

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about this government's treatment of the snowmobile industry in the province. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to recognize the financial savings that could be made by contracting the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association to groom provincial trails; and obtain funding for this through the sale of provincially owned grooming equipment, mandatory trail permits on Crown land and provincial parks, and the attachment of trail permits to snowmobile registrations.

There are four petitions here, Mr. Speaker, and they are signed by citizens of La Ronge, Air Ronge, Hudson Bay, and Canora.

I so present.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan who would like to see all 49 recommendations that came out of the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade come into being. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately implement all 49 recommendations of the final report as submitted by the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade.

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Archerwill, Rose Valley, Fosston, Elfros, and Spalding, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition on behalf of many constituents from Canora-Pelly. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures are from the communities of Foam Lake, Sheho, Wynyard, Wishart, and Tuffnell.

I so present.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by citizens of the province of Saskatchewan. And this petition is in regards to those who are in long-term care homes. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

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

These petitioners are primarily from the riding of Rosetown-Biggar including communities of Elrose and Rosetown. And also including Saskatoon and Eston.

And I'm pleased to present this petition to the Assembly.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today to present a petition for the people who are concerned about the long-term care rate increases:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

The people that have signed this petition are from Kelvington, Rose Valley, and Prince Albert.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well again today on behalf of citizens who continue to express their concern about long-term care fees. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

Signatures on this petition today, Mr. Speaker, are all from the community of Melfort and I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

The signators, Mr. Speaker, are from the city of Yorkton, the Deputy Premier's riding, and the village of MacNutt.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well to present a petition. And reading the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the petition I present is signed by people from the communities of Yorkton, Springside, and Ebenezer.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with proposed fee increases for long-term care services. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the community of Yorkton.

I so present.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition concerning crop insurance premium hikes and coverage reductions. 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 halt its plan to take money out of the crop insurance plan and hike farmers' crop insurance premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by producers from Sceptre, Lancer, Prelate, Abbey, and Cabri, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from citizens concerned about long-term care increases. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

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

And this is signed by folks from my constituency of Estevan.

I so present.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present on behalf of citizens of the 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 loss of injury and life and also to prevent the loss of economic opportunity in this area.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from Francis, Estevan, and Weyburn.

I so present.

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned about long-term care fees. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increase for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Ogema and Pangman in the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy.

I so present.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of citizens who remain concerned on the issue of long-term care fees. The prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for the long-term care services in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners on this petition are exclusively from the city of Yorkton.

I so present.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens opposed to possible reduction of services to Davidson and Craik health centres:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Davidson and Craik health centres be maintained at their current level of service at a minimum, with 24 acute care, emergency, doctorial services available as lab, physiotherapy, public health, home care, long-term care services available to users from the Craik and Davidson area and beyond.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Craik, Davidson, and Aylesbury.

I so present.

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have this afternoon a petition brought forward by individuals who are highly concerned about the proposed increases for long-term care facilities in the province. And, Mr. Speaker, the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by the good people from Yorkton and Melville.

I so present.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to present a petition from citizens who are concerned about the increased fees in long-term care homes. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Yorkton.

I so present.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition today with citizens concerned about the deplorable state of Highway No. 15. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to use a portion of its highway budget to address the concerns of the serious condition of Highway 15 for Saskatchewan residents.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And the petitioners are from the communities of Simpson, Meacham, and Saskatoon.

I so present.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents concerned with the increase in long-term care fees. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the community of Cupar.

I so present.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition regarding the long-term home fees. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the exorbitant fee increases for long-term care services in Saskatchewan.

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

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, on this petition are from Yorkton, Canora, and Theodore.

I so present.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a petition from citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned about the annual deductible amount for prescription drugs. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reinstate a reasonable annual deductible amount for prescription drugs in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens of my constituency, from Killdeer, Climax, Woodrow, Lafleche, and Limerick.

I so present.

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Deputy Clerk:** — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional papers nos. 17, 18, and 31.

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

##### Standing Committee on Agriculture

**Mr. Harper:** — Mr. Speaker, I present the second report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Watrous:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 37 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Industry and Resources: how much money did the provincial government contribute to the Prince Albert arena in 1999?

And, Mr. Speaker, I have similar questions for the year 2000 and 2001.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 37 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of SPMC: what are the names and addresses of the buildings and/or properties owned by the government for which no grants in lieu of property taxes are paid to the local municipality; and for each one, in what year was the last grant in lieu payment made?

I have a number of other questions similar to this, Mr. Speaker, for different departments.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 37 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: how many farmers signed up for coverage with Saskatchewan Crop Insurance in 2001?

And I have the same question for year 2002.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce a young man seated in your gallery, Tyler Hoyt.

He's a grade 8 student here in Regina and every year Tyler gets to come to the legislature to spend one afternoon to view proceedings. Tyler is accompanied by his father, Vern Hoyt.

So I would just ask all members to join me in welcoming them.

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

(13:45)

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through to the members of the House today, a close friend and a constituent of mine, Joan Upshall, and a friend of hers, Donna Kozak, from the city of Regina. I'd ask everyone to welcome them here today.

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

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

#### Long-Term Health Care Fees Under Review

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Premier announced that he had at long last seen the unfairness underlying his government's planned restructuring of long-term fees in Saskatchewan. And while we are pleased that the Premier announced that this policy had been put on hold pending a review, we'd have been more pleased had he had taken the extra step and removed the planned increase from the drawing boards completely.

Because we have no guarantee of what the final outcome of this review will be, the Saskatchewan Party believes it important to continue to press home the point with the members opposite that this policy was and is wrong. For this reason we will

continue to present the many petitions we have received and continue to receive from the people of Saskatchewan on this issue.

I want to personally take this opportunity to thank all those people in Saskatchewan who have helped us fight this policy to this point, through their many letters, phone calls, and petitions. Make no mistake about it, the fight is not over. However, without all of the people who joined with the official opposition — people of every background and political persuasion — in trying to get the government to come to its senses, we wouldn't even have made this amount of progress.

Thank you to all of them, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Snowbirds Launch 2002 Air Show Season

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I was honoured to be one of the guests of Commander Bruce McCuade in 15 Wing Moose Jaw to observe the acceptance show for the 32nd season of the Snowbirds. In civilian terms, Mr. Speaker, I was privileged to watch the Snowbirds' dress rehearsal for the upcoming air show season.

According to regulation, they are required to conduct an acceptance show for the commander of no. 1 Canadian Air Division so that he can ensure the aerial display is safe and that it maintains the highest standards we have come to expect from this most famous of Canadian teams.

If the commander is willing to take the humble opinion of the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) who happens to represent the air base, the standards were maintained and exceeded. This air show is ready to hit the skies.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of how many times I have seen the Snowbirds in performance, their precision, their teamwork, their skill, and the sheer joy they display in their art is always a thrill. I suspect each of us will agree.

Mr. Speaker, the Snowbirds belong to Canada but we have a special claim. I know all members will join with me in wishing the commanding officer, Maj. Stephen Will, and all members of the Snowbirds another safe and successful season.

Thank you.

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

#### National Science Fair

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand today to recognize a young inventor from my constituency, Sheldon Bowman. Sheldon and his invention have won a spot at the National Science Fair to be held in Saskatoon this May.

Sheldon's invention, the pushy bale handler, won first place in the engineering, computers and math sciences category at the regional science fair held recently in Wynyard and was named the overall best project of the fair.

