receive a report from those particular communities and ensure that our people from Sask Water are alerted and will meet with them to discuss how we can resolve that issue. We are concerned about water quality throughout the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Drought Assistance for Livestock Producers

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Agriculture. Yesterday the minister revealed once again that the federal government had rejected one of his government's strongly worded letters asking for agriculture support. Now this time, it was a request for \$2.5 million to fund dugouts and well projects for Saskatchewan producers.

You know what Mr. Speaker? Saskatchewan livestock producers are tired of getting nothing but talk from the NDP government. Time and time again the NDP have hidden from their own responsibility to Saskatchewan farmers by blaming everything on the feds. Today, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan farmers are looking at the NDP for some answers. They keep hearing the NDP talk about the serious drought situation, so now they're asking why the NDP won't come up with the extra two and a half million dollars for a farm water program. Two and a half million dollars that this government could put into that program.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain why the NDP has \$20 million to spend on a high-risk dot-com company in Atlanta, Georgia and not one extra penny for drought-affected livestock producers right here in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Maple Creek would know very well because we've had a number of conversations, Mr. Speaker, about the importance and the need of getting water for farmers in Saskatchewan. And we had a

conversation, not only this year but last year, about the need to get water for farmers.

And we got last year, Mr. Speaker, through our conversations and a joint bylaw, he and I and the associations in Saskatchewan, farm associations, were able to get an additional \$1.5 million for producers last year.

And we're lobbying to get from the federal government enhancement to the PFRA (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration) again this year for Saskatchewan's livestock producers.

But as, Mr. Speaker, we're busy lobbying away to get additional money — farm organizations and farm leaders in this province — we have the Agriculture critic from Kindersley standing up in Saskatchewan and saying that Saskatchewan farmers don't need any money, Mr. Speaker, from the federal government — don't need any money.

And, Mr. Speaker, the member from Kindersley is on record now saying that Saskatchewan farmers don't need money, while we're busy working away trying to find money for Saskatchewan producers. And I say to the member opposite . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Elhard: — . . . year we lobbied real hard to get any money at all, but what we got was a meagre \$3 million program. Now what we have is producers who have completed their projects but won't be paid for them because the program has already run out of money. Two, we have producers whose projects have been approved but won't be able to finish them before the end of the deadline because of the severe winter weather. And three, we've already got growing concerns that the dry winter is going to exacerbate the drought situation, and the need for new wells and dugouts is going to increase this spring.

Now the government is saying that they don't have extra money of any kind for projects this coming year.

Mr. Speaker, how is it that the minister and the NDP have money for dot-coms in Atlanta, but only Georgia peanuts for drought-stricken Saskatchewan livestock producers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — I want to say again to the member, and to the House, I have here a letter, Mr. Speaker, that I wrote to Mr. VanClief way back in . . . (inaudible) . . . Mr. Speaker, talking about the need for additional water for Saskatchewan producers.

And I've now received the correspondence from Mr. VanClief, as of March 6, and he says that this year there won't be any additional money for Saskatchewan producers, Mr. Speaker — no additional money for Saskatchewan producers. When all Saskatchewan people today — producers and farmers and farm organizations — are saying we should have more money.

And not only are people across Saskatchewan saying that we should have more money for producers, but also the entire federal Liberal caucus that travelled the province just recently had conversations with Saskatchewan producers and all of those

. . . and every one of those members, including the Liberal MPs (Member of Parliament), Mr. Speaker, said that we should have more assistance for Saskatchewan farmers today.

But who is the only lone voice out there who is opposing Saskatchewan producers, Mr. Speaker? It's the critic from Kindersley — the agriculture critic. He's the only guy who is on record in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, today saying that we, Saskatchewan farmers, don't need money, Mr. Speaker. And I say to the . . .

Mr. Elhard: — . . . (inaudible) . . . government may be prepared to abdicate their responsibility but this government has a responsibility of its own. Will the minister stand in his place and tell us how much money will his government commit today to fund water development projects for drought affected farmers and ranchers in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year this government found an additional \$80 million for Saskatchewan farmers. Last year we found an additional 1.5, unprecedented for Saskatchewan farmers, Mr. Speaker. And I want to say to the member opposite that on this side of the House we're going to continue to work to find more additional money for farmers and also provide additional money for farmers.

But I say to you, Mr. Member, and to the member from Kindersley, who is the agricultural critic, don't stand in the way of our good work because every time you get in the way, you know exactly what happens.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 7 — The Electronic Information and Documents Amendment Act, 2002

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 7, The Electronic Information and Documents Amendment Act, 2002 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 8 — The Family Maintenance Amendment Act, 2002/Loi de 2002 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les prestations alimentaires familiales

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 8, The Family Maintenance Amendment Act, 2002 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 9 — The Real Estate Amendment Act, 2002

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 9, The Real Estate Amendment Act, 2002 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Prebble, seconded by Mr. Forbes, and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. Toth.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to exercise our democratic opportunities in the legislature here. And I'm just going to do a short recap of my introduction yesterday for those who might have forgotten some of the trends that I was pursuing.

First of all, I just want to remind everybody of the article, "Saskatchewan: not the biggest, just the best." And the reason I want to emphasize it is the researchers were surprised at how much higher the figures were for Saskatchewan than anywhere else in Canada for charitable giving, for volunteering, for community involvement, caring enough to help, and particularly caring enough to become involved rather than simply sitting back and sniping from the edges.

Now you'll hear this theme a little bit more, Mr. Speaker, as I talk about the opposition sniping from the edges.

Now I have to say I'm getting a little discouraged with these front page parrots. When Mr. Harris was on his roll, they jumped on that bandwagon. When Mr. Stockwell Day was on his run there, they jumped on his bandwagon. When Mr. Klein was on his roll, they jumped on his bandwagon. Gordon Campbell, they jumped on his bandwagon. I don't think they have a thought of their own. Whenever they see a front page headline they like, they just jump on the bandwagon.

But you know, I have to say that the excitement fades, Mr. Speaker. Right now we have a headline from the oft-quoted Alberta, from last year. Now I don't notice the opposition saying very much about Alberta this year because when you jump onto a bandwagon, if you're not careful, you can just as easily fall off again.

And what's the headlines here: "Taxman jams hand into most pockets".

Albertans will pay more for . . . health care, education . . . a budget that dashes Premier Ralph Klein's pledge that the only way taxes in Alberta will go is down.

The tax and fee increases are worth \$722 million, including a brand new tax on sports.

Now the budget boosts health care-premiums by 30 per cent, a move that'll cost families 240 more dollars a year. And of particular note, I think for the opposition, would be lifting a freeze on school property tax that will cost property owners 45 million.

Albertans will pay 20 per cent more when they register their vehicles, file court documents, pay traffic fines.

And I will say, as the opposition pursues their rather specious argument about hiring of public servants, last year the Alberta government boosted spending by more than 22 per cent and hired more than 1,000 staff based on projected energy revenues of 7.5 billion.

So I'll just close this little reminder, because I know what a short attention span some of the people opposite have:

(The) infrastructure projects such as roads, schools and hospitals worth \$631 million have been delayed until the economy improves.

Late breaking news from Alberta, Mr. Speaker.

I might also mention that, in terms of fiscal reality, Alberta knows that there is such a thing as fiscal reality. When you live in a province where 75 per cent of your trade is with the US (United States), when the US has experienced a dramatic drop in corporate income tax revenues and as well a corresponding reduction in oil and gas revenues, well, there's a reality. And I have to say that, as depressing as it must be for the Sask Party to have all of their heroes crashing around them, where we have Alberta dealing with fiscal reality, BC (British Columbia) reckless in its response to its fiscal reality, Stockwell Day and Gordon Campbell just aren't feeding any good lines these days, and the bloom is off the rose for Mike Harris.

So I would suggest that they pay a little bit of attention to the four pillars that we've laid out in our plan as mentioned in Her Honour's most excellent address and, of course, those four pillars being: investment in the economy, in the environment; investment in infrastructure; provision of quality education; and healthy and self-reliant families.

Now I mentioned yesterday I wouldn't spend too much time on issues that my colleagues have dealt with very well, so I'm going to emphasize just a few. One of the things of course that's very important for Saskatchewan into the future is environmental technology and opportunities for growth in the environment area. And I just wanted to remind people that recently 16 million acres were committed to the representative areas network.

(14:30)

Now this is an innovative agreement where cattle will still be allowed to graze but land will be protected from being tilled or otherwise disturbing the natural growth there. Now this of course helps in drought situations and is a very good way to conserve the quality of land in our cattle ranching areas.

The second thing I want to mention is the second major wind project, 10.8 million. The members opposite are wondering where the money goes. I'll repeat, 10.8 million to the Cypress wind power project to provide green power to the University of Regina and as well, who's going to be using it to power some of the green projects that are going on there. That's a project with Vestas Canada wind technology to supply turbines near Gull Lake. And I'll also mention that by August the first wind power

project with SunBridge will be in full operation.

The next one will be the ethanol announcement that is on the way. But there is no question that, as well as being a huge boon to the agricultural sector and the energy sector, that this as well is going to be very helpful in greenhouse gas reduction.

So I just mention those as new areas of economic development linked to the environment. And I think the member from Regina South did a very good job yesterday of going through a lot of these areas.

Now one of the things I want to talk particularly about is the very negative effect that the Sask Party has on the young people in our province when they work so hard at depressing them. You know it's interesting. One of our young people who works in the bureaucracy, when I was asking him about young people leaving rural Saskatchewan, he said, well you know, he said, the whole time I was growing up the only thing my parents said to me was, you know, be sure you get out of farming; be sure you get an education.

Now we can hardly expect our young people to stay here when the advice they receive from their parents or from the opposition is to get out of what they're doing. The way that we of course are going to succeed is for people to become innovative in what they are doing. And I would have to say that the biggest detriment right now to young people staying in the province is the very poor attitude of the members opposite in discouraging people.

When I talk to young people who have gone to Alberta to work, wages are lower, housing are higher, costs of apartments are higher, and in fact they actually get two weeks less off work as part of their labour standards there as well, I might add.

But the fact of the matter is it's . . . they go there having believed the fantasy that's painted by the members opposite and are very disappointed when they see the reality and usually very quickly return to work in the province. And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, we're doing a number of things to make sure that those opportunities are here.

The centennial student summer program recognizes the need for young people to have a good experience in professional-level employment. And so 1,600 jobs were created last summer under the centennial student employment program so that students could get both the direct career experience but also would be able to start to look at the various employers they might care to work for when they graduate.

We have the very special program in the public service — the aboriginal public service internship program — which is assisting professional young aboriginal people in getting into the leadership levels of the public service where they are under-represented. And we're very proud of this program and of the high-quality young people who have applied for it.

And the leaders of tomorrow program — shortly there will be young people joining the boards of our Crown corporations to add their professional advice and their fresh skills to the work of the Crowns.

We have the Youth PACE (Provincial Action Committee on the Economy) Committee, which is made up of young people who give input into government actions in areas of education and the economy. And as well of course, the post-secondary graduate tax credit, in which young people who remain in Saskatchewan receive a tax credit on their income tax.

We have programs for young people who may not be in post-secondary but are certainly wanting to have quality work and job start future skills in the apprenticeship program and as well, the Department of Economic Development helps young people get involved through the regional economic development authorities in doing economic development work out in their regions.

We have an aboriginal education training action plan that is assisting young people in taking their appropriate place in our workplaces and our communities. And as well, technology-enhanced learning, which is enabling young people from around the province to have access to a full range of educational services that they could otherwise only get at universities.

And I'll just mention Virtual Campus — Canada's first. And Tracy Belisle, who's in her first-year nursing class says, it's allowed me to be at home more. While other institutions offer some courses on-line, nothing in Canada — nothing in Canada, Mr. Speaker — compares to the extent of the virtual campus. And that's a program being delivered by SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) so people are able to get started on their nursing careers without leaving their home community.

The other myth I'd like to dispel is about young people staying in the province. We know that over 90 per cent of SIAST graduates get high-quality employment directly related to their field of training in the province. And as well the University of Saskatchewan just completed a study that I have here: of the 1,653 graduates surveyed, 1,245 continue to live in the province and they found work as quickly and successfully as those who moved outside. And over 95 per cent were very satisfied with their occupations, which I'd think would probably beat some of the job satisfaction levels in other areas.

So, I just want to say that this is a complete myth that young people are not finding quality jobs here, and we're certainly working to open up more and more opportunities in those areas, with the increase in research projects like the greenhouse gas, the CO₂ centre, the synchrotron. There's a whole range of areas opening up in research and in the public service as some of the baby boomers, who are maybe a little less boomy than they used to be, start to retire and open up professional jobs in the public service and all our other institutions.