The pushy bale handler is designed to transport bales from stacks or windrows to a feeding area. It's a spring-loaded system that doesn't involve any hydraulics or electric controls and can be hooked on to the back of a tractor or a truck. It's simpler and cheaper than any other handlers currently on the market.

The idea for this invention came from Sheldon's everyday routine. His family has 50 head of cattle and has to put out round bales every couple of days. His system allows bales to be moved quickly without getting out of a vehicle.

The size of the handler can be adjusted to the size of the round bale. As well, it can be used for square bales.

So I'd like to congratulate Sheldon on his invention and wish him the best of luck at the National Science Fair in Saskatoon.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Award to CommunityNet**

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to say thank you on behalf of the provincial government and all the hard-working public servants involved in CommunityNet to say thank you to the Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association.

SEDA (Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association) is the professional association for those who practise community economic development in Saskatchewan and they recently honoured the Government of Saskatchewan's CommunityNet initiative with a special achievement award. The award presented was for outstanding economic development initiative 2002.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the creation of CommunityNet resulted from a lot of hard work and an innovative partnership between a number of organizations, including SaskTel, SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network), SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation), the Information Technology Office, and a number of other groups and departments.

It is interesting to contrast this award, Mr. Speaker, and the views of economic development professionals with the view of members opposite as expressed by the member from Redberry Lake in *Hansard* April 16 this year when he said, and I quote:

... this initiative in the CommunityNet is driving private business away.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, they didn't say anything about that last night to the Action Committee on the Rural Economy. This government is proud to be going in the right direction to bridge the digital divide. We are proud to help develop Saskatchewan's rural economy and, Mr. Speaker, we are proud to receive and accept this important economic development award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Catholic School for Tomorrow Innovations in Technology Award**

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 4, at the National Catholic Education Association convention in Atlantic City, St. Patrick's school in Swift Current became the first and, to date, the only Canadian winner of the Catholic School for Tomorrow Innovations in Technology award.

The project that earned the award for St. Pat's school and their partnering Catholic school divisions from across the province, Mr. Speaker, has resulted in the development of a Web site which is being accessed by Catholic educators around the world.

The Web site which has the backing and support of Saskatchewan Education, the Catholic trustees, and the province's Catholic Bishops, is designed to provide a clearing house of unit plans and professional development opportunities for teachers.

And, as Swift Current Separate School Board chairperson, Julie Randall said, and I quote:

We are honoured to have been chosen for this award and appreciative of the innovative work by teachers and administrators from across Saskatchewan. We are also very appreciative of the leadership offered by Moose Jaw's Catholic Director of Education, Dr. Helen Horsman . . .

Recently the editor of *Today's Catholic Teacher* magazine saluted St. Patrick's school for their selection. She said, and I quote:

You can be justifiably proud to be judged among the top 12 in innovation application of technology.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in saluting St. Pat's school, the principal, Del Wagner, all of his staff, and all of the partners from across Saskatchewan who have made this project a reality, and brought home this prestigious honour to Swift Current and to the province.

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

#### **Saskatchewan Indian Federated College Artist of the Year**

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, for years the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College fine arts program has provided a solid educational and creative environment that has been a springboard to the careers of many of our province's emerging First Nations artists.

Each year, the college recognizes a graduating student for their accomplishments and designates an artist of the year. The Legislative Building now plays a role in the celebration of these achievements, not only to the artist of the year, but all the students and staff at SIFC (Saskatchewan Indian Federated College).

Mr. Speaker, the Cumberland Gallery in the Legislative Building was created to provide a venue to support established and emerging artists. At the opening of the gallery in April of

2001, His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, stopped and admired the work of the late Sanford Fisher, whose work is well-known.

Well I guess you could say that things have come full circle, Mr. Speaker, because the Cumberland Gallery just recently honoured Dan Fisher, the son of Sanford Fisher, as artist of the year.

On behalf of the House I would like to congratulate Dan Fisher, and invite all members of the House to take some time in the near future to stop by the Cumberland Gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Fire in Bladworth**

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to talk about a great community effort to fight a fire which occurred in my hometown of Bladworth on last Friday afternoon. The fire apparently occurred when a burning barrel touched off some dry grass nearby and quickly spread.

The Davidson fire brigade was called and were there very quickly, although by now an old, abandoned house was on fire. The danger was that, with the high winds and dry conditions, the entire community of Bladworth was in danger of catching fire.

I myself arrived back home as the firefighting efforts continued, and joined in. I was very proud of the many friends and neighbours of mine who had quickly come out and were assisting the fire brigade in their desperate effort to stop the fire from spreading to nearby houses.

They came out with anything they could find in the way of shovels and all manners of tools and equipment. For several hours, they worked hard to contain the blaze, and in the end, they and the fire brigade were successful.

The whole community was certainly shaken up by this near disastrous fire. I appreciate the neighbours' efforts very much and honour them for their commitment to their community. A strong tip to the hat to Fire Chief Rick Woodman and his 10-member squad of volunteer firefighters from Davidson.

Mr. Woodman said that it took from between 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to safely contain the fire and ensure that the high winds did not cause the flames to relight. The fire chief added his appreciation to the community members who came out to help them fight this dangerous fire.

He also mentioned a local man with a Caterpillar dozer tractor came in to bulldoze down some trees around the fire area as an added safety precaution.

I would like to ask all members in the Assembly to join me in thanking the residents of Bladworth and the Davidson fire brigade for their heroic efforts during last Friday's fire. The strength of the community showed through as it always has in my hometown of Bladworth.

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

## **ORAL QUESTIONS**

### **Fund for Victims of Crime**

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On budget day the government announced that they were going to raise surcharges on court fines. Purpose? To raise money for the Victims' Fund. What the NDP (New Democratic Party) didn't tell us, Mr. Speaker, is that they drained \$750,000, Mr. Speaker. That's three-quarter of a million dollars out of the Victims' Fund to help them pretend that they were actually going to balance that fudge-it budget.

Crime victims in this province, Mr. Speaker, have been robbed twice — twice — once by the thief and once by this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, why did the NDP government drain three-quarters of a million dollars out of the Victims' Fund, and why didn't they tell anyone they were going to do that?

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

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Mr. Speaker, the member will know the valuable work that the Victims' Fund does, that it takes a surcharge from those who commit crimes and are fined and uses it for useful purposes — to protect victims, to enhance victims, and to provide supports across the province.

Mr. Speaker, the member will know that that fund, that that fund is increased this year and that it will generate the resources needed, more resources needed to protect victims to the best of our ability and indeed, Mr. Speaker, those who work with victims on a regular basis.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a very poor answer. The funding, the funding for those helps that he was talking about was provided for traditionally out of the general fund. They know that.

Funding for this program was already in place in last year's budget, in the previous year's budget without raiding the Victims' Fund, without raiding it. That means the Victims' Fund will have three quarters of a million dollars less this year to spend on the compensation of victims in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP raided the Victims' Fund to pay for existing programs in a desperate attempt to give our wee Premier a wee surplus in his budget. Why is the NDP taking money away from the victims of crime?

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

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I would just ask the member when referring to any other member in the legislature, they should refer to the member by the proper title or by the constituency.

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should just

straighten the member out a little bit. He will know that the Victims' Fund is not designed to compensate victims so much as to provide services and supports for them as they deal with the trauma of being victimized, Mr. Speaker. And he will know, Mr. Speaker, that we still have to find more money for this fund this year and that indeed there will be a half a million dollars more for victims, Mr. Speaker, and that this will continue into the future.

We're committed to helping victims, Mr. Speaker. We're committed to dealing with crime in this province. And of course the member should be reminded that his commitment to justice in the last election was zero, Mr. Speaker.

We've added, we've added, Mr. Speaker, 25, 26 per cent more money for police. Mr. Speaker, we are committed to safety and security in this province, unlike the members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

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

(14:00)

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Victims' Fund, Mr. Speaker, consists of surcharges and court fines. Section 6(3) of The Victims of Crime Act says that all money raised through these surcharges, and I quote, "... shall be deposited in the fund and not the general revenue fund."

Mr. Speaker, the minister appears to be violating his own Act — his own Act, Mr. Speaker. The minister raided the Victims' Fund to pay for existing department programs even though the Act says very specifically the Victims' Fund money is not to go to the general revenue, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain this. Why is the minister violating his own Act?

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

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — The money that goes to victims, to the Victims' Fund, goes to prevent family violence, crime prevention programs, Aboriginal victims services programs, Mr. Speaker — 280,000 for crime prevention, 365,000 for family violence initiatives, 105,000 for Aboriginal victims initiatives, Mr. Speaker. Which of these, Mr. Speaker, does the member opposite not support?

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We support all of those programs. That's why we want the money left back in that program. This government, Mr. Speaker, fudged the budget. This government took money and took it away from wildlife, from habitat. Now they've taken it away from victims.

Will the minister stand in his place today and make a commitment to return that three-quarters of a million dollars to the Victims' Fund.

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

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Mr. Speaker, what I can do is remind

the member that in 2002-2003, fully three-quarters of a million dollars will be available for these initiatives to help victims across the province, Mr. Speaker.

And I ask the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, to give some thought to what they would do regarding safety and security and victims in this province, Mr. Speaker. Because we know from their platform in the last election, they would have done nothing.

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

### Plans for Saskatchewan's Economic Growth

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the ACRE (Action Committee on the Rural Economy) committee released its report. And they said a number of things the Saskatchewan Party has been saying for a long, long time.

In short, ACRE said we need to grow Saskatchewan. They said to stop the flow of people out of our province and increase the number of people moving into our province. They said, we need to grow the population of rural Saskatchewan by 200,000 people in the next 20 years. And they said, we need a government that creates a climate for growth.

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Instead of, Mr. Speaker, instead of picking winners and losers.

Mr. Speaker, that's exactly the opposite of what the NDP has been doing for the last 10 years. And that's why the NDP has driven out so many people out of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier admit the NDP's economic approach has been a failure and that it's time to follow ACRE's recommendations and grow Saskatchewan.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, I sat through the same evening and the same presentation by the same people. And you know what I heard, Mr. Speaker? I heard that our problem is not only the economic circumstances and that we need to change and we need to move forward and that we need to diversify. What I also heard was that we need to have a positive attitude about this province.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — And what I heard, Mr. Speaker, is that we need to recognize our successes, the fact that we've had economic growth eight years in a row.

2001 was a difficult circumstance for us, but the Saskatchewan Party consistently hides their head in the sand when it comes to good news. A little piece of bad news — we had a tough year last year and nobody will deny it — and the world is falling.

Mr. Speaker, I say the people of Saskatchewan know they've got a strong economic base for growth in the future and they're

going to take advantage of it, in spite of what the Saskatchewan Party says.

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister seems to be a bit confused about what is really going on in the province of Saskatchewan.

Let's take a look at the NDP record. Last year, the NDP killed 12,000 jobs. They drove over 10,000 people to other provinces. And, Mr. Speaker, they were the only government in Canada to have negative economic growth.

Today, the RBC Financial Group released its provincial outlook and they are predicting more of the same. They say Saskatchewan will trail the rest of the country in economic growth; Saskatchewan will trail the rest of the country in job growth. And they say, and I quote:

... a declining labour force is not a good sign for the future, suggesting that the ... net outflow of working-age individuals to other provinces is intensifying.

Mr. Speaker, what the NDP is doing isn't working. When is the NDP going to admit its economic policies are failing and come up with a plan to grow Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Saskatchewan Party that this government is committed to economic growth of this province. It's committed to diversifying what we do as a ...

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

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — I want to say, Mr. Speaker, it's evidenced by the fact that, eight years in a row, we had growth in GDP (gross domestic product).

Now members opposite from the Saskatchewan Party say we have different views. And you bet you we have different views. Because they refuse to understand that 2001 was the driest year we've had since the 1930s, that our income from agriculture decreased by 60 per cent, that our income from all sources in this province since 1996, from agriculture, has decreased from 12 per cent to 1 per cent. We've got different views in terms of what our difficulties are.

But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the difference is we have a view of optimism for the future. The people of Saskatchewan will build this economy, and they're not going to listen to the negative nabobs from that side because they go nowhere. It's straight politics. We're here to build this economy.

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister needs to get his numbers straight. He keeps saying that Saskatchewan led the country in economic growth over the past eight years. That's just not true. The fact is, Saskatchewan was seventh in economic growth over the last eight years. And over

the last four years, Saskatchewan has been dead last, Mr. Speaker — dead last.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from the article in *The Globe and Mail* dated today, and the paragraph reads this way:

... oil developments will continue to do well ... pushing Newfoundland to the top of the list in terms of economic growth among the provinces, Royal Bank said Tuesday.

Mr. Speaker, that's the prediction for Newfoundland. Now the Royal Bank prediction for Saskatchewan is three factors that are going to continue to make Saskatchewan dead last: they say slow economic growth, slow job growth, and more people leaving Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, when is the government going to get the message? Why does the NDP have no plan to grow Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about a plan. The Leader of the Saskatchewan Party in Saskatoon last fall got up and announced the three platform plan. One of it was ... (inaudible interjection) ... Well, no, no. No, no, sir. Sir, you did. And you know what the first ...

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

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite will laugh and I tell you they should laugh because none of it's been sustainable. He got up and committed to 600-and-some million dollars in tax reductions. Not one word about where that Leader of the Opposition will find it from, the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party.

He then talked about cutting the civil servants the same way they're doing in BC (British Columbia), but he doesn't want to talk about that, Mr. Speaker, because civil servants in this province rejected it, rejected his plan; as the people in BC rejected his plan. Then how's he going to finance it, Mr. Speaker? He's going to sell Crown assets.

Well which Crown assets, Mr. Speaker? He doesn't want to talk about it. Now if he wants to shake his head and say that's not what he said, he can do that. But it's in writing, people know it, and they don't buy into your plan.

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's time — I think it's time to turn back to the ACRE report. The very government ...

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Let's take a look at what the ACRE report says — the government's own report.

And I quote:

... the "status quo" is not an option. We cannot keep doing



what we have been doing if we are truly serious about reversing the decline.

The role of government is not to pick winners but to set proper economic and business climate and remove roadblocks so that Saskatchewan entrepreneurs and communities can take advantage of the opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, we couldn't agree more. And we need to start by removing the biggest roadblock — that NDP government.

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, when is the NDP going to realize what they're doing isn't working? Why do they have no plan to grow Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Let's talk about the plan because they won't talk about their plan. I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, one day one person said, you know, integrity isn't a 90 per cent thing, it's not a 95 per cent thing — you've either got it or you don't.

Now I want to know . . . Last fall he stood up and he said he's going to reduce taxes, he's going to cut the cost of government by firing civil servants, and he's going to cut the Crowns to the core. Where is that plan? Where is the integrity? Why doesn't he stand up and defend what he said he's going to do to grow the Saskatchewan economy?