Now the one thing I particularly want to mention, because I found this very disturbing, we've . . . many of us have fought long and hard for young women and women generally, to have equality. And here's a quote from the Leader of the Opposition, "Stay home, women told." Elwin Hermanson was questioned at a Prince Albert Chamber of Commerce meeting about why the Sask Party couldn't nominate more women to run as candidates.

The Sask Party leader said it was difficult since their concerns

were with the home and they don't like dealing with conflict. And you know, I have to say that I think all of the elected women here have a lot concerns about the home. But we also have concerns about women having the same opportunities to make a choice about how they manage their professional and home lives. And we stand for women having that same opportunity.

Certainly as I've gone around the province and been to various schools, I've seen the huge strides that we've made in programs for young women in math, science, and technology, and these have been very successful. So I'll just say that unlike the party opposite, Mr. Speaker, we do not stand for being barefoot and in the kitchen, I think is the old phrase. We stand for young women having the opportunity to be both family people and professional people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — The second area I want to explore here is about the film and video industry in the province. I think it's important that people understand that this is not like the old days of Hollywood where a few towns had a movie theatre and there was one area of the world that cranked out films for people to see.

We live in a multi-channel universe now where people spend a very large proportion of their time looking at various cable stations, being involved in . . . in going to movies. It's a very large marketplace today in the multi-channel universe. And I have to say that Saskatchewan film producers have product on many, many of the channels today whether it's Discovery Channel, TLC (The Learning Channel), Bravo!, CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network), the Women's Channel, the home and gardening channel, the cooking channel — you name it — the National Geographic Channel, The History Channel, Global. We are everywhere in the multi-channel universe. And these are high-quality film and video productions by Saskatchewan talent and Saskatchewan producers and technical people.

And, you know, people say well, why does that matter, why do we bother? For one, it's a huge marketplace. But secondly, when I watch a movie, I kind of like to see Saskatoon or Southey or La Ronge in the background. I don't always want to see Chicago and New York and San Francisco. I like to see some of my own home landscapes.

I think that we've seen with some of our filmmakers how the Saskatchewan perspective is a perspective valued by investors around the world who are wanting their story told in a particular way, particularly in the documentary film area. But we've seen other producers be very successful in the feature film area where they've done programs like the children's story studio program.

These programs have been translated into many languages and are shown throughout the world to children of many regions and many languages. And I say if we have all this talent, this investment that we've made in our creative sector and in our technical sector, then film is merely a value-added level of activity that takes place on top of that skill set and infrastructure

that we've already built. Whether it's film and video, new media, IT (information technology), video streaming, these are all complimentary skill sets that fit into knowledge economy.

And I just want to say that it's a huge economic sector, it's worth \$1 billion in Canada today. And I think that we have a very competitive edge in Saskatchewan. Now, we lost some of our competitive edge when we didn't have a sound stage, because some of the productions require that. And of course when your productions have to relocate out of province, so do your crews, so does your technology. And ultimately some of your folks make connections with other enterprises outside the province.

So we're very optimistic as we go into the sound stage project that we are going to repatriate much of our high-level production activity and certainly will be seeing a lot of good new synergies with the production centre with broadcasting, music, sound, and educational activity taking place in the same place as film production. And we're seeing some new relationships between the university, in its script-writing centre, working together with the English departments and the Fine Arts department, together with film people, in applying skill sets and new ways.

And the other thing I particularly like about the film industry, Mr. Speaker, is that 30 per cent of the people who work in it are under 30, and I think that's a good boost for Regina to have a lot of young people involved in the city.

Now people might wonder, how many jobs does this create? Well if you've ever watched the credits running at the end of a film, you'll have some idea of how many jobs it creates. And I ask you to have some patience to watch those sometimes, because it's very educational to see all the work that goes into a film.

But at a level of \$40 million worth of investment, there's about 600 to 800 direct jobs, another 600 indirect jobs, and then about 1,945 jobs of services that the people in that industry use, for a total of 3,400 jobs. So this is a very good area. And like I say, the ability to have film year-round means that our crews don't have to leave the province for part of the year.

And it makes things possible like this — I just ran across this recently — a big step for *Rider Pride*. And this was, of course, comedian Brett Butt, who's done a little 10-minute comedic short film by Saskatoon's Tony Hrynychuk and Greg Portis. And the deal was with ALLIANCE ATLANTIS, which is one of the major film company distributors in Canada.

And this film is going to be shown at the beginning of the ALLIANCE ATLANTIS new film, *Men with Brooms*. So here we are, we've got *Rider Pride* being shown in theatres everywhere that *Men with Brooms* is shown across Canada. So that's a very good coup for this film company.

The next thing I want to mention, because I'm so incredibly proud of them, is the folks at Partners in Motion. Just in the last year they've received an Emmy award — very rare; in fact almost unheard of for a Canadian company to receive an Emmy — for their show *13 Seconds - The Kent State Shootings*.

Now this was both on the learning channel and the history television, and certainly Ron Goetz and Chris Triffo were involved in that particular show. And it was interesting when I talked to them about that show, why it was produced by a Canadian company. And what they said to me was that the American producers felt that the emotional framework in the US was so intense around the Kent State shootings that they thought they could only get an objective view of this situation by having a Canadian film company do it.

(14:45)

And one of the other things that was unusual about these particular folks was that they were able to convince people who had never been willing to be interviewed before to tell their stories to a Canadian film company and, in fact, a Saskatchewan film company. So we are extremely proud of this company for receiving that Emmy and for telling the story of the Kent State shootings, which of course many of us would be familiar with from our days as students.

The second coup that they have done lately is called *The Eye of the Storm* done in partnership with Harmony Entertainment Management. Now Paul Millar, Mark Mori, Steven Donziger, and Maureen Meehan travelled to Ramallah to meet with President Arafat, who of course has won a Nobel Peace Prize for his work in trying to resolve the problems in the Middle East.

And I'll just read this quote from Ron Goetz, executive producer for *In the Eye of the Storm* :

It's a unique and intriguing opportunity for Partners in Motion to be involved in the production that features such a key player in international events. Our goal is to produce a documentary that will help the viewer understand more clearly why the Israelis and Palestinians are in conflict and one of the most important figures, who for five decades has been at the centre of the controversy.

Their lives were at risk in going to do this story and certainly again I think it's bringing that Canadian perspective, bringing that Saskatchewan perspective to a story that needs to be told about things going on in other parts of the world. So again, congratulations to these folks.

And one of the people I want to recognize in terms of why we have such a successful film industry here is Jean (Hans) Oser who at 94 just recently died. He was the father of the U of R (University of Regina) film department and his greatest legacy was the hundreds of film students he taught, mentored, and encouraged to pursue their lifelong passion. In 1953 Oser won an Academy Award for his short film *The Light in the Window* which was a profile of painter Jan Vermeer.

But at the urging of a friend Oser left New York to come to Saskatchewan to establish a film department at the university. And many people believe that Saskatchewan's film industry wouldn't exist today, Mr. Speaker, if it wasn't for Mr. Oser's contribution. Now I know they're having a memorial for him later this month, but certainly again Mr. Jean Oser had a huge amount to do with why so many people in Saskatchewan are crazy about films.

Now the next area I want to mention here is . . . Oh, maybe just before I leave the film, we have a company that was just about to head off to BC — a company from Saskatoon, an animation studio — and because of the sound stage they have now brought their 28 staff . . . are bringing their 28 staff to Regina and maybe they'll make a cartoon about the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker. I don't know — we'll have to see whether they are able to spend a little time on that. But I have to admit there's not much funny about it so it might not be the best subject for humour.

The next thing I want to talk about in the cultural industries is the part that culture plays in the economy. And I want to mention that 51 per cent — that's 51 per cent of all Canadians — 12-plus years of age are arts patrons; and 37 per cent are sports fans. Now I don't want the sports fans to get all bent out of shape about that but I think sometimes people have a different perception. They think that more people go to sporting events than artistic events. But again I mention that 51 per cent of all Canadians 12-plus are patrons of the arts.

Now if you combine arts patrons and sports patrons, 70 per cent of the Canadian population are involved in these things. And they're passionate about these activities — they use words like exciting to characterize hockey and riveting for theatre. So I think we have to understand that these things aren't just hobbies; they aren't just part-time activities; they aren't just things we do while we're not at work. These things are a fundamental part of both human development, who we are, and our economy — and are increasingly becoming part of the economy.

And in that regard here's a person who I have met in my constituency — his name is Edward Poitras. Edward Poitras was one of the seven winners of the Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts this year. Now he's had a distinguished career in the visual and media arts and as well has made outstanding contributions in this area. Edward Poitras has been in almost every major contemporary Native art exhibit of the last 20 years.

In 1995 — and I remember this because he was looking for funding to get there at the time — he was the first Aboriginal artist to represent Canada at the Venice biennial. Born in Regina, Poitras is a treaty Indian of Métis ancestry and a member of the Gordon First Nation. In the late 1970s he studied at the Indian Cultural College in Saskatoon and the Native Arts and Communication Department of Manitou College in La Macaza, Quebec.

The themes of assimilation, genocide, displacement, and survival permeate his work. And the jury that looked at Edward Poitras's work said that he is one of the most compelling and eloquent artists to have emerged from the rich creativity of contemporary Canadian art. He does sculpture, painting, drawing, installation work, and crosses many cultural borders with the mystery of the trickster coyote which many people would be familiar with. So well done, Edward.

And just on that note, I want to switch for a moment to some of the other developments that have been taking place in the economy. And I want to thank some of our local partners because the successes that I'm going to talk about would not

have been possible without the co-operation of the mayor and city council, the Regina Economic Development Authority. And I do want to thank all the people who operate facilities and businesses that focus on entertainment, service, growth, and development in the city — the people with Regina's best interests at heart and Saskatchewan's best interests.

But I would be remiss if I didn't mention our Moose Jaw partners who are part of the economic development region and part of the Regina-Moose Jaw corridor because there are great developments all along the way. I don't know if you know this, Mr. Speaker, but a trip to Moose Jaw today could now take an entire day because along the way there are art galleries, tea shops where you can have a slice of many berry pie — it is very good, Mr. Speaker, I recommend it — and a side adventure to Claybank Brick Plant which has to be one of the most interesting places I've ever gone into. I had no idea a brick plant could be that interesting. And there is stained-glass artisans along the way, organic gardens.

So if you ever have a whole day to get to Moose Jaw, I suggest the Regina-Moose Jaw corridor to you as one of the excellent ways to spend a day. And I might emphasize that all these businesses along the way are either on farms or in small towns. So these are people who are very committed to where they are and what they're doing.

Now in terms of the infrastructure that the government and our other partners have developed in the last several years in Regina, we have our new SIAST campus along with the expanded nursing program. We have the Show Lounge expansion to Casino Regina. We have our investment in Saskatchewan Science Centre ensuring its viability in tourism. The investment in the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College which is a national and internationally recognized institution.

The establishment of the Petroleum Technology Research Centre. The establishment of the Greenhouse Gas Technology Centre. Very large investments in community schools. A leading-edge sound stage to reuse the old teachers' heritage college building. Development of the knowledge corridor in Research Park.

There's 300 employees that have been moved from the outside area of Regina into the downtown which is helping with revitalization of the area. As you know, we've been involved in an upgrade of the legislature heritage site here. And the Education Building has been expanded at the U of R (University of Regina). Luther College and Campion College have both had renovations and technology upgrades.

And these are all investments that we think are important to help grow the economy and to prepare young people for the work ahead.

I want to just go for a minute on the question of high-speed Internet and cellular service. You know, the opposition wonders where the money goes. Well 100 million of it is going directly out to rural Saskatchewan. I kind of like this heading — it's really not . . . (inaudible) . . . of much, Mr. Speaker, but it says: "Go digital or eat dust."

And the next one is called: "The perils of the slow Internet."

Which is kind of interesting, because right beside the picture is our Christina LeMay Doan speedskating here. I guess fast skaters and fast Internet having something in common.

But one of the things that the article talks about is that you can't leave these kind of developments to the private sector alone. Because if you do, you will have a digital divide. Because it is not profitable for the private sector to set up small Internet connections in various locations.

One of the reasons we've been able to put together the most cost-effective broadband high-speed Internet project in Canada . . . And I have to say that companies like Cisco that are world renowned believe this is one of the best projects for universal coverage of Internet in the entire world. Again, Saskatchewan leading in the world.

The fact of the matter is it can't be left to market forces alone, because the penalties of failing to keep up are too large. One hundred and twenty-eight kilobytes is needed for full motion video, 100 megabits per second is the level at which Internet multi-media comes into its own. And a high proportion of the latest products, educational offerings, are at these speeds. And without high-speed Internet, people don't have the opportunity to access these materials or to access them in any kind of a meaningful way.

And certainly if we want our citizens in Saskatchewan to be able to have the most up-to-date products with a high-speed communications system, economists estimate that it could be worth 400 billion US in growth each year in this marketplace. But again because of the fact that it is expensive to install, because we own SaskTel and SCN satellite servers, we have been able to install Internet and will by next year have 90 per cent of the province covered with both cellular and Internet. We are actually a front of places like Toronto, where in some places in their inner city they won't have the level of connectivity that we have throughout rural and northern Saskatchewan.

So if they are wondering where we spend 100 million bucks, that's one place. And that's only one of them. And I just want to mention that.

When I was in La Ronge recently, Tina Anderson, the Chair of the Northern Lights School Division, praised this investment. It said, quoting Tina here:

The benefit to the school division and the kids who attend our schools is just immense. CommunityNet is one of the most important events since the building of the roads in northern Saskatchewan. Northern Lights school district Director of Education, Ralph Pilz, said:

Saskatchewan's and Canada's economic future depends on training our children. If this generation of Canadians is technologically literate, we will compete and succeed.

And as you know, our Premier has said that we are very happy to be making this significant step in bridging the digital divide.

And you know, people in the city maybe can't appreciate what it means to be in La Ronge and not have access to all the largest libraries, the university library, all the various resources on how

to do various things, how to start a business, how to do this, farm information. Now with high-speed Internet, it won't matter where you live, Mr. Speaker. You can live anywhere. You can take music lessons on-line if you want to. You can attend a conference via live video streaming — that happening to be one of the companies that SaskTel invested in.

And I would just have to say that our government is determined that rural and northern Saskatchewan will not lag behind because they don't have the infrastructure that they need in communications technology.

And here we have from Lorne Gottselig who's been teaching for 16 years working out of a rural school. And working out of a rural school means he didn't always have the same facilities as in the city. But now one thing is equal — the computers.

Getting high-speed in every school is an excellent idea because it creates a level playing field. So what a teacher does in Regina or Saskatoon could be translated over to a teacher that teaches in rural Saskatchewan. And certainly in areas like calculus and other areas where teachers have sometimes had difficulty getting a specialist into a small school, it now means they can assist a teacher via distance education to deliver some highly specialized courses. And in some areas of rural Saskatchewan where we have multi-use facilities, community colleges are sharing the same computer labs and whatnot, where the students use them in the daytime and the other students use them in the evening — making very good use of that investment in technology.

And when the opposition again questions our investment, I want them to ask these towns what they think about our investment in Internet and digital cellular — Turtleford, Loon Lake, Rockglen, Estevan, Carlyle, Grenfell, Churchbridge, Foam Lake, St. Walburg, Meadow Lake, Assiniboia, Gravelbourg, Coronach, Willow Bunch, Bengough — they will have it and I cannot believe that a \$100 million leading investment that no other government in the world is doing is not good enough for the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(15:00)

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — However, a party that inappropriately uses its Web site is probably not thinking terribly deeply about these things. But we won't mention that. We'll just throw that away.

Okay. The next thing I want to talk about just for a moment is the provision of quality education because we think this is so important for young people to have the opportunities. As you know, last year our community schools went from 40 to 83 and I want to particularly recognize Sacred Heart.

Sacred Heart Community School is in the riding of Regina Centre. And I talked to the principal. I said, what do you think has made your school such a success? And this particular principal has been there for the last seven years. And she said to me, well the first thing I did was get rid of the authoritarian structures in the school and established a school based on mutual respect.

She said, the second thing we did was get rid of the unstructured time at recess and lunch hour. They have a shorter lunch hour and replace it with structured physical activity in the gymnasium. Every class has two half-hours of physical activity a day and she said, we get their heart rate up twice a day. I think, Mr. Speaker, you should consider getting us out of here for a couple of half-hours a day to get our heart rates up. But the fact of the matter is that that physical activity has had a huge effect on that school.

And the other thing they've done, because some of the kids are kids who have had a mixed school history, they are quite often behind their age grade level, so what they did was they mixed the classrooms up so that it's harder for the kids to identify which kids are in grade 3, which are in grade 5, which are in grade 8. But they're all following their own learning programs.

And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, if you went into that school, nobody has to tell you that it's an award winning school because you can feel it. You can feel it in the hallways; you can feel it in the co-operative, calm atmosphere there; and the happy kids who are in that school. Congratulations to that principal for having the ability and the courage to make the changes in that school setting.

High schools have been added to this community school program. And we have found, in areas where there are community high schools, that they actually have waiting lists of young people wanting to get back into school. So unlike the opposition who tend quite often to characterize young people as people just wanting to commit crimes and getting in trouble and needing boot camps, the fact of the matter is, is that in schools like this there's very positive developments for the communities.

And programs like the cadet program — which is voluntary and students can only participate in it if they don't break the law — exist at Scott Community Centre. And certainly these are very successful programs.

The other thing I want to mention is our libraries. Although the province is not as directly involved in funding libraries, we do some funding there. But the fact of the matter is, is that libraries are very important centres of computer access for people who may not have computers at home. I don't know if people know this, but you can have your e-mail received at a library; you can go on-line at the library and do that, and it is very affordable for people who may not have these things.

And lastly, I want to talk a little bit about School^{PLUS}. School^{PLUS} is built on the idea of community schools, but the idea being to have a school that meets the needs of your community. Now your community could be quite different depending on the income levels of people who live there, the kind of work the parents do, the kind of support services. But School^{PLUS} will be built around those services in each community, coming together around the school to create healthy . . .

An Hon. Member: — Are you going to pay for it? How much money are you going to put into that?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well if you read your budget — the

opposition is chirping, how much money are you going to put in — if they read their budget they would see that millions were put in last year and millions more will be put in this year. But I don't think they know how to read a budget, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to in fact just thank the public schools, the Catholic school boards, the community schools, the early learning centres, and the libraries for all the work they do in education.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I also want to speak a little bit about healthy and self-reliant families. You know, I want to talk for a minute about the minimum wage because some of the critics of the minimum wage, who think that people should be able to live on less than \$12,000 a year, they say that government should do more to support the minimum wage.

Well let me explain, Mr. Speaker, what the government already is doing to support minimum wage earners. The fact of the matter is, is with our tax changes that we made in the last budget, over 55,000 low-income people were taken completely off the tax rolls. They pay no tax any more. People who are working families — who are working poor — have health, dental, and eyeglass benefits covered to make sure that the absence of those benefits doesn't create a disincentive to work.

There is the Saskatchewan Income Plan which supplements the incomes of working poor families. There is the PST (provincial sales tax) rebate which gives back the amount of money estimated that people at different income levels paid — I think it goes up to about an income of \$25,000.

And the biggest benefit we have of all to people of all income levels is a public health care system, because it means if you're a minimum wage-earner, you don't have to watch someone in your family die because they didn't have the money to go and get the health care that they needed.

And this circumstance still exists in the US today, where millions of their residents are not covered unless they have a private plan with an employer. And our employers forget that in the US employers pay for those health premiums themselves; they're not covered under a public system. And I think that's one of the biggest benefits we have in our society, to people of all income levels, but particularly low-income people who would have to have great grief and self blame if they were not able to afford the medical help that their families need.

On a positive note, I don't think I can go through all of them today, but I'll hit some highlights. I've added some information to my newsletter called the Winner's Circle. And this is where we congratulate people who have won various things. And the problem, Mr. Speaker, is not finding names to put in here; the problem is finding enough space to put all the names in here.

We have, for example, all the young people from Regina — 96 who were participants at the 2002 Saskatchewan Winter Games. We have Edward Poitras, who I just mentioned, winner of the Governor-General's Award, 2002; Mark Knoll, long-track speed skater at the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City; Maurice Thibodeau, 2002 winner of the U of R Ace, Regina entrepreneur of the year; PSW Architecture and Interior Design, 2002 Municipal Heritage Award; John Cote and Barb Stevenson-Cote, these were winners of Canada's outstanding

young farmers; University of Regina Cougars women's basketball team, 2001 athlete award and team of the year; Hillary Adams and Ingrid Currie, athletes of the year awards; Jump.ca, named to the top 100 of fastest growing businesses for the third year in a row; Xponential Products, waste reduction, 2001 Corporate Leadership Award; Stephen Hall, 2001 international Emmy for an episode of *Street Sense*; Chris Triffo and Ron Goetz, the Emmy for *Thirteen Seconds - Kent State*; Trevor Herriot, 2001 Writer's Trust of Canada Award for *River in a Dry Land*, and the international recognition for Sacred Heart Community School, the only school in Canada of forty honoured and to be showcased at the conference in Washington, DC (District of Columbia).

And would I ever appreciate it, Mr. Speaker, to hear the opposition bragging about some of these successful Saskatchewan people instead of tearing down, moaning and groaning, gloom and doom, on and on, ad nauseam.

Now the last thing I want to talk about in this particular section of my response to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker — and a most excellent address I thought it was that Her Honour gave, well delivered and well presented — but I want to talk just about active school communities and the benefits of physical activity. You know, over the past several years we've put a little more emphasis in schools on, you know, some of the justice needs, some of the counselling needs, the food programs, etc. But in the midst of all that, that we can't also forget that young people need activity. They need physical activity; they need arts and culture to develop.

I really do believe the Aboriginal model that there's four areas of development: intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical. And I think it's very important that young people have access to that full range of developmental activities.

And I just want to mention that in studies of regular physical activity, people experience improved concentration, enhanced memory and learning, enhanced creativity, better problem solving, and improved mood state for up to two hours following exercise. Now moderate to vigorous physical activity enhances skill performance in classroom in arithmetic, reading, memorization, and categorization, and as well improves self-esteem and self-concept.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, those are all positives. But there's some negatives we have to be concerned about. Childhood obesity is increasing and it's directly linked to a lack of physical activity.

Now 40 to 90 per cent of overweight youngsters become obese adults who are at high risk of developing heart disease and diabetes. And one of the particularly disturbing trends lately has been the children who never before have had Type 2 diabetes, adult-onset diabetes, are now starting to have this as children directly related to diet and lack of exercise.

And so this is a serious medical problem developing that's going to have long-term consequences for the health care system and for our Minister of Health over here who is going to have to figure out how to increase expenditures in the health care system for growing unhealthy people.

And one of the things that the research shows is that exercise actually has more to do with bone development than drinking milk does. So even if you can't afford a glass of milk, you can afford a walk around the block. And the important thing is for us to educate, encourage, and motivate children to participate. And maybe in motivating them, Mr. Speaker, we'll motivate ourselves.

Certainly there's a number of grandparents in the legislature here and taking your grandchild out for a walk is a good thing to do. So I'll just say that we very much appreciate the active schools community's efforts and programs like the In Motion program in Saskatoon where they're actively working on getting schools to sign contracts to increase the physical activity within the school area.

And again, just in wrapping up this section, I'm going to mention a thank you to the school boards, Social Services, Justice, community service agencies, parents, police, community schools, and all the service providers who are out there working to make communities better for children.

And you know there are some people, Mr. Speaker, who said there's not much new in the Throne Speech. Now I want to talk about that for a minute because, you know, building highways goes on every year. And it's not new to build a highway but it is new to twin a highway, and it is new to upgrade roads, and it is new to use new road technology. So don't expect that we're going to quit building roads, we're going to continue doing that. And I know they'd like something new and exciting, but I think improvements and twinning in roads and road technology is exciting.

Putting in high-speed broadband Internet is now not new because we started it last year, but it's new to the people that didn't get it last year.

And community schools aren't new but adding 43 more, particularly in rural Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan, and adding high schools is new. And every community that is now under School^{PLUS} will be moving to a model of community-based control of education — this is new for those communities.

Especially when other provinces are discussing how to privatize their schools or how to get into charter schools, people in Saskatchewan are focusing on how to make the schools we have better; to focus our resources around the schools and to work co-operatively, not using our individual money to improve some school where we can take our kids out of the mainstream and put them over there so they are separate from the rest of the kids in the community. No, this is about making the schools better for all of the kids.

And I think it's a Saskatchewan model that I really appreciate, and would not appreciate having to think about sending my granddaughter to a private school so that she could get a quality education. I'm happy and feel good about the fact that all the kids in her school are getting the same quality education.

Now, improving health care isn't new but there are many new service improvements that have been begun in the health plan announced a few months ago. There will be service

improvements and new accountability measures. And I just say to those who are always looking for something new and I ask them, Mr. Speaker, to give their heads a shake because value added is about building on what you have. Value added is about building on your strength to grow and improve, and value added is about using what's uniquely yours to lead in world development.

So we don't need to be like somebody else. We need to look at what our strengths are and value add on top of those strengths, adding to the areas that are working and that are doing well. They may not be brand new but they're constantly improving.

(15:15)

And to the Leader of the Opposition, not mentioning any names — the leader over there will know who they are — I have to say that the quip about the recycling logo on the back of the Throne Speech was particularly offensive; because I have to tell you, I live in a neighbourhood where a whole bunch of people who believe that reduce, reuse, and recycle is a very good concept and all in all a pretty sensible idea.