His platform right now is one-liner: in 10 years we're going to create 100,000 people; we're going to grow this population by 100,000 people. He hasn't been able to articulate one way that he's going to do it.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, our record is clear — eight years of consecutive GDP growth. We had a tough year in 2001 — we admit it. And I want to know if the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party is going to support us when he sees the numbers turn around in 2002 and '03.

### Gaming Agreement with First Nations

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of Gaming. I asked this question yesterday but did not get an answer. The new agreement states a process will be developed over the next three years that would provide First Nations with full jurisdiction to all forms of gaming on First Nations land.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain what that process will involve.

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Mr. Speaker, I thought I had explained it to the member opposite that our 25-year agreement signed with our friends and our partners, First Nations of this great province of ours, in good faith and in confidence in one another and mutual trust.

She's talking about jurisdiction on reserves. We will be working with our First Nations partners to go to federal . . . to the federal government to talk about the potential in the future

for First Nations to develop their economies, to create jobs, more employment opportunities. But there's a process to follow.

That commitment was made to our partners back in 1993-94 and it continues to remain in place. And we will keep our word to First Nations. I'm not so sure the members opposite would.

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain specifically what full jurisdiction to all forms of gaming on First Nations land means. Does full jurisdiction mean that new casino development could go ahead on an urban reserve without the approval of the community?

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

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Mr. Speaker, I was under the impression that the member opposite did have a copy of the agreement. If not, I'll be happy to read into the record what part of that agreement says. It says, and I quote:

The parties continue to be committed to work together to develop and (to) present to the Government of Canada proposals which would allow First Nations full jurisdiction in relation to all forms of gaming on reserves, either through amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada or new federal legislation. The agreement will set out a process to jointly (jointly — that means together and in partnership, to present) . . . these proposals (in the best interest of both parties involved).

What's simpler?

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — The answer still is not clear. Is the agreement between the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) and the government, or is the community involved? I would hope that the minister would answer after I ask the next question.

Mr. Speaker, there's also a question about what giving First Nations full jurisdiction of all gaming on First Nations land means in terms of revenue sharing.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: would this mean that the provincial government would not have any share in the proceeds of gaming on reserves?

(14:15)

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Mr. Speaker, we are working with the First Nations to go to the federal government to discuss these proposals. When we discuss those proposals that First Nations want to advance to the federal government, it will be determined by the federal . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Criminal Code applies here right across Canada and to all peoples here,

Mr. Speaker.

If in fact the federal government chooses to make changes to the Criminal Code to recognize what First Nations people are asking for, we will be doing it together, Mr. Speaker, in a partnership. Collectively we'll make those proposals in the best interests of future economic development for First Nations people and to grow the economy of this great province of ours.

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, I find it very alarming that this government has signed a 25-year agreement and they cannot stand in the House today and tell the people of Saskatchewan whether this agreement would allow the people of Saskatchewan to share in the revenues of First Nations gaming on reserves.

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, again we have to be very, very curious why there's an attack on a 25-year agreement with First Nations community in this province of ours. I question the motives of the members opposite.

I just want to remind again what the Leader of the Opposition . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Mr. Speaker, what we're doing is working with First Nations people in this province to create job opportunities for them, to ensure that collectively as a partnership — perhaps they don't understand the meaning of the word partnership — and I don't understand why they've suddenly changed their minds. What the Leader of the Opposition stood before the First Nations Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and said:

Gaming will certainly play an important role in successful future First Nations economic development. That's what we're working towards.

Have you changed your mind, sir?

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

**The Speaker:** — I would just remind the member from Melville, the minister of Industry and Gaming, that all of his remarks — all of his remarks — should be addressed through the Chair.

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, on April 25 . . . Mr. Speaker, on April 25, the day the gaming agreement was signed, CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) Radio reported that according to Chief Perry Bellegarde, full jurisdiction meant that First Nations would receive all revenue from on-reserve gaming ventures. He said, and I quote:

At that point it's our full jurisdiction and we set up our systems the way we want to do it. Because what other business — it's a business — we're sharing the profits, where else does that happen?

Mr. Speaker, does the minister agree with Chief Bellegarde that

a full jurisdiction agreement on reserve would mean the end of revenue sharing between First Nations and the province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Mr. Speaker, we signed a 25-year agreement. The process that we've agreed to assist First Nations people with is going to the federal government on the issue of jurisdiction on First Nations land.

Now I still . . . obviously it's still not understood. This is a partnership. And both parties, both First Nations and representatives of the government, will be at the table with the federal government, Mr. Speaker.

I mean, do they not appreciate and understand that we will, as First Nations, be looking after the best interests of First Nations and the people of this province? There's a question of trust that keeps entering into my mind when I hear those kind of questions, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, full jurisdiction is not clearly and specifically designed in the new gaming agreement and the minister has failed to tell the people of Saskatchewan what full jurisdiction means. Yet the government is committing \$250,000 annually to the FSIN for the next five years to enable them to move toward full jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, why is the government committing these funds and does the NDP believe it is in the best interests of all people of Saskatchewan to give up all of the revenue from on-reserve gaming?

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

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Mr. Speaker, whatever the decision is by the federal government with respect to jurisdiction will be decided by the federal government. This is an opportunity for First Nations and government to go to the federal government to determine what the jurisdiction issue is all about.

The members opposite are already speculating because obviously I don't think they want to see that happen. They don't want to see any economic development for First Nations people. They are not interested in First Nations people.

I would like to ask the members opposite, perhaps the Leader of the Opposition: what would they do? Would they refuse to be in a partnership with First Nations people to help them develop and create job opportunities?

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, what plan does the NDP have to consult with the people of Saskatchewan to see whether the public supports giving First Nations full jurisdiction to on gaming reserves — full jurisdiction that could see the government give away the right to regulate expansion of gambling and give away the right to regulate revenue sharing?

Mr. Speaker, to the minister, what plan does he, as the minister,

have to consult the people of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I heard across the way a little earlier the reference to the ACRE committee, who suggested that it's very important that we work with the First Nations community in this province. I think that's agreed.

I'm a little disappointed that the speculations and the pre-empting of what people who are . . . build our Criminal Code, the members opposite pre-empting what may or may not be written into a decision with respect to the First Nations jurisdiction on reserves right across Canada.

That means a significant change to the Criminal Code of Canada, Mr. Speaker, so it will be addressed when the time comes, and I wish they wouldn't speculate about more doom and gloom.

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

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

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Northern Justice Symposium

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring the attention of members of the House to the great success of the Northern Justice Symposium held last Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday in Prince Albert.

And I want to congratulate the Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities, more commonly known as New North, for organizing this well-attended, lively, and exciting conference that focused on the role of communities in building safe and healthy northern communities.

The conference was funded through the National Crime Prevention Centre and organized with the assistance of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) and the Aboriginal and northern justice initiatives branch of the Department of Justice.

Two hundred plus northerners attended this conference and learned of promising new community-based crime prevention initiatives. The symposium provided an opportunity for northern communities to build networks and linkages so that these initiatives can be realized.

Let us make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, the rates of offending and resultant experience of serious social harm continue to be one of the North's major challenges. What's encouraging is the absolute determination of the communities of the North to take effective steps to stop the cycle of offending and victimization.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to working with people in northern communities, forming partnerships, and finding solutions together.