These folks are happy to hear about new wind power, about the development of ethanol, about the investment in leading edge technology for communications, about increased investment in research. They like fiscal responsibility and they like the enhanced role that the Minister of Finance has in quarterly reporting.

So you say, is it more of the same? Well you're darn right it is. It's more good stuff and I'm not at all worried about supporting a Throne Speech where there's more good stuff.

Now, I have to say we've heard about the Alberta situation with all the public servants that were hired last year because they had an upturn in oil and gas revenues, as we did. This year, being a sensible government apparently, as we are, they've understood that some things that they had hoped they could do, they're going to have to not stop doing but maybe reduce expectations.

But I want to talk a little bit for a moment about the opposition's view of the public service, Mr. Speaker. Here we have the MLA for Wood River who his version of this is to imitate BC, the latest bandwagon going by, on their core services review. But in the very same article his leader says, I know where the skunks are in government . . .

An Hon. Member: — He said that?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — He says, I know where the skunks are.

What does that imply about the viewpoints of public servants? We don't think of our public servants as skunks. We think of them as people who applied and legitimately got jobs which they work hard to fulfil their commitment that they made when they took those jobs.

And I ask the opposition to say how they are going to maintain a public sector or teachers or health care professionals when 80 per cent of every budget is the workers.

And when they promised — they talk about keeping promise —

they promised zero for health care, zero for education, and they also promised that they would . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . they promised that they would cut social services and we can certainly provide them with the quotes if they've forgotten what they said. They promised they would do that. Well I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, there's no way that you can save money in a budget where 80 per cent is people when you are at zero. It is absolutely impossible.

So they have just announced . . . their core services review, Mr. Speaker, is just code for massive layoffs and slashed programs. And anybody who thinks any different, I would have to say, Mr. Speaker, is not thinking very hard.

And here's the leader's comment here — I knew I had it here somewhere, Mr. Speaker — the member from Wood River:

The whole bureaucracy, the whole civil service has to be cleaned out. I can wield a pretty good-sized broom. And you know what I would do with that broom in there.

An Hon. Member: — Men with brooms.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Men with brooms. And you know, Mr. Speaker, that is a darned odd thing for a person to say who spent their entire life on the public payroll — their entire life.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — And here we are again. You know, you know you don't want to always drag these old quotes out. But here we have the leader saying:

Before I agreed to run for the leadership I asked the MLAs, do you know who the deadwood are?

These are the public servants they're talking about.

Do you know who the deadwood are? Do you know who the skunks are? They assured me they know who those people are.

I wonder how many people are on the list of some of the members opposite. And then it says, if you can believe this — I say to the opposition now through you, Mr. Speaker — they say:

Civil servants can be very powerful. Look what they did to the Devine government.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when a government runs a deficit of \$1 billion a year for 10 years, I don't think you can blame that on the public servants. As far as I know, there was a Treasury Board, there were ministers, and there was a premier. And if they didn't like overspending of 1 billion a year, I guess they should have done something about it.

Now the last thing I'm . . . Gee I hate to say this; I'm having so much fun. But I only have another half-hour or so here, Mr. Speaker.

You know again they moan and groan, doom and gloom. And I want to just mention in 2002 January, KPMG completed an

update on the competitiveness of 42 cities in Canada, 43 in the United States, and 30 in other countries, including — and we were very pleased to be included — Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Regina, and Saskatoon.

Canada was the overall cost leader with a cost index average of 85.5, representing a 14 per cent advantage over the US. And you know what? Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, and Regina all came in under that. We have the most competitive cities in Canada.

And so what does the opposition do? Do they spend their time going out there trying to attract investors saying, come to Saskatchewan; we have the most competitive environment in the world. And you know why they don't do that, Mr. Speaker? Because they care more about political power than they do about the well-being of their Saskatchewan communities, including the ones they represent. If they actually cared about these communities, they would be out there telling people about the investment opportunities in Saskatchewan instead of moaning and throwing a wet blanket on everything around them.

Now I just want to mention that the Governor of the Bank of Canada — now this is not somebody who you would ignore; the Governor of the Bank of Canada, David Dodge — in speaking about Saskatchewan . . . Now the Governor of the Bank of Canada knows this, he says:

I know the difficulties your people face. (He was speaking about Saskatchewan.) I know the difficulties your people face.

He says:

Saskatchewan's economy was weakened in the past year because of low commodity prices in agriculture and in the mining sector.

But the Governor of the Bank of Canada says:

It will pick up.

Dodge said:

There is much more to Saskatchewan than agriculture and even the agriculture sector is far less dependent than it once was on grains and oilseeds. It's a better situation than it was a decade or two decades ago.

The economy here is becoming more diversified and that diversification is extraordinarily important and will stand Saskatchewan and Saskatoon in good stead as you move to the coming decade.

Now why don't they tell people about that, Mr. Speaker? That's what I wonder.

And you know, there's an article here . . . Now this is not about Saskatchewan. It's a woman from Kamloops, BC who moved to Red Deer. But when asked why she thinks it's so successful there, she says, people are excited. They feel good about being here. There is no negativity. I'll just say that again — no

negativity.

You know, in Saskatchewan we have the whole province — the whole entire province except for the opposition — united in the attitude project. I was driving down the street today and a bus went by with the Seeds of Success program involving the Aboriginal corporate circle and many corporate sponsors in highlighting the achievements of Aboriginal business people in Saskatchewan. We have the media outlets, including John Gormley involved in the attitude project. We have the chamber of commerce involved in the attitude project, Tourism Saskatchewan.

And then, I find it hard to understand how all these people could be involved in the attitude project except for the bad attitude dudes across the way there who just can't seem to get on the Saskatchewan bandwagon. They've been on the Ontario bandwagon. They've been on the Alberta bandwagon and they've been on the BC bandwagon. Mr. Speaker, maybe it's time they got on the Saskatchewan bandwagon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — You know as supposedly responsible adults — the opposition or the Sask Party — I would ask them to think before they speak because we might differ on how Saskatchewan could be better, but we should start from a place of pride and encouragement. That should be our starting point.

So in a desperate bid for power, when people become reckless about what they destroy, arrogant in their basic disrespect for people who don't share their point of view to the point of affecting the viewpoints of the next generation, and I just remember in keeping promises, Mr. Speaker: zero for health, zero for education, and cuts to social services. They would build their progress in this province on the backs of the most vulnerable.

And you know when you look at the people who do have vision in this province — these are just a series of articles; I won't go through each one — but who do we have on the attitude campaign: Mayor Al Schwinghamer of Moose Jaw, Mayor Mike Fisher of Melville, Mayor Dennis Korte of Humboldt, Mayor Fiacco in Regina, Mayor Jim Maddin in Saskatoon, Mayor Gabe Fournier in Meadow Lake.

And you know what all these communities have in common? They have a positive attitude, they're working hard on economic development in their communities, and 9 times out of 10 their communities are either growing or doing very well on building the fundamentals for the future.

And I'll just quote our Regina mayor, Pat Fiacco, here, who says:

He hopes all city residents become ambassadors for Regina and tell visitors how great the Queen City is.

And, Mr. Speaker, I hope that all MLAs become ambassadors for Saskatchewan and tell everybody how great Saskatchewan is.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I think . . . I don't want to use

more than my share of time so I'm just going to finish off with a quote here. And this is a quote from Ed Galenzoski. He says:

The cost of living on the West Coast, the cost of licensing a vehicle, the cost of commuting time, I was on the highway for two hours a day in and out of Vancouver. Now I live three minutes away from *The Leader-Post*. I live in a house that I couldn't even dream about owning in BC. I look at the economic opportunities in this marketplace and I say we have all there is to take advantage of what's there.

While opportunities abound in Saskatchewan, what's missing is a can-do entrepreneurial spirit. We always put ourselves down and look across the road for something better. But I tell you it isn't better.

So I just urge the opposition to help be ambassadors of Saskatchewan. I'm proud of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to be of Saskatchewan and in Saskatchewan. And aside from wishing I was a little bit warmer for some parts of the year, I really don't have too many complaints.

So is the Throne Speech more of the same? You're darn right. It's more of the same good stuff and we never get enough of good stuff, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm glad to see you back in charge of the ship of state, but I have a few other people I just want to quickly mention.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my family and my staff; they are my own personal support system. And I hopefully I give back to them a bit in their direction. We've been through many kinds of weather together in many family circumstances.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, it's not always easy to accept the support of friends and family. But I believe in Saskatchewan we pull through for each other. We share through our tax base. One person said to me one time, taxes are about doing the things together that you couldn't afford to do alone. And I think that's a very good description of what taxes are all about.

We share through our charities; we give of our time, our skills, and our caring. And what we give is returned to us a hundred fold.

So I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be a Saskatchewan resident. I'm proud to be a Saskatchewan MLA. I will be voting against the amendment. And I am very pleased to support the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a real pleasure for me to be able to respond today to the Speech from the Throne. I think it's an opportunity and a privilege being elected to this Assembly, representing our constituents. And I think to be able to make comments regarding the direction of the Speech from the Throne, also directions that I see happening from my particular region, I think is very, very important. And I'm looking forward to this.

The Speech from the Throne is an opportunity for showing what the expectations are and the hope of what this province

should be, what the planning for the future should be. Just as we're into a new session, we're also into a spring session or very close to the spring season, if the weather would co-operate a bit. We look forward to a renewal and a re-vigour. And we want to make sure that we get that thought process put forward and the Speech from the Throne is an ideal opportunity.

What a traditional Speech from the Throne is, from my earlier reading of speeches from the throne, it's a direction that is given to the people of the province by the government. It's a plan; it's a direction. People should be able to review the Speech from the Throne and get some kind of an idea how they can also organize their own lives and their own businesses in response. And I think that's very important.

(15:30)

And I think speeches from the throne should speak directly to the people who are still here in this province particularly. I think that's important.

But the Speech from the Throne should also be directed to the people who are planning to leave this province. Those are the people that need to have some, some hope that there is a plan, there is a direction. And a speech to the throne should be directed to the youth of this province because they are going to eventually become citizens of this province and we want to give them the hope and the opportunity.

I've mentioned before, Mr. Speaker, that I have two members of my family in this province. Neither of them have left. I have five granddaughters in this province and I'm looking forward to the day when they will be able to recognize the opportunity here in this province.

We all want, we all want a better opportunity for the future. We all want a better tomorrow. We need to have a positive attitude and I agree that positive attitude is a very important part of how we approach our future. And I believe that traditionally the spirit that we have exhibited in this province to raise . . . to rise to challenges and to be able to make the best of these opportunities is an important part of our tradition, of our past, and I think we can build on that.

So what we really need is a substantial plan. And that is a phrase that was used in the Throne Speech and the problem that I have however is that the words that are used in the Throne Speech are just not enough. Hoping that people will rally around just the words is just not enough.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, cheerleaders don't play the game. We need the players to be in there playing the game and you just can't, can't use pompoms and words. You need to make an action plan and you need to put the game together.

So people are looking for a plan and the plan is very important because the plan puts the fundamentals in place. It's the fundamentals that are in place that will complement the attitude and the spirit that we need in this province. We need both of those to complement one another to build on this province.

The conditions that we need based on the fundamental plan and the proper elements of that plan, they need to be in place for the

sustained growth that we so desperately need in this province. We need to have reasons — as we've talked about, Mr. Deputy Speaker — we need to have reasons for people to stay in this province and not to leave. We need these reasons of opportunity and growth to keep the people here. We need to grow this population and we have a plan to grow the population by 100,000 people in 10 years.

Because when I look at page no. 6 in the Throne Speech, I see investment in the infrastructure. And when you look down the infrastructure requirements in this province as outlined in highways, better roads, telecommunications, high-speed Internet, infrastructure renewal, municipal infrastructure, what is needed in all of those is investment, and investment must come from the taxpayers in this province. And if we're not, if we're not having an expanded taxpayer base, all of those infrastructure investments are in jeopardy. Those are fundamentally what we need to keep attracting other people here . . . people here and to attract them back.

If you don't have the taxpayers . . . We have a real problem attaining that, as I said. We need businesses in order to offer jobs to taxpayers. Before you have businesses, you need investment. The investment is very crucial in this particular cycle.

What we don't need in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is lowered expectations. And that's what this government is trying to do — we're trying to lower the expectations of what is possible in this province. We keep hearing in the paper, in the media, in reading in the paper that maybe there'll be tax increases coming in this province. I'll be anxious to see what comes down in the budget next week in terms of tax increases.

We keep hearing rumours that the public service . . . there may be layoffs in the public service. We keep talking about tough times in the economy. So we're told not to expect too much anything new. In fact we may expect to have something less than what we have now. I see in the . . . on page 3 of the Throne Speech the words that:

. . . require . . . (your) co-operation of (the) Saskatchewan people to live within our means . . .

This is rather a hollow plea, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to live within our means. This plea comes from a government that has been spending on an increasing basis year after year, at at least 6 per cent per year. And this includes the last budget that came out. And in that last budget when revenues were projected down, spending was still on an increase at that same . . . at that same rate. That was . . . With the revenues down, it was reconfirmed at the mid-term financial report. It was reconfirmed again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the third quarter report.

People are looking for direction, as I said, from this Throne Speech, but what we have seen is . . . we have to look at the record of what has happened in this province. Even though the Throne Speech might have some optimistic projections, we have to look at the record that has happened in this province. What has gone down are jobs. We've had job losses in this province. We've just recorded the population loss in this province. We've lost farm safety net coverage, for instance the hail loss insurance.

Year after year we've seen a deficit in this province when you talk about expenses over revenue — this year alone nearly a \$50 million deficit.

A number of small businesses have left and, in fact, in the third quarter it showed that the revenue . . . tax revenue from small corporate businesses were so low that it was . . . that it really caused a problem.

At the same time, we've had increases in Crown investment in the economy, often in direct competition with the private sector. We've had medical waiting lists going up, fewer health care workers associated with those waiting lists. We've had an increase in the government employees in this province.

What we hear is, we say one thing, but the records really show another.

So what did we hear in the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker? We saw in the Throne Speech that there was a bus trip; there was a whistle-stop photo opportunity throughout the province. I know the Lloydminster city council was waiting to welcome the bus trip to the city of Lloydminster. There was . . . there was no mention of meeting with the city of Lloydminster and no indication that they were or were not coming.

What we did hear also in the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was that the programs and the initiatives that were announced in fact had been announced earlier. It's a restatement of the health care, the action plan on health care. It's a restatement of the action committee on the rural economy. Those are going to be . . . the ACRE (Action Committee on the Rural Economy) committee is going to be reporting shortly but that has been announced before.

Programs that were announced and initiatives are being set aside for further review. They're being set aside for further study and they're going to evaluate these programs and studies even further. What we need is not further study but we need some positive action.

We've heard about some of the initiatives that were considered a success by this government. We've heard about three projects in this province that were specifically mentioned in the Throne Speech — Centennial Foods, Harvest Meats, the Meadow Lake plant, the OSB plant (oriented strand board) in Meadow Lake. All three of these projects, as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, require significant public money — all of which had been announced earlier as well.

We've heard about some of the good comparisons that this government did in the Throne Speech using the GDP (gross domestic product) comparisons, but they were using them on a per capita basis. And it's about business numbers they talked about and they were talked about on a per capita basis. Now if these comparisons look good to this government, it's because they're really based on a declining population and on a per capita basis. I guess the thinking would be that the more people who leave, the better we're going to look per capita.

We've heard blame time and time again and all through this Throne Speech, blaming problems other than what has been created by the NDP. There's blame on the feds, there's blame

on the drought, blame on the poor economy; they're blaming the US. There's members . . . even the member from Athabasca yesterday talked about the Saskatchewan Party and blaming us for driving the young people out of the province.

That same member, Mr. Deputy Speaker, said that he's confident that people who have left this province will come back. Well the question would be, why haven't they been coming back; why have they been leaving? It might be something to do with things like no perceived opportunity here in this province. It might be that there's a lost opportunity. It might be that the taxes are not in line with competing provinces. It may be that they see their future somewhere other than trying to work in this particular province and they believe that their best future might be outside this province.

I think that we can make a difference in this province if you put the fundamentals in place and make sure that when this . . . when we put the fundamentals in place, that there is opportunities here.

I look in my own region, and I've talked about this before, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I've talked about the city of Lloydminster specifically because it is in such a unique position. It has unique problems and it has unique opportunities. The growth rate on one side of the city is outstripping the other side by a significant margin, and I'll talk a little bit about that in a moment.

But in fact it's the same environment; it's the same wind blowing, the same sunshine. It's the same people, the same resources. The only difference between the two sides of the city on either side of the border is taxes and regulation.

Well those two things — those two things alone — make the decisions for people to move across the border and work outside of Saskatchewan. And that's why it's growing on that side of the border.

Those two things — taxes and regulation — they lead to an attitude. And there is a different attitude in . . . on that side, on either side of the border. And I don't really mind talking about Alberta and the comparison that I've made to my neighbours to the west, because I think there's something that we might be able to learn from them.

I want to use a quote from the member from Regina Dewdney. That was back in March 31, 2001. And I quote from *Hansard*, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

It's about hope and opportunity for our children. It's not about Alberta envy. Our children don't need to hear about how . . . much better (it is) in Alberta because the more you tell your children it's better in Alberta, the more likely they are to leave.

That is quite an attitude, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If you keep the lid on things — keep everybody in the dark — maybe it'll be fine and nothing will come of it.

What we found in our Lloydminster region, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that it doesn't matter how wonderful we're being told it is in Saskatchewan. People choose to make the decision themselves. People choose the best opportunity for them. They

choose the best living and they choose their own future.

(15:45)

What I found as well, it came out very clearly in the local paper, the *Meridian Booster*, on Sunday, March 17 and there's an interesting couple of quotes in here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I think should be put on the record.

The population numbers in the 2001 census released this past week showed a 16.2 per cent increase of population on the Alberta side of Lloydminster — that's a 16.2 per cent increase on that side. That was compared to a 10 per cent increase on the province of Alberta. Saskatchewan grew as well during that census period; it grew at 2.7 per cent.

And the mayor is very cognizant of the difference in where the growth potential is. And he makes this comment in noting the 2.7 per cent increase on the Saskatchewan side, while it's positive, that it exceeds the provincial average by about 3 per cent. He goes on to say that they have made every effort to try to make both sides of the city with the same opportunities. Unfortunately, they have to come to the fact that there is those differences of taxation and regulation.

And that brings up an interesting comment. The city . . . and here's a quote from the paper, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Presently areas of provincial jurisdiction like health care and education are managed by the Saskatchewan government. As we expand the Alberta side of our city, if it keeps growing at the rate it's going and you project out 25 years from now, you're going to be in a situation where 80 to 85 per cent of the people in the city will be on the Alberta side. Now will they want an outside province managing the affairs related to the city?

I think that's a real tough question to come to grips with, particularly when the population is expanding so rapidly on that particular side.

There is an attitude too, not only in people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but in the business climate as well. For instance, why did Husky Oil, the company that has a considerable . . . it has a considerable investment in Saskatchewan. It has an investment in the upgrader on the Saskatchewan side. Why would Husky Oil invest \$5 billion in northeast Alberta, just across the border from Saskatchewan, when the resources are the same on that side of the border? It comes down to strictly an attitude and the taxation and regulations problem.

When we're disappointed in the Throne Speech, we're not alone, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The reaction in the media has been disappointing as well. When I looked at some of the other throne speeches from other provinces, there was a much different focus; they were much more in line with what the population expected. They expected to hear the direction and vision that was presented.

For instance, the Throne Speech that was presented last fall in Manitoba, it covered a lot of areas that were not . . . I did not see in our speech. They talked about . . . in Manitoba they talked about the security of the people in Manitoba. They talked

about developing a plan for security in the wake of September 11. They talked about the bioterrorism possibilities, and lab testing, and mail handling, and expanded emergency services.

They also talked about . . . while the interest rates are low, it was an opportunity to really build on their infrastructure, not cut back on their infrastructure. They talked about building in the health care centres, and the Red River colleges, hydroelectric. And they talked about matching that dollar value with private sector investments. I never heard anything about that in our Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

They talked about agriculture research. They talked about the possibilities in nutraceuticals and functional food research. They talked about biomass, geothermal, hydrogen development in the energy field. They talked about training and health care professionals. They talked about their education, with a 12 per cent increase in both public and university systems.

They talked about the immigration increasing actually 24 per cent in Manitoba. Imagine a population through immigration increasing at 24 per cent. That was . . . that was actually through a partnership with private business, labour, and multicultural communities. They actually talked about e-government and initiatives with the new governing formats needed. They talked about the Kyoto accord and climate change and environment.

Those are the kind of things that people, I would have thought, would have expected to hear from a Throne Speech. It wasn't only Manitoba. I looked in the Internet and looked at the Throne Speech from New Brunswick. They had 30 new initiatives and actions to help secure New Brunswick's future. Those were the things that the people of New Brunswick could look at and get a feel for where the government was heading, what they wanted to do, what their objectives were.

When I looked at the Throne Speech from Ontario, here's the kind of thing that we received . . . the people in Ontario received from their Throne Speech — 21 steps into the 21st century. And they talked about things like paying down the debt, smaller and more efficient government. And they talked about the new e-government processes and the new economy. They talked about national leadership and improving health services. Those are the kind of things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that should have been in our Throne Speech to give us some direction and some hope of where we're going.

What we actually got from this government in the Throne Speech here however was some wonderful rhetoric and some good intentions, but we got . . . the federal government got blamed for a lot of things in there. They got blamed for the health problems. They got blamed for highways. They got blamed for agriculture, crop insurance, national farm safety net. Those are the kind of responses that we got in ours, in our Throne Speech.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to rebuild the confidence in this province. We need the pride in this province, and that's what's people want. And that requires a plan to be put in place so that the fundamentals are in place.

And what we need is the confidence of people that are either here or looking back in Saskatchewan and saying yes, there is a

confidence, there is opportunities in Saskatchewan.

But in order to get . . . and here's the cycle: if you have confidence and you recognize opportunities, investment will come. And with investment you get development, you get businesses establishing, you get employment. You get the taxpayers and you get the infrastructure, ability to pay for the infrastructure that you need both in development and maintenance. That's the cycle.

And that cycle can be a spiralling up or it can be a spiralling down cycle. And we need the spiral to start moving upwards and not in the other direction.

We need more promises kept than we've been seeing. The platform promises in the 1999 election by the NDP have been a real failure. And we need, we need program announcement. We need promises when programs are announced that there's going to be dollars at the end of that program to make the program work. And a good example was brought up again today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the well assistance and assistance for digging dugouts in this drought year.

We don't need the Crowns and the CIC in competition with ourselves. Those are the things we don't need in this province. We need to make sure that the enterprise that is coming here has an opportunity to operate without competition from money coming from the public sector.

We don't need Crown investment in cable television distribution. We don't need it in home security systems. We don't need Crown investment or public money in dot-com companies or in publishing or in information transfer company systems. Those are the kind of things that are best handled by the private sector.

You can't build the confidence of our people in this province by taking more money out of the region than is actually coming into it. We have, we have money in taxation leaving the region, in royalties, in VLTs (video lottery terminals), and very precious little coming back into our region. An example is that, in my area, the rural municipalities are in fact net taxpayers to this government. They pay more money in taxes to this provincial government than they receive in operating revenue sharing. And that is not a way to build confidence that we can move in the right direction.

When we have the Department of Education offering zero, zero operating grants to three of the school units in my area — zero operating grants. And I want to refer to a letter that I received from one of the board members of the Battle River School Division. And he outlines the problems specifically here. He says:

(Our school budgets) . . . of our school budget, 54 per cent comes from commercial/industrial oil field assessment, 39 per cent from farmland, and towns at 7 per cent. There are very few families living in the rural. Most of our students come from our small towns and acreages.

So what we have, what we have now, people who use the system the most pay the least taxes. That is causing considerable problems all through the province and particularly

in my area of the province where the operating grants to school divisions are in fact zero.

We have royalties leaving our region from an increased amount of heavy oil production. And that's a positive thing for everyone. It helps us regionally; it helps the province. The problem, though, is that we're talking about heavy oil. It is not conducive for pipelining and the pipelines in my area are really the roads and the trucks that use the roads. And those . . . the maintenance of all those rural roads are really on the back of the local taxpayers, and that has been a real concern from some of our RMs (rural municipalities) in that area around Lloydminster.

There is some positive things that are happening in my area that I'd like to just mention. This weekend there's going to be the opening of the Vic Juba Theatre for the performing arts in Lloydminster. And there was a donation from this Saskatchewan government to that theatre and it's very much appreciated. And I think it's going to serve the community very well.

You have to remember that my community there is growing at a considerable rate compared to some of the other parts of the province. Lashburn is growing at about 16 per cent, for instance. They're trying to develop a sportplex in that area. And the reason that they're doing that is that towns like Lashburn, Marshall, Maidstone are all trying to adapt to a changing world. They're trying to keep their communities vital and keep them so that they can attract people to come and live in those rural communities rather than always attracting to the larger centres.

So we need, we need to make sure that there are places like sportplexes, recreational centres, community centres, social centres. I think those are very important. There is no granting available for those kinds of structures and facilities from this government and in fact from the Alberta government for my area as well.