I ask all members of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, to join with

me in congratulating New North on the recent successes of the Northern Justice Symposium.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's, I think, a good meeting that took place in northern Saskatchewan. I would like to thank the minister, first of all, for giving me a copy of his statement.

Building safe and healthy northern communities is probably one of the key things that we're concerned about anyplace in the world, that our places that we live are safe and that they're healthy. And so the topic that was at that symposium, Mr. Speaker, is obviously one of the most worthwhile topics that we can have anyplace in Canada, in Saskatchewan, and in northern Saskatchewan.

I think it's also good, Mr. Speaker, to see that there were 200 people out. This wasn't just a little group that came together and a few bureaucrats — a good turnout — 200 people talking about the initiatives that are out there and basically, community-based crime prevention initiatives.

And I think we all know that when the community, Mr. Speaker, gets involved with crime prevention, it has a whole lot more effect very often than just expecting some of our law enforcement officers to be in charge and everyone else just stands around and watches. So to the extent that they're trying in the future, the symposium, to build networks and linkages to create the community network, I think, is a very positive sort of a thing.

Mr. Speaker, the minister said that his government was committed to working with northerners to find the solution. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, all parts of this province are together with the government on this one to find solutions to the problems that were indicated by the symposium, and we support the directions and hope that it turns out well, Mr. Speaker.

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

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 38 — The Paramedics Act

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 38, The Paramedics Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'd like to convert for debates returnable.

**The Speaker:** — No. 143 has been converted to motions for returns (debatable).

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased this afternoon to stand and table a response on behalf of the

Government of Saskatchewan to written question 144.

**The Speaker:** — Response 144 has been tabled.

### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

#### Training and Health Care Initiatives for Residents of Northern Saskatchewan

**Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be moving the following motion after my remarks:

That this Assembly advance the programs announced in the Throne Speech geared to providing training and promoting better health for citizens of northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to make my commentary in regards to how we work and partner with people of northern Saskatchewan in making sure that we have a better health system that is under their control and also how they work together, you know, for the betterment of the people of northern Saskatchewan.

Now my comments will focus in on our health strategy vis à vis, of course, the training component that is listed there and also other aspects relating to health, meaning our capacity building, particularly in regards to health facilities.

(14:30)

I will start out with the aspect of health facilities because it's always a very, very, very important notion. I know that one has to look at it in historical terms. Sometimes we look at facilities, how far apart they are, and so on.

And when I was in opposition, I used to do a lot of debating on this issue. And I knew that while the Tories were in power, they made many promises about northern health facilities. And I remember we had money back in 1982 to build a health facility in the North, but that was taken away by the Devine government when they come into power.

And actually, their people said that we will build a facility in the North, you know, for the election on their second term, you know, when I ran during that election. And it's very, very clear that everybody was waiting for this health facility back in 1986 when the Devine PCs (Progressive Conservative) came into power because their message was exactly the same as the Sask Party. They would provide this and that. They would cut taxes. They would do all of these things, but also get a health facility in northern Saskatchewan.

Well the first year came by and everybody was waiting for the budget. Zero came on. There was absolutely nothing in the budget by the Tories. Second year comes by and again zero for the people of the North.

And when we look at the next budget, on those total nine years they were in office, not one penny came to northern Saskatchewan, basically because they had to fulfill their right-wing expectations in the South and do a lot of unnecessary expenditures and also not deal with the people of northern Saskatchewan. They tried to sound good prior to the election,

but they never did absolutely anything during that period.

Now the . . . an old Tory, the member from Rosthern, talks there. He talks about the '80s when he was a member of the old Tory party. And a lot of them were the members of the old Tories. Now they . . . they worry now because I'm speaking the truth about what happened. Those guys gave us zero.

There is a Saskatchewan Party freeze on health today. The Saskatchewan Party talks about freezing health care and the Tories did zero in regards to northern Saskatchewan facilities.

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Now I invite the member from Cumberland to make his statement.

**Mr. Goulet:** — Yes. The statement was in regards to the positive aspects of health facility support for northerners. And I hit a nerve, because sometimes the truth hurts quite a bit.

You know a lot of them are old Tories and they will talk a good line before the election but they will never deliver in regards to what happens in northern Saskatchewan.

Now when we were running, of course we said that we would work with the people in the North in the health facilities. When we come into power we went in . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And of course the member from North Battleford said something. He's been voting with the Saskatchewan Party right from the very beginning against the budget which helps the North. Mr. Speaker, he voted against The Métis Act as well, Mr. Speaker. Now that member may talk over there but he still votes with the Saskatchewan Party.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when I'm talking about the facilities, the La Ronge health facility went up when the NDP government came in. With the coalition government we moved on and we even made some further improvements. And we put in roughly over \$30 million in regards to health facilities in northern Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Goulet:** — We had health facilities in La Ronge and the people from the Athabasca region said we need a health facility in the Athabasca region. Mr. Speaker, we responded. And for the first time we . . . the people in the North not only had a health facility, they would have their own health district up in the North . . . northern area called Athabasca Health Authority.

And we also did the same thing when we did the other health districts. We created northern control in health for the first time in history because we were known as the government who would put the power of decision making in the hands of northerners and we did the Athabasca Health Authority along with Mamawetan Churchill on the east side and the central side and the Keewatin Yatthé Health District.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we also built another centre at a cost \$11.2 million in La Loche.

And I must say that, Mr. Speaker, when we ask the member from North Battleford in regards to federal dollars, you know,

there is 14 cents on the dollar that the federal government puts in on health, and in regards to that we are looking for 50 per cent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on La Loche, we put in \$11.2 million as our health support system. And that is a tremendous record in our regard.

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

**Mr. Hillson:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Would the member from North Battleford please state his point of order?

**Mr. Hillson:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Speaker has had to remind this Assembly on several occasions recently that it is important to keep our debate on a civil and dignified tone that does credit to the members and this province.

And I would suggest that when the hon. member for Cumberland starts saying that I am one with the Saskatchewan Party and in agreement with them and one of them, he is dragging the level of the debate of this Assembly to new lows. And it ought to be ruled out of order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip on the point of order.

**Mr. Yates:** — . . . respond to the point of order.

Mr. Speaker, the point that needs to be talked about here is this is a debate. There may be a difference of opinion, but within this debate the individuals will have an opportunity to express their opinion. The member was expressing his opinion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order, order. I thank you for the point of order and thank you for responding to the point of order.

I would just remind the member for Cumberland to not cast aspersion on other members or draw the members in debate in an unparliamentary way.

**Mr. Goulet:** — Basically what I was putting forth is the record in regards to the budget, Mr. Speaker. We have a health budget. We support the health budget. And all I was showing was that the member of Battlefords did not vote against the budget. He voted against the northern Saskatchewan budget.

We've got extra money going to La Loche, \$11.2 million, and we got new money for . . . from the federal government on the La Loche facility. But we were able to get some money from the feds on the Stony Rapids one. We were able to put in over \$12 million on that Stony Rapids facility, of which over \$8 million was provincial and just over \$3 million was from the federal government. So we were happy to get the federal dollars on that part.

But my point was that on the case of La Loche, all that money that was there, that 11.2 million, 1.2 million was from a local and \$10 million was from the provincial government.

So what I . . . what I'm saying here, Mr. Speaker, is that we've had, in addition to the training programs, we've done very good support in regards to the facilities side. And I might add that on the budget was also the next phase from La Ronge, Stony Rapids, La Loche. Now we will have Ile-a-la-Crosse and the St. Joseph's Hospital.

And I know that it's very, very important for the member of Athabasca, and it's not only his constituency but it is his own town in regards to the St. Joseph's Hospital and we were pleased to announce that on the budget of \$600,000.

So I think that it's very, very important to look at the overall aspect as well of health districts.

I know that the members from across cringe when we talk about the issue of northern control, or First Nations control, or Métis control, and they have a very, very difficult time with that. And when we're talking about northern control this has been a very, very important aspect. Our own people are in the boards. They make the decisions in regards to policy; they make decisions in regards to program development. They are an important part of the health formation, health development, in the history of the North.

And I might say that in that regard not only have they partnered together, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have done partnerships between the three provincial health districts but also with the tribal council authorities. The tribal council signed a memorandum of understanding with the three health districts where they will partner on major issues, whether it is diabetes or other aspects of the development in regards to health services in northern Saskatchewan. So it's a real plus, you know, for a lot of people on the partnerships that they have established in regards to northern development and northern control.

There are other aspects that have been there for . . . and I will list a few in regards to what's been happening.

In addition to the provincial plan, after the commission report, we had a northern health strategy. And a northern health strategy while it composes of many things also includes the primary health care team approach which is very similar throughout the province, but it will have a northern component. We have Cree and Dene speakers in the North, and they will have the cultural aspect of the people up there as well as in regards to northern conditions — the reality of dealing with the various issues there on primary health care.

And also we have a northern and Aboriginal health care provision which I have talked about, in regards to the partnership. We have emergency medical care. We have diabetes education program. We put in 166,000 in regards to that training program.

I might add that, on the training we have looked as well on the emergency medical technicians. Northlands has a program in Buffalo Narrows and also Beauval. We also have a northern health services access program, a northern nursing education program. A lot of the people recognize that it's not only a matter of control for the people of the North, they want to get the professional workers from the North working right into the health hospitals.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet? (14:45)

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, ask for leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and my apologies to the member from Cumberland for the interjection.

I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly a group of 63 students from Prince Albert. Now these students are from Ecole King George Community School. Their MLA, the member from Prince Albert Carlton and the Speaker, is not able to be here to introduce them and has asked me to introduce them to you on his behalf.

So I would want to say to all of the students, welcome to the legislature. I hope that you enjoy your tour and enjoy your time here in Regina.

And I want to, as well, just close by saying welcome to Mrs. T. McShane, Mrs. J. Matice, and Madame C. Elliott. And so welcome to all of you and have a great time down here and a safe trip home.

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

### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

#### Training and Health Care Initiatives for Residents of Northern Saskatchewan

**Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, my last commentary of course related to the health facilities as well as to the importance of northern control on the health boards and the partnerships they've established with the tribal councils as well as on the training. Because on the health professional side, people want to get into that whole area of becoming nurses, LPNs (licensed practical nurse), as well as doctors.

I know that we have a famous Janvier guy from La Loche who was . . . Jack Janvier, who has become a medical doctor. And it was a very, very tremendous sense of pride, you know, for us to be able to have a person, you know, from La Loche, you know, going through the rigorous examinations and going through the whole process and becoming, you know, a medical doctor. And so we're very, very proud of that.

And also from Ile-a-la-Crosse we have Colin McColl who was there, whose mother is actually from Cumberland House, from my hometown, and she's an aunt of mine. And he was also one that grew up in Ile-a-la-Crosse and actually I think knows the member from Athabasca quite well and we stay in touch, you know, quite a bit.

So we're proud of these people. And in many cases, we're moving ahead on the training plan as well.

We're also helping out the staff on recruitment and retention. We had a special retention program for quite a few years now on trying to get our doctors to stay up in the North and also our health professionals.

We build, for example, facilities. It's hard to get rental facilities, in particular to the communities going up to Stony and La Loche, so we . . . and Ile-a-la-Crosse, so we build the centres, residences, you know, for our health staff as they move up North in what's part of the recruitment and retention strategy. There's also other aspects of the recruitment and retention strategy that's there, that's been there for a few years and that continues, and it's an important component.

I remember just a little while ago that the health board was talking about getting special workers from the Philippines and setting them up in La Loche so that they could open their facility on a more 24-hour basis. And it was a very, very important aspect. Therefore, not only looking at the issue in relation to the workforce, of the training of the workforce right within the North, but getting workers up, even from the international sense.

So, Mr. Speaker, the aspect of housing is an important strategy, the facilities, the training, and it is very, very important that as we move forward, the support continues to be very, very strong, you know, in regards to the people in the North.

So, again, I will move my motion and which will be seconded by the member from Regina Wascana Plains again:

That this Assembly advance programs announced in the Throne Speech geared to providing training and promoting better health for citizens of northern Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's certainly a pleasure for me to be able to rise today and support the motion by my colleague from Cumberland in seconding the motion that calls on this Assembly to advance the programs announced in the Throne Speech geared to providing training and promoting better health for citizens of northern Saskatchewan.

Some would ask why a member that represents a constituency in southern Saskatchewan — and a rural/urban constituency at that — would be wanting to readily stand here and support the motion. And it's very clear from the heritage and the history of this government and our party that we stand firmly behind the saying that says that what we wish for ourselves, we would desire for all, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I'm proud to be able to say that, as a government member, we are working to clearly develop the partnership as the member of Cumberland has talked about in addressing the issues that are important to northern Saskatchewan and northern communities and families. And it's very important for us to understand what needs to be done, in particular some of the areas that are mentioned in this motion.

But when we're talking about the health of communities and the training, there is . . . there are many approaches that we are using to address these issues. And our member from Cumberland has talked about a very important one in health.

Last week I did talk at some length about the building to independence strategy and the three-pronged approach to having people who are able to access training dollars to be able to have employment supplements and to have programs that support families and particularly members of northern communities who want to further their education or become active members in the economy. So there are initiatives such as housing as well.

And certainly today we've talked about our plan for economic development and growth in this province and the *Partnership for Prosperity* outlines many, many ways the Department of Economic Development has rallied communities and support for the plans that will help this province move ahead.

And for the northern communities much of that is working with the corporate sector on training opportunities and jobs for people in northern Saskatchewan.

The Throne Speech that I wanted to highlight today outlined the building to independence program that has reduced social assistance caseloads to the lowest level in 10 years by increasing participation in the labour force. Building independence will be expanded during this year to give more families the opportunity for greater participation in the economy.

In the area of housing, through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, my government provides affordable, quality housing to more than 67,000 low-income residents of the province. And with the renewed support of the Government of Canada, a new five-year housing initiative is underway to construct 1,000 additional housing units in urban and northern areas and that will begin this year as well.

One of the government's highest priorities of course is the provision of health care. A renewed, sustainable, publicly administered health care system that is accessible to all. And in the northern areas we're looking at how that approach is developed.

The two health districts, Keewatin Yatthé and Mamawetan Churchill River health districts form the one authority — the Athabasca Health Authority— have seen much movement in the last year with the La Ronge construction of the new hospital that's underway and the hospital in Stony Rapids. The hospital for Ile-a-la-Crosse was recently announced and the northern health districts have received \$27 million over the last three budget years.

That's a long . . . (inaudible) . . . the housing projects that we've talked about and on the side of infrastructure that's so important to healthy communities when we talk about sewer and water projects as well. There's many more dollars that have been put forward by this government to have more installation and security of water supply, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In the area of health the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health

Care is a vehicle that this government plans to use to illustrate its commitment to work in partnership with northern health districts.