So what we've done in my area is try to get people representing all the RMs, the towns in that region, come together and ask some simple questions. Are rural communities vital, and if they are, how do we attract people there?

(16:00)

We need, of course, the schools, the hospitals and the roads. But there's other parts of the community that's needed too and that's the recreational, culture and social infrastructure. And presently we're having representatives from all those organizations get their heads together to try to figure out a way to be able to sustain those communities without having to depend on outside help.

Waseca is an example of a water problem similar to the one that was talked about today in Perdue. They have been told that their water supply might be in danger of a health warning and they have to switch to a different source — and then immediately told that there's no funding for that kind of facility or infrastructure.

So what we've heard is, from this government, we should live within your budget. You should have been planning ahead.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that comes from a government that's had a track record of planning that I've already outlined and it's a little disappointing to hear that kind of a response.

So opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, really is something based on attitude. It's based on spirit, but it has to be more than that. We have to make sure that the fundamentals are in place and once they're in place, we have a much better chance of success.

Using the Irish example, when they were right up against the wall in terms of economic disaster they had the foresight to put some fundamentals in place in terms certainly of education, tax reduction, and regulation. They have an overall plan that they put in place involving everybody in the economy. They put in place partnerships to be able to address those objectives. And as a result, when the economy started to turn around, the fundamentals were in place and the Irish success is a matter of record.

I would agree with the member from Regina South who talked yesterday about he believes in Saskatchewan is a province of opportunity. I too believe in that. But in concurring with that, I would say that we have a plan to make the province into an opportunity and, presently, there is nothing but an opportunity gap.

We have not developed as we have in Manitoba or in Alberta for that matter. And I really believe that if we do things right, the world will take advantage of this opportunity gap and we will prosper; we will be attracting people and investments here; we will be retaining our people in this province.

And the attitude is quite important. When I listened to Premier Doer, for instance, from Manitoba, as he addressed the Romanow health review commission, he made reference to the pride he had in his province and what they're going to be doing in terms of economic potential and how they're going to tap that.

And one of the things that he mentioned specifically to that committee, Mr. Deputy Chair, was the fact that the health care system in Manitoba is an economic advantage for them. He made the statement that compared to the American states next to them, each person had a \$5,000 advantage in the health care system, and he was prepared to invest in the health care system and make sure that that remained an economic advantage.

That's the kind of confidence and the kind of hope, the kind of expectations, and the commitments that we should have been hearing from the Throne Speech. We didn't hear it from that Throne Speech, and I believe that's an opportunity lost, Mr. Deputy Chair.

Mr. Deputy Chair, I cannot support the Throne Speech, but I will be supporting the amendment put forward by my colleague, the member from Moosomin. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, I'm very pleased to have my family here to support me as I give my speech and participate in the plan for the Speech from the Throne . . . and in support of the Speech from the Throne, and

opposition from the . . . the motion from the opposition.

Before I begin, I'd like to say thank you to my constituents. It's a great privilege to serve them in this legislature. I take that privilege very seriously and I'm very proud to be the MLA for Saskatoon Sutherland.

It is the constituency that basically is a little microcosm of the province. You have First Nations people in the Muskeg Lake First Nations band — they've got one of the fastest growing businesses in that area with Kocsis Trucking — a dry cleaning, insurance, even an art studio. Within the constituency is the University of Saskatchewan, and St. Thomas More College, and all of the colleges that are on the university.

As well the synchrotron is . . . falls within that constituency. And it's one of the best innovative ideas that is publicly supported investment in education and technology.

I'd also like to thank my family. And I'm sure all members can appreciate how difficult being an MLA is at times. Probably for the next half an hour for most of the MLAs in this room, it'll be one of the toughest jobs they'll have.

But I want to thank my parents for their support, I wouldn't be here without them. But I especially would like to thank my wife and my three sons. I couldn't be here and couldn't continue on without the support from my home. My wife, Karen — I mean she's beautiful. She's caring; she's supportive; she's very powerful; she's married to me. She only has one flaw. There's only one flaw that my wife has and that she's got a bad taste in husbands, so . . .

But a lot of people question about whether or not they would want to support me, but then when they meet Karen they think I must be okay if she'd stay with me for 17 and a half years. So I appreciate that support. Actually we got married very young and she just believes in commitment, I think.

I would like to congratulate the member for Idylwyld, both for his election and his very good campaign — to be elected with 58 per cent of the popular vote, which is again an increase from the previous MLA who also served her constituents well.

I also want to congratulate the member for Idylwyld for his excellent seconding of the Throne Speech. I had that honour in 1999 and it's a very challenging opportunity to be able to speak in the House very soon after you're elected at such an important event. And I thought he did a fantastic job. So thank you, member for Idylwyld.

I also want to congratulate the member for Greystone for all of his work in supporting his constituents and also for moving the motion in support of the Throne Speech. I thought he did a very good idea . . . a very good job in that aspect as well.

I also want to welcome back the member for Battleford-Cut Knife. I know that he's had some varied challenges in the past while and our thoughts and our prayers were with him over the past while and I'm very glad that those prayers have been answered. So welcome back to the House, Rudi.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Addley: — Now, Mr. Speaker it is the first day of spring today — and it's minus 27 degrees in Saskatoon and it's minus 30 in Prince Albert and minus 25 in Regina — but it's the first day of spring.

It's also another important day today. And if I could have the attention of all of the House, it is the first anniversary of Mr. Speaker's ascension to the Chair there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Addley: — So I just want to congratulate Mr. Speaker for his fine work that he's done this past year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Addley: — And I know even though I've said nice things about you, Mr. Speaker, that you won't let me get away with anything here today.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on September 11 the world changed. Now for many people it was a whimper; for many people it was a bang. For me personally I was on an airplane the morning of September 11. I flew from Saskatoon and was on my way to Toronto. And you check in and you sit down and you say hello to the people you're sitting next to and then you studiously ignore them.

About an hour into the flight the flight attendant comes on and says we have an important message from the pilot; please listen. Now I've been on planes before and that's not the usual patter that Air Canada follows. So then the pilot comes on and says there's a terrible tragedy in New York, that two planes have flown into the World Trade Center and there'd been three hijackings. So suddenly the plane is very excited and we're talking with our neighbours. How many kids do you have? How are things going? Everybody's a little stressed.

About 15 minutes later he comes on again and says there's been additional 11 more hijackings in the United States and all planes have been ordered to land in North America. It turned out there was not an additional 11; it was an additional one. But we were forced down to land as other members were. And I was forced down in Sault Ste. Marie.

Now it's a long way of saying is that on the way back . . . the flights were rescheduled several times and cancelled. And the Clerk Assistant and the member for Cannington were forced down in Toronto. And there's a long story about that, but they rented a van and were travelling back to Regina and picked me up in Sault Ste. Marie.

And the member from Cannington is giving me his support as he usually does and I appreciate that. But I have to say that that experience travelling from Sault Ste. Marie back to Regina with Viktor Kaczkowski (I learned to pronounce his name), the Clerk Assistant and also the member for Cannington . . . and what that did for me is . . . the member for Cannington — as a new MLA I'll admit this — he's one individual that can really stick it to members on this side of the House. And I'm sure he's just as annoying to the members on that side.

He's one member that I really, really wanted to dislike. Just as

there's members on this side I try really hard to like, there's members on that side — and he's one of them — that I really wanted to dislike. Unfortunately I got to know the member for Cannington. While I still disagree with his political views, I got to know him as an individual and that's one of the silver linings in September 11. I'm sorry; that's about as nice as I can be, member for Cannington. But I did enjoy the ride back from Sault Ste. Marie with Viktor and the member for Cannington.

Now the other nice thing I was going to say is that one of the things that I have been able to participate in the last two and a half years as a member is my work on the Tobacco Control Committee, the all-party committee on Tobacco Control.

And I think there was some very good work in that piece led by the member for Prince Albert Carlton, Mr. Speaker. And I'd just like to thank the member for Saltcoats, member for Weyburn, member for Estevan, member for Moose Jaw Wakamow, and the member for Regina Qu'Appelle.

I mean we travelled the whole province, got to know the province very well, and I think we came up with some very good legislation — very good recommendations. So I just wanted to say thank you to those members.

Now the Minister of Health took those recommendations and formulated some legislation that I think is a great step forward in protecting youth. In other countries and provinces, they're looking at Saskatchewan as leading edge on some of the aspects within our legislation. Now some people may say, what's the point? Why are we going down this road with tobacco control? I just want to let the members know, Mr. Speaker, that there is no known safe or beneficial exposure levels to tobacco.

Tobacco-related diseases are major public health problems — 80 per cent, and we've heard in some cases 90 per cent of deaths due to lung cancer are tobacco related; 40 per cent of strokes are tobacco related; 25 per cent of heart disease; 70 per cent of chronic lung disease is tobacco related.

Children exposed to second-hand smoke have an increased frequency of bronchitis, pneumonia, ear infections, and health problems. We've also just recently learned that young mothers and fathers that smoke around their children, infants, that they have an increase incidence of SIDS, sudden infant death syndrome.

Twenty-six per cent of Saskatchewan residents are regular smokers. The national average is 23 per cent. The overall number of smokers in this society has declined. However, the number of children who are starting to smoke remains very high, particularly among young women.

Young people are starting to smoke at an earlier age than in the past. In a recent survey, 8 per cent of teens aged 12 to 14 were current smokers. Of these, half were daily smokers and half were occasional smokers. Children who start using tobacco early have more difficulty quitting and are more likely to become heavy smokers.

The Canadian tobacco use monitoring survey indicates our youth smoking rate for 15- to 19-year-olds is 31 per cent. The national average is 23 per cent. BC, which has had the toughest

anti-tobacco legislation, is only 17 per cent.

(16:15)

I'm proud, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure all members of the committee are, to be part of legislation that is actually going to save lives. I've spoken out in the past about this in my community and elsewhere. And as an MLA I've learned that most of what we do is either speeches, or writing letters, or attending committee meetings, improving the process or hopefully not making it worse. This piece of legislation, I believe, will actually save people's lives.

It's not unlike the seat belt legislation. Ten years after the seat belt legislation was introduced and the compliance was well into the 90 per cent, there were people alive that would not ordinarily be if that legislation had not been enacted. And I'm confident that with this legislation in ten years there will be people alive that ordinarily wouldn't have been if we hadn't taken these measures.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's a great step forward but it's not the whole answer. There's still more work that needs to be done. But I do just want to advise that I've been in contact with some tobacco control individuals from other parts of the world. And what I've learned is that the tobacco advertising ban that we've introduced here, and I'll just explain it for some members; is that the federal government in the past put in legislation that basically banned the advertising and promotion of tobacco in public.

Now what the tobacco companies did is they took that money and they allocated it to where their customers are . . . their future customers reside, and that's in convenience stores, gas stations, small grocery stores, that sort of thing. And what they did is they took . . . made power walls, displays, the smokeless tobacco, the individual tobacco right beside the till, so that as people who have young children know, that they cannot go and spend their allowance without working their way through all the tobacco products.

Now one thing business people know, and I'm sure the member of the opposition know and members of government know, advertising works. Otherwise people wouldn't do that. Now the tobacco industry is advertising. They are advertising to our kids. And we know that it's killing our children. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be able to support that piece of legislation and that component of that legislation.

Now what I've learned is that in other parts of the world they're considering this piece of legislation as groundbreaking.

And what we did learn with the federal legislation is that smoking rates started to go down. What we have learned is that there is not any one piece of legislation that's going to be the answer to everything. It's a comprehensive approach. You do 10 things, most of them work. You do another 10 things, most of them work.

Well, one thing that I've learned is that Ireland is very disappointed but very pleased with the Saskatchewan legislation because they are in the process of implementing that very same ban on promotion of tobacco to kids in convenience stores, and

gas stations, and those sorts of things.

So we beat Ireland to the punch, Mr. Speaker. We hear a lot from the opposition about how great Ireland is. In this aspect and in other areas, I'll be able to say that we also beat Ireland.

Now the tobacco industry is resisting this of course. Because that's where their future customers are. But I have to say it's a matter of credibility with the tobacco industry. Earlier on the tobacco industry said no, tobacco is not addictive. Then we found out later after many studies and many years that yes, it is addictive; and yes, they knew that it was addictive when they said that it wasn't. Then they said, well it may be addictive but it's not harmful. Well then we find out years later that yes, it is harmful — in fact, it's deadly — and that the tobacco industry knew that it was deadly when they were saying that it wasn't.

The tobacco control agreement that was signed in the United States was largely as a result of the tobacco industry going in to Congress and perjuring themselves. They realized that they had lied to Congress and they knew that they had to get a fix out, and they did that by paying billions of dollars to keep themselves out of jail.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the . . . one of the things that the opposition talks about is the loss of 12,000 people in the last five years based on the census result. Now I suspect that when we go back and we look at the numbers that it won't be 12,000 people. But let me just . . . let's accept that it is 12,000 people.

In that same 5-year period, tobacco killed in Saskatchewan over 6,000 people. Over 6,000 people in the last five years in Saskatchewan were killed because of tobacco. So when you say that a population loss of 12,000, we know where half of them went. And we are taking steps in this legislation to fix that aspect of it and I'm proud to be part of that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Addley: — Now, Mr. Speaker, the member from Lloydminster just finished his, his speech and he had a few comments to make which I have to question. He's talking about the Saskatchewan confidence, that it needs to go up. Well what we hear day and day from the members of the opposition that if — and from my interpretation of it anyway — that if the Saskatchewan confidence goes up, the Sask Party's political fortunes go down. So it's not in their best interests to have the good news be broadcast in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have heard the new line from the opposition that somehow the Fiscal Stabilization Fund doesn't exist. That there is no money. Now this is news to me because in the . . . now the member for Swift Current calls it a laundering agency. Now isn't this interesting. In the last two and a half years that I've been in this House I've heard many speeches from the opposition saying spend the money. Spend the money. We want you to spend it on this great project in my constituency. We want you to spend it in this part of my constituency. The member for Kindersley gave a very impassioned speech last year about how everybody's bank account is empty except the government's. Spend the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

So what do we do? We said then that no, we are going to keep this for a rainy day — for when the downturn comes. For when there's incidences in the economy that we have no control over. And now we . . . now that has come upon us with September 11, with the softwood lumber dispute, with the drought, with the downturn in the oil and natural gas prices, we are now spending the money, Mr. Speaker.

Now they also said that it was an election slush fund. They also said that we were sitting on it, or the Minister of Finance was sitting on it. And he would keep sitting . . . standing up and looking and find out that no, he's not sitting on it.

Well now today what does he say? What do the opposition say? That it doesn't exist. That there is no Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Now we have the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee saying that there is no money.

Now let me give you . . . let me just give you a simple explanation. Now it is a very simplified model so it may not be 100 per cent accurate but I think it illustrates the point. Let's just say that we have a \$50,000 mortgage — a \$50,000 mortgage . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm going to explain it to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

Let's just say we have a \$50,000 loan . . . a mortgage. And at the same time we have people working away — we'll even use a family. We've got two people working at a job; one them wants to go back to school so they're saving up money to go back to school. And they've saved up . . . set aside money in a special fund of \$10,000. Now they have a mortgage of \$50,000 over here; they're paying their 5, 10 per cent — 5 per cent. They put their money in a savings account and it's earning next to nothing per cent. That's what the Fiscal Stabilization Fund is.

Now what this family did is instead of saying we're going to keep the \$10,000 for the next number of years and earn nothing, we're going to take that \$10,000 and plunk it on the mortgage — on the debt. So now we have \$40,000 mortgage and zero in savings.

Well the opposition can't have it both ways. Either we have \$50,000 debt and 10,000 in savings or we can have \$40,000 in debt or nothing in the rainy day. Now any member that's been . . . Now the opposition stands up and say there's no money there. There's no money there. But they still go on and on that we have a \$50,000 mortgage. Well, you can't have it both ways. Either it's a \$50,000 mortgage and 10,000 in savings or it's 40,000 in debt and nothing in savings. Now we don't get the credit for that \$10,000 cut.

Now the other illustration I'll give is anybody that's on a church board or any kind of a voluntary organization and they get their finance statement. They've got money in this fund, money in that fund. They've set aside money from a donation from a parishioner that's passed away. Now does anybody here think that the church or the volunteer organization has 20 chequing accounts or 20 savings accounts? No. They have one and they itemize it based on where that money goes and where that money is allocated. So you can't . . . It's not that complicated, but obviously the opposition has some difficulty with it.

Now here are the facts. We've paid \$3.7 billion down in debt, in

public debt. The tax supported debt, the 43 per cent GDP has declined down to 23 per cent GDP. Now this is not like British Columbia which have just implemented a \$4.4 billion deficit and laid off 25 per cent of the civil service. That's the opposition for you, Mr. Speaker.

So that's the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, Mr. Speaker.

Now the second aspect that they seem to go on and on about are the Crown corporation sector. Now the problems with that, Mr. Speaker, is that the Crown corporations have done very well, thank you very much.

In SGI, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, we have the second lowest rates in Canada. Good Crown corporation. For example, a 2001 Taurus in Saskatchewan would be \$1,183. How much would it be in Calgary — \$2,335, but it's better in Calgary.

SaskEnergy. We have had for years the lowest or almost the lowest cost of natural gas in all of Canada. Now with the insurance that we purchased or SaskEnergy has purchased we're still among the lowest, but we may not be exactly the lowest. But the one province that is lower doesn't have the price insurance. So if the price of natural gas spikes, guess what? Saskatchewan's is capped, while Alberta's could go through the roof, just like it did last year.

Now the Sask Party and the member for Swift Current goes on about the gigajoules and the spot pricing and all of this sort of stuff — while maintaining he's no expert — but he never . . . and he criticizes the price insurance protection as if that's somehow a nefarious NDP mismanagement. Well I hope we'll never have to use that price insurance, Mr. Speaker, but I'm glad that the seniors in my constituency that are on a fixed budget, they can rest assured that their price will not go through the roof.

Now the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I'm also glad, Mr. Speaker, the member for Swift Current is saying that he's . . . are you glad you're paying more? I just said that we are among the lowest in all of Canada and when you average over the last five years, we are the lowest in all of Canada.

Now SaskTel — the basic monthly rates for SaskTel. We are the lowest in Western Canada. At the same time, we have probably the broadest high-speed Internet coverage and the digital cell phone coverage.

So it's very frustrating, Mr. Speaker. On the one hand the opposition says, we don't want SaskTel, we don't want money putting into SaskTel. You're wasting the money, you're investing in places outside of Saskatchewan, plus you're investing in places within Saskatchewan.

At the same time they say, we don't . . . we want cell coverage in my particular constituency. Could you please increase . . . put a cell coverage tower in my area. Also they say, could you expand that CommunityNet thing, that high-speed Internet thing; I'd like it in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke last year about Crown corporations. All Crown corporations are, Mr. Speaker, we're getting together,

we're earning money in other provinces and other countries, we're taking that money and we're subsidizing our rates here. Now I know that members like to go on about this particular one didn't make money or this particular one didn't make money. But I know my money is in mutual funds. Some of them go really well, some of them not so well. But over the long-term and over the year you make money year over year over year.

And he could . . . Mr. Speaker, the members can quote and pick out this little one that hasn't made money or that one. But overall when you put them together in the basket, Mr. Speaker, SaskTel and all of the Crowns have paid back a huge dividend to this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, SaskPower. We have among the lowest rates in Canada. And we're the leader in green power, Mr. Speaker. Now one of the things that the opposition has talked about is that they're going to sell the Crowns. Then they said, no we're not going to sell the Crowns. Then they said, well maybe we're going to sell some of the Crowns. Well then maybe we're going to review the Crowns, and if the review says to sell some and keep some, we'll sell some.

(16:30)

One thing that they have said, Mr. Speaker, is that they're going to sell STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company).

Now as someone who was born and raised in Loon Lake but now lives in an urban setting, I don't understand where the opposition is coming from. The people who use STC, Mr. Speaker, are by and large rural residents. This is basically just an investment into their constituencies. So they seem to be blinded by their ideology to get rid of the Crowns even though it's benefiting their own members and constituents.

Now, for example, the parcel service to farmers, we have private industry providing parcel service in this province. But if you went to most of those private parcel delivery services, they would not want STC gone. Because they know that STC . . . What the members don't seem to realize is that the way the private firms work is that they send the truck out from an urban centre to the rural and they drop off the parcel.

Now what the STC does with the parcel on the bus is that they actually come in in the morning and go out at night. So if I'm a farmer or I need a part, at the end of the day I can phone and say I need the part here. And it's here at 5 o'clock — not the next morning . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . 9:30, the member for Canora-Pelly says.

But if I'm in the middle of seeding or harvest and I need to get the crop off — that's in harvest, not in the seeding; I've learned that — that I'm willing to get my part at 9:30 at night and work when it's dark to fix my tractor or fix my combine. And I can do that.

Well with the private what happens is you've got to pay a hotshot. That's basically whenever it comes, it goes, and it could be a couple hundred dollars. So talk to . . .

Mr. Speaker, the members are upset, but I would suggest that

they go talk to their rural constituents and ask them if they'd like STC gone.

Now with passenger service, it's students that are into university wanting to go home for the weekend. It is seniors coming in for medical appointments. And it's First Nations people that are coming into the cities as well, Mr. Speaker.

Now I know that the opposition says, well a private bus line — and they're on record — a private bus line can do it better. Now I know that with STC there's two or three profitable runs. And even with those profitable runs, they don't earn enough to subsidize the less profitable runs.

Well guess what. Saskatoon to Regina is a profitable run. It's not going to hurt me if Greyhound is going between Saskatoon and Regina. But if you are trying to go from up to Tisdale or Nipawin or out to Wilkie or Kindersley — well Kindersley would be — those are not going to be profitable runs. And I know business people — they're not going to do it for nothing. They're going to want to have a profit. That's how it works. This is part of the social network of this province.

Now, here's one thing. When you compare North Dakota to Saskatchewan, very similar provinces, but we have double the population. And part of that — not all — but part of that is Crown corporations, the other part is public policy.

A billion dollars were spent in Saskatchewan by the Crown corporations in 12,000 businesses in our community and largely in rural Saskatchewan. There's a \$500 million payroll that the Crowns spend in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And they also provide infrastructure to business and service to individuals.

Now we can look at, yes, \$500 million that's a huge cost that we could get rid of. Well, a lot of those are head office jobs, Mr. Speaker. They're people that . . . if we turned that over to the private sector they wouldn't stay here.

They would do it out of, I mean . . . another example more recently in the news, Mr. Speaker, is the breweries. How many private breweries are in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? They are consolidating and they're brewing out of one place in North American, one place in Canada, in their different areas. If we hadn't . . . if Crown corporations had not invested in the brewery in my hometown, my city, they wouldn't be doing that.

Let me give you an example, Mr. Speaker, of the infrastructure that the Crown corporations provide. If you . . . and this is how the Sask Party, the opposition, would interpret this as the Crown corporations competing with private business. SaskEnergy has a very good program to . . . where you phone up SaskEnergy and you say, I'd like to have my furnace inspected.

Now that is providing infrastructure by the Crown corporation. Those are all private operators that have signed on to SaskEnergy. And there's a whole lot of individuals that are getting their furnace looked at and inspected that they ordinarily wouldn't have gotten because of the promotion and the infrastructure that SaskEnergy has provided, Mr. Speaker. So that's another example . . . just one of many that I could . . . but I only have an hour today, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I appreciate the advice. Now the other comments that the member for Lloydminster talked about — and I think it's indicative of the opposition — first off, they're saying how great things are in Alberta. Then they say how great things are in Ontario. And then things aren't so great there. So then they switch, now BC, we're going to do exactly what BC does. Well then when BC doesn't turn out real well. We hear today that the member from Lloydminster is quoting the Throne Speech from New Brunswick. Now they have New Brunswick envy, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I can understand why they wouldn't be talking about Alberta now. Here's just some recent comments in the Alberta press: "Albertans pay more under budget plans." Here's one Premier Ralph Klein said, quote, the only way taxes are going down in this province is down . . . pardon me, "the only way taxes are going in this province is down."

And this group says there's no need to increase taxes considering that Alberta spends more on government programs per person than all the Canadian provinces. Spending is up 57 per cent higher than five years ago. And who is saying these things?

Here's another quote from the same group, quote:

Alberta could have already been debt free already today. If the government had implemented spending control legislation in 1996, they would have saved Alberta \$825 million in debt servicing costs for this year alone. The Premier of Alberta is challenged to keep his promise of no tax increases.

Now do you want to know who's saying this? Well lo and behold, it's a good friend of the government here, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. Yes they're saying the Canadian Taxpayers Federation has challenged Alberta Premier Ralph Klein to honour his pre-election promise that the only way taxes are going down in this province is down.

Health care premiums are a tax, period, the CTF (Canadian Taxpayers Federation) director said in Alberta. It's money earned by individuals then taken by the government and spent by the government. Health fees soaring. Alberta families now pay \$800 a year for health care benefits, and BC as the only other province to charge premiums has also increased them in a recent budget.

I can understand why, Mr. Speaker, now they are quoting New Brunswick, because their friends in Ontario, their friends in BC, and their friends in Alberta have abandoned their policies.

Another one: Alberta may delay business tax cuts. Alberta's plan to slash business taxes by a billion dollars by 2004 will take a hit on Tuesday when the government hands down its budget. Now remember . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. It may be just a little distracting to somebody who is trying to listen to the speech of the hon. member from Saskatoon. Order. So could we give our attention to the member for Saskatoon Sutherland?