In the plan the government and northern communities play equal roles in determining the course of action. This strategy continues to build on the government's overall policy of being inclusive and consensus builders. Now we've heard that in all of the policy areas that we work in — partnerships, consensus building and, of course, overriding everything is the desire to be inclusive in all that we do.

In the strategy the northern stakeholders will make presentation about northern health issues to the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada in June, 2002.

So to the basics of this health plan, the individual and community ownership of health, is very important to us. Respecting the autonomy of individual health districts and the First Nations health authorities is primary. We're going to build on the strengths and create new ones from the framework for a health care delivery system for northern Saskatchewan.

As the Minister of Justice even announced just today that there is the Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities — the New North — who are organizing. And they're organized conferences such as the Northern Justice Symposium. Again the partnerships that develop and the need to be inclusive in all of the things that we are going to do to provide quality of life for northern Saskatchewan.

So the northern health strategy will be no different. It will reflect the intent and the direction and the priorities of the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care and it's encouraged by the reporting of Fyke who said it's very important for us to further the goals of the action plan by developing the northern health strategy.

A very important part of that is to have a holistic approach that considers all facets of health care delivery in the North, including the budget to go with it, the need for partnering and the breaking down of jurisdictional barriers. To that end on February 5 of this year, northern stakeholders presented a proposed budget to the provincial and federal representatives.

Their proposals were met by both levels of government and are being reviewed and discussed. And the member from Cumberland says that the federal government is very interested in furthering the primary health services initiative that will be serving as a framework for the northern health strategy.

The North has incorporated components of the primary health care model in their deliberations, and that includes nurses and their expanding roles, and in a few minutes I'll talk about the nursing initiative that we have for more spaces for nurses, and particularly the northern health nursing strategy.

There's isolated communities that need to be a focal point for health services, and how they will be delivered in areas where there's a vast number of miles where there's little inhabitant, but there are communities that become isolated and we need to, again, be very mindful of inclusiveness in developing the health plan for all.

And the information networks of health providers that are coming together and working together will be very important as they go forward.

Some of the major initiatives that I've noted that are very positive developments for northern Saskatchewan . . . I've mentioned one is the La Roche Health Centre capital project. It'll be completed about November. The grand opening of the facility was scheduled for November of last year. And also the provincial contribution of \$10,013,000 for construction and project-related costs, with the local contribution of \$1,221,000 for land, landscaping, furnishing and equipment. Some major budget contributions to providing health facilities in the North.

Another issue that has been identified, and everyone is coming together and working on, is the diabetes education program. The district has partnered with First Nations in the development of the northern diabetes education program. The district has also indicated a need for additional funding in this area, given the increasing the incidences of diabetes in the North, and also wanting to take a pro-active approach to the issue of diabetes, and the causes. And also the prevention and protection of people.

The two health districts through the co-management process submitted a joint proposal for the prevention of diabetes and received \$166,000 over the last three years. And there are many, many more health initiatives.

I just want to close in highlighting in education the area in our Throne Speech that says:

Saskatchewan's commitment to post-secondary education will also be maintained. Well over 50,000 Saskatchewan students will participate in classes and training programs this year

including:

on . . . job training programs, and . . . Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission programs will continue to be key.

Of particular significance is the growing number of First Nations and Métis students who participate in provincial education and training opportunities. The northern health sciences access program and the northern nursing education program are initiatives that are valuable to increase the number of northerners trained as health professionals in our province. And there's a very impressive list of the capital approvals in the North, not to mention the \$280,000 in provincial funding for training programs, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's also the new training program to create firefighters and so on. This goes on and on.

And so it's very important for me to let everyone understand that I support the initiative and the motion that was presented by our member from Cumberland. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's a pleasure this afternoon to get up and say a few words on the motion brought forward by the member from Cumberland in regards to the lack of initiatives that the provincial government has towards northern Saskatchewan.

Certainly we've heard . . . and this would be, I believe, the 11th Throne Speech of this government or maybe the 12th Throne Speech this government has brought forward. And certainly, every year there's been rhetoric after rhetoric after rhetoric. And today then now, the member from Cumberland has gotten up and says that this Assembly should advance — advance, Mr. Speaker — the programs announced in the Throne Speech.

Well first off, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was no new programs announced in the Throne Speech. There was nothing in the Throne Speech whether you were from western Saskatchewan or you were from eastern Saskatchewan or whether from southern Saskatchewan. And most specifically, there was nothing in the Throne Speech for residents of northern Saskatchewan. In fact, all we had in this speech was more political rhetoric — more political rhetoric.

And what happened is that now this member from Cumberland is getting up and saying that we should congratulate and advance the policies of rhetoric. Well what good is the rhetoric going to do to the people of northern Saskatchewan?

What the people of northern Saskatchewan are demanding, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are jobs. Was there anything in the budget speech or the Throne Speech to indicate jobs for northern Saskatchewan? There was nothing — there was nothing again, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

All we saw in this Throne Speech was a repeat, repeat, repeat for the last 12 throne speeches from this government. When is this government going to get it right and realize that the people of northern Saskatchewan actually do have the initiative to create the opportunities that are necessary for job creation in northern Saskatchewan?

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

(15:00)

**Mr. Wiberg:** — The Throne Speech was also very clear, very clear that it was visionless. We could understand that. The members opposite don't seem to be able to understand that and that this tired and out-of-touch government has absolutely no idea where they're going with . . . to help the people of northern Saskatchewan to be able to create the prosperity that is necessary in order for the people of northern Saskatchewan to become full participants in the 21st century.

Now one of the promises, rhetorical promises that we've heard about, is certainly and was first mentioned by the previous premier, Roy Romanow, at . . . In the 1999 election, that premier at that time promised 10,000 new jobs in northern Saskatchewan — 10,000 new jobs, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well did their record indicate has happened since that point in time?

Well from this side of the House, of course, we stepped back, did the research. What happened in that period of time? Did 10 . . . were 10,000 jobs created? Well actually what we found out



is that there was not 10,000 created . . . there wasn't even 10,000 jobs created in all of Saskatchewan. There wasn't even 10,000 jobs created in all of Saskatchewan.

In fact, since this government came into power, they've lost 12,000 jobs, lost 10,000 people. So how are they supposed to be able to create 10,000 new jobs in northern Saskatchewan when they couldn't even create 10,000 jobs in all of Saskatchewan, in fact, lost 12,000 jobs? Of those 12,000 jobs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how many of those jobs were lost in northern Saskatchewan? I think that's the point that needs to be discussed at this point.

The member from Cumberland got up and said we need to advance the Throne Speech and encourage the government to advance its policies in the Throne Speech to help northern Saskatchewan.

But we don't want this government helping northern Saskatchewan any more than they already have. Because what they've done for northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is lost 5,000 jobs. Five thousand jobs were lost in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. How is this supposed to be a help to northern Saskatchewan?

Well on this side of the House we get it. They did not help northern Saskatchewan. In fact the people of northern Saskatchewan have actually come up with a term, they've come up with a term, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that clearly outlines how little help that they've gotten from this NDP government. That term, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is legislated poverty.

They believe very clearly in their minds in northern Saskatchewan that this government has a clear program of legislative poverty so that the people of northern Saskatchewan cannot enjoy the economic benefits that should be attainable in northern Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member from Cumberland, the member from Regina Wascana Plains, has talked about health initiatives in northern Saskatchewan. Well maybe what they should have done is take a trip into northern Saskatchewan — that's what they should have done, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and they would have been able to have a clear understanding of the health issues of northern Saskatchewan.

Now the members on this side of the House have done that. We have gone to northern Saskatchewan en masse — en masse, Mr. Deputy Speaker — to help us understand the issues that are facing the people of northern Saskatchewan. And one of those issues is health care, is health care, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Members on this side of the House have toured the health facilities. We've toured the hospitals in northern Saskatchewan, and we were appalled — appalled, Mr. Deputy Speaker — at what we found when it comes to health initiatives in northern Saskatchewan by this NDP government.

We have gone into health facilities. We have gone into hospitals. And we have observed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, first-hand, the lack of response by this NDP government to the health care issues of northern Saskatchewan.

We have been in health care facilities where they have actually had equipment brought in for them from southern Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that required repairs — used equipment that actually required repairs — so that when the equipment showed up, medical equipment showed up in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what was required was the first thing is that they had to send it away to be fixed so that they could even use it.

So what kind of an initiative is that where money is being expended by this NDP government on health care in this province and what is required is they can't even use the equipment in northern Saskatchewan because it's not even usable?

So the residents of northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are running out of enthusiasm for supporting this government in any future endeavours. In fact what we know is that this government, through one of their so-called, so-called initiatives, is they've created a committee in the North called new north development corporation.

This new north development corporation is made up of the 35 northern communities, leaders from those northern communities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And these leaders from northern Saskatchewan took their responsibility seriously. They took this responsibility very seriously, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They thought that the government was actually very concerned about the lack of initiatives that were going on in northern Saskatchewan.

And so then what they decided to do is that, if these northern leaders were going to be involved in a committee, let's actually do something that will help promote, help promote, help promote the initiatives and the opportunities that could be taking place in northern Saskatchewan.

And so they've done that. They've formed subcommittees and what these subcommittees did was examine the opportunities that could take place in northern Saskatchewan. The subcommittees reported to the larger committee what could take place in northern Saskatchewan. The larger committee sent a delegation down to Regina.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, again the people of northern Saskatchewan have come across what they have traditionally come across in . . . when they meet with the officials and the government ministers from this NDP government, is a stone wall.

Here was a group of individuals, a group of individuals concerned about their communities in northern Saskatchewan, concerned about the people of northern Saskatchewan and the lack of opportunities that has made . . . that has been made available to them.

So when they took on this initiative with all the care and concern that northern residents have for themselves and each other and brought those concerns to Regina, they brought them to Regina, Mr. Deputy Speaker, met this government at a round table — they called it a round table, Mr. Deputy Speaker — where they could sit down and clearly, clearly enunciate the problems in northern Saskatchewan and the initiatives, the

initiatives that they would like to see take place that would benefit the people of northern Saskatchewan.

But again it was a no go, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government was only talking about rhetoric. They did not mean that they wanted to help the people of Saskatchewan. They just wanted the people of Saskatchewan to actually think maybe they might be doing something.

And so when we looked at the, at the motion by the member from Cumberland, we thought it was a little short-sighted. So what we decided to do is we have a motion here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the following be added after northern Saskatchewan.

This would be moved by myself and the . . . seconded by the member from Shellbrook-Spiritwood:

That the following be added after "Northern Saskatchewan":

and urges the provincial government to adopt a concrete strategy to improve the economy of northern communities and to improve the lives of northern residents instead of repeating the empty rhetoric we have heard from this government for over a decade when it comes to northern issues.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand before this House today to speak about northern issues.

And as my colleague mentioned before, about knowing the issues of northern Saskatchewan, you have to go up there and talk to the people up there to realize exactly . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I'm having difficulty hearing the member. Order.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Once again, it's a pleasure to second the motion put forth by the member from Saskatchewan Rivers in regarding northern affairs and the health of northern people up in the North.

As I was saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member from Saskatchewan Rivers attended meetings up in northern Saskatchewan and I also attended them. And living up there and having the problems that northern Saskatchewan people have, only people up in the North realize that the people in the South don't understand the problems that we have in the North.

In fact even the government opposite, the NDP government, doesn't understand the problems of the North especially when it comes to health care.

I was amused, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the comments from the member from Cumberland. And the member from Cumberland stood up in his place and talked about the old PC government and he referred to us on this side as Conservatives.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know and everybody knows, we are not the old PC government. We have members in our House that are Liberals. But every time the member from Cumberland

stands in the House, he always reverts back to the PC members. He spends more time talking about the government of the '80s than he does about the year 2000. He should be talking about what's in the year 2000 and what his people need in this province to go forward, especially in health care. But he continues to revert back to the past.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the waters under the bridge have flown down the river a long way, and it's time that member stopped thinking about the past and get on with the future. Because the people of the province of Saskatchewan and in the North need his voice to address the problems of the North, and he's not doing it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when he refers to the PC government of the '80s and he talks about all the good things that the '90s did under the NDP rule, well let me refer back to a thing that was in the paper, the Regina *Leader-Post*, and it's the Kitsaki Management Corporation, and it's under the leadership of Chief Harry Cook and Ray McKay. And I would just to make a comment out of it. And it says:

Within the past 20 years . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're going back 20 years. Now that's the same time as the member from Cumberland is talking about the PC government.

(And) Within the past 20 years, the Lac La Ronge First Nation has built an impressive corporation with multi-million dollar operations that employs hundreds of people in the community.

It also goes on to say:

The (member) . . . accomplished this feat by creating Kitsaki Management Corporation. The corporation's philosophy is simple: partner with successful businesses, and have interests in (various) . . . of businesses. That way . . . one sector's profits are down, (the) other sectors . . . make up the difference.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what I wanted to say was, it started 20 years ago. That's what got the Lac La Ronge area going in a positive direction. It had nothing to do with the NDP under thumb rule that they've been putting forth in the North for many, many years.

I would like to talk about the health districts now. And in the ventures that myself, the member from Saskatchewan Rivers and other members, including our leader, the member from Rosetown-Biggan, we ventured up north. We went into the Athabasca area; we also went into the Cumberland area. And when we were in the Athabasca area and talking to people up there, we had a brief meeting with the CEO (chief executive officer) of the health district.

And you know what's frustrating with the members up there, especially the CEO at that time? Was the fact that two years ago all districts had a deficit budget, every health district had a deficit budget. But you know something? In Athabasca region under this CEO, they did not have a deficit budget. They had . . . they had a balanced budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And you know something, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They are frustrated because you know something, at the end of the year when all these deficit budgets in the health region were let known, the people from the North in the Athabasca region suffered. Do you know why? Because our NDP government balanced off all the deficits in the health budget.

(15:15)

Well what about the poor people from Athabasca? They cut and they cut and they cut services to make sure they run a balanced budget. And yet the NDP government stood here and paid off all the other deficits in that budget. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that CEO of that health district was just fuming.

It's no wonder when you go to the North and you talk to the people of the North, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and we've been there, as the member from Saskatchewan Rivers said we have, and talked to them — when they start talking about regions in Saskatchewan, there are three: there's urban, there's rural, and there's northern. And the people from the South don't understand what's happening in the North.

And yet the members from Cumberland and Athabasca very seldom get up in this House and say what they need as far as getting the province of Saskatchewan growing and incorporating the people of the North.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the health regions that's up there, as the member from Saskatchewan Rivers said, you wouldn't believe what the people up there live with. It's incredible. And these members opposite do not understand what's going on up there. They haven't got a clue.

I would also like to refer back to the documentation that was put forth by the Kitsaki Management