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

Now if you think back . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, yes, I appreciate the kind comments from the member for Cannington. Say a few kind words and you get a fan for a day.

Now if you think about . . . now the member from Kindersley doesn't want to hear some common sense. Now the Alberta surplus, not very long ago, was \$7 billion — \$7 billion. Now they've cut almost a billion out of their bet . . . (inaudible) . . . and they have a slim surplus today.

Here's another headline from Alberta, "Alberta budget belies status as low-tax mecca." Whoops. "The Alberta budget breaks promise." "Health care premiums to rise sharply as taxes for big corporations reduced." That's Alberta, Mr. Speaker.

Now I've already talked about the challenges facing all of Saskatchewan and all of the world. And it's even talked about in some of the reasons why Alberta has done these things — September 11; oil and natural gas prices depressed; the softwood lumber dispute; the drought.

BC is now, under the able guidance of the Gordon Campbell government, is now a have-not province. They have a \$4 billion deficit with a 25 per cent cut to civil services and get this, Mr. Speaker, a more than 200 per cent — 200 per cent — increase in tuitions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the opposition talks about Ireland. And I resent that, Mr. Speaker. My grandfather was Irish and he was born in Quebec on the way over from Ireland.

Now what did Ireland do, Mr. Speaker? Other than implementing the tough anti-tobacco legislation. What did Ireland do, Mr. Speaker? One, they cut taxes. What did Saskatchewan do? They cut taxes. What did Ireland do? They invested in education and technology. What did Saskatchewan do? They invested in education and technology. And Ireland is set to introduce some of the toughest anti-tobacco legislation. And what has Saskatchewan already done? Introduced that legislation.

Now one of the things, Mr. Speaker, the opposition talks about what a low-tax area Ireland is, but did you know that Ireland has just introduced a 20 cent per bag tax on those plastic grocery bags to save the environment. Would the opposition support that I wonder? Their silence is deafening, Mr. Speaker.

Now we have cut the business tax, we've cut personal income tax, we've cut PST, Mr. Speaker. In 2002, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan residents will pay one-third less income tax than in 1993. The business tax for small business will be 40 per cent lower than in 1991.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is a province of opportunity.

Now here's some comments from the Throne Speech directly that there's opportunity in many sectors, that Saskatchewan has earned a bronze medal in becoming the third largest mineral producer. We've got a silver medal for being Canada's second largest producer of oil and gas. We've got a gold medal, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has lead the way in increasing gross domestic product per capita. And we'll continue to lead the country in many other ways.

Now, Mr. Speaker, last summer, last July and August, I was pleased to be on the bus tour with the Premier. We met over 6,000 people in many communities in all corners of the province. And, Mr. Speaker, we plan to do it again in July. We're coming to their . . . their small town in July, Mr. Speaker. We'll be there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member for . . . Some of the members are saying that we weren't there long enough. Well you know, I remember saying we don't want you there at all. Now we're not there long enough. Well, we're coming back and we'll stay a lot longer than we did last year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the . . . The ironic part is this was supposed to be a nurturing building part of my speech.

But I was born and raised . . . I was born and raised . . . I was born and raised in Loon Lake. Okay. Just . . . Just give me a minute. A very good community. And I am very proud of my hometown of Loon Lake and I thought that I had a quiet pride that nobody else had.

And one of the things that I learned on this bus tour last year, and I'm sure it'll be reiterated in this July's bus trip, is that in every community that I was in and I'm sure other members as well, the deep sense of pride that each member of their community had is very good.

And I know we joke and we criticize, but I know the members on that side of the House also have a pride in their communities as well. No, the member for Kindersley says he doesn't have a pride.

Now the nurturing part of my speech is over.

Let's compare with the Sask Party's response to our bus tour. I'll just quickly read some of the headline:

Indian Head-Wolseley, dismal turnout for presentation. At one point Friday morning, there were more politicians than visitors.

Always a scary thing, Mr. Speaker.

(16:45)

The old Saskatchewan meeting stunted by indecision. The Saskatchewan Party may want to form the next government, but it recently had trouble deciding on a meeting place in Meadow Lake. Only four residents showed up.

Northern . . . (inaudible) . . . Sask Party preaches to a few on tour. But they stayed a long time, Mr. Speaker.

Although Saskatchewan Party may have aspirations of winning the next provincial election, they were only able to attract a handful of people to a special meeting in Meadow Lake. The Saskatchewan Party leader, quote:

Elwin Hermanson, who was originally listed as a speaker, was not present at the meeting.

The next quote, Mr. Speaker, from another newspaper in *The*

Wilkie Press: "Grow Saskatchewan or gut Saskatchewan."

The Gull Lake Advance: "Sask Party fails to outline position on health care."

The Tisdale Recorder, a letter to the editor. Just a copy of Devine's. "Upon becoming premier . . ." And I'll quote from the letter:

Upon becoming premier, Lorne Calvert promised to tour Saskatchewan and to listen to people of Saskatchewan. The people told him they didn't want hospitals in rural Saskatchewan closed. The premier listened. Also the people stressed the need for our highways to be improved. Saskatchewan has a big work program planned for this summer.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the letter goes on and on but in the interest of time I'll past it on, but that letter goes on about all of our promises made and the promises kept.

Saskatchewan Party discusses Grow Saskatchewan in Morris. Seven people came out to listen to these MLAs talking about growing Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Now I quoted a little bit from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. Here is some of their stuff about how great it is in Saskatchewan:

Total per capita public debt. Saskatchewan third lowest. Compared to provincial debts from 1989 to 2001, Saskatchewan second lowest. Some of the good things in Saskatchewan, government lowers red tape.

I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker.

Now these plans, or these . . . the Grow Saskatchewan that the opposition has talked about, initially it was open to the public; anyone could come. Then they were closed public meetings. Then I heard they were focus groups. Then they became kind of executive meetings, committee meetings, or junior caucus meetings.

Mr. Speaker, after hearing about their changes whether they are going to support Ontario, Alberta, BC, or New Brunswick now, just once I wish they would support Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Addley: — It seems the inconsistency of the Crown corporations can't invest outside of Saskatchewan or outside of Canada but they also can't invest inside Saskatchewan. It seems that their plan can be summed up in three words: ready, fire, aim.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan alliance party on the other . . . I'm sorry, the Saskatchewan Party, here's another inconsistency. Stockwell Day for leader, can you remember hearing that two years ago? Now we don't hear anything from the opposition. They refuse to admit that they supported the Sask Party . . . the Stockwell Day. Now they're all depressed that Stockwell Day might actually win tonight, Mr. Speaker.

We have members, MLA's who were PC (Progressive Conservative) Party workers, supporters, staffers, MLA's that were members of the PC Party. I'm proud that the NDP came out of and grew out of the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation). The Sask Party does not seem to be proud that they grew out of the PC Party of Saskatchewan. They say — they say that the . . . that they're not gloom and doom.

Okay let me restate that Mr. Speaker, I said, I'm proud to say that the NDP grew out of the CCF movement. It seems to me that the members opposite are not proud to say they grew out of the PC, Liberal banner . . . the Saskatchewan alliance party, I guess you could call them, Mr. Speaker. They say they're not gloom and doom but then they seem to run down all of the accomplishments that Saskatchewan people have.

Now the member for Rosthern gave a very nice speech about how his party, pardon me, how his constituency never voted NDP, and he ran down the socialists. Now I've gotten to know the member for Rosthern, and I still think he's a closet socialist. Now he talks about neighbours helping neighbours. I just think he should come clean and admit it. It's really not that bad. I'm married to a Mennonite, and their values and their platforms . . . it links right up to with what the member for Rosthern is talking about.

Now Mr. Speaker, some more good news for Saskatchewan that we don't seem to hear on the opposition benches, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan leads in shipments, Saskatchewan led the country with its increase in manufacturing shipments for January, Stats Canada said. Shipments increased 7.7 per cent. The national increase was only 3.1, Alberta lagged behind at 2.4.

Rural Saskatchewan communities success stories. Border city continues upward trends. Davidson flush with surplus funds. Economic development officer says Fort Qu'Appelle will bloom. 2002 a promising year economically for Unity. Rocanville's main street getting busier. Rocanville booming. Economic development picture encouraging. Despite what too many pundits and naysayers would have us believe about investing locally and investing in Saskatchewan generally, there are entrepreneurs out there who see great opportunity in launching or expanding businesses.

A&W, welcome to Melville. Saskatchewan: not the biggest, just the best. Upbeat polls surprise business officials. Over 93 per cent of respondents say their company is either in stable or growing stage or with just over half saying they're growing. The . . . yes, the number one reason for this increase was a change for demand in products and service.

Critics forget Tory debt. Crown corporations had a 90 to 10 debt/equity ratio. Today they're within industry standards. According to the Dominion Bond Rating Service only the federal government, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and PEI (Prince Edward Island) — not BC, not Ontario, and now not even New Brunswick — reduced their debt in the last five years. Saskatchewan has gone from worst in Canada to better than most, with higher credit ratings.

Saskatchewan's debt . . . I already read that part, Mr. Speaker.

Melville mayor remains optimistic for city for 2002. 2002 looks promising says mayor of Meadow Lake. A big year for construction, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the highest building values on records.

Here's a member that . . . a Saskatchewan person that says he's glad he came back to Saskatchewan. I looked at the economical opportunities in this marketplace and I say all we have to do is take advantage of what's there.

It's an attitude adjustment which is the first order of business, with business leading the way. Business has to make it happen. Business needs to take the leadership role. I don't think we can sit back and rely on government. I don't think we should be blaming the government, Mr. Speaker.

Economic game plan developed for the city. City's economy should have healthy hike in 2002. Mayor predicts huge year for Humboldt, Mr. Speaker. But do we hear the member for Humboldt talking about the huge year in Humboldt? 2002 market force. Consumer confidence rebounds. New home starts increase.

Saskatchewan, land of plenty for Alberta ranchers. This is Kevin Hursh.

Saskatchewan has many challenges, but you don't hear about Saskatchewan farmers packing up and moving to Alberta to farm.

Everything considered, the agricultural advantage is here, Mr. Speaker.

City shines in growth projections. If you follow all of the numbers being generated it looks as though Saskatchewan should outperform or . . . at or about the Canadian norm. Based on that, Saskatoon should outperform the Saskatchewan norm and perhaps the Canadian norm.

A KPMG competitiveness study from January 2002: among 17 major cities in Canadian and US Midwest, Saskatoon ranked second behind Edmonton and ahead of Calgary; ahead of Winnipeg; and ahead of all the US cities including Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Phoenix; Minneapolis; Dallas; Fort Worth; and Houston, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have very many good things in Saskatchewan. We have very many challenges but we are a province of opportunity, Mr. Speaker. We have the First Nations demographic advantage. One of the things that was the engine for Saskatchewan and Canadian growth was the baby boom after World War II from the 50s and the 60s and into the 70s.

Now every other area in North America is worried about their population decline and the fact that we don't have enough young people. In Saskatchewan we have a demographic advantage in our Aboriginal people. And I'm pleased to represent a constituency that holds Muskeg Lake First Nations Urban Reserve.

Mr. Speaker, this province must live within their means. But the economic outlook is good.

Mr. Speaker, I want to end this evening or this afternoon with a couple quotes. One from the Throne Speech and one from the newspaper.

Chief Ahtahkakoop said:

Let us not think of ourselves but our children's children. We hold our place among the tribes as chiefs and councillors because our people think we have wisdom above others amongst us. But let us show our wisdom. Let us show our wisdom by choosing the right path now while we yet have a choice.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to end with a quote by a resident that came back to Saskatchewan Christalee Froese. And the article is entitled: "Why are you moving there?" Why are you coming to Saskatchewan? Quote:

As the days stretched into months, the lament about what we had left behind quietly turned into a newfound love for what we have rediscovered here in our home province. Our walks and jogs on Prairie roads were constant sources of amazement as the Saskatchewan sky unfolded its wings before us, revealing colours the Crayola company could only dream about. This sky was as awe-inspiring as any mountain or jade-coloured lake had ever been — we just never realized it before.

A sea of wild grasses and planted crops came to life daily, dancing in the breeze, folding down onto themselves and rising up again in ripples of wonder. The sloughs too revealed their unique beauty, creating a mirror for the sky and a reflective home for ducks and geese.

(Well . . .) Saskatchewan? Why . . . (would you move) there? (And she answers, quote.) Well, my friend, stand with me surrounded by the full height of this golden crop against the colours of the setting sun or sit with me in this Poplar bush next to a blazing winter fire and you will know of what I speak, without either of us having to say a word.

Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against the amendment and I'll be supporting the main motion.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and at this time I'd like to move adjournment of debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:59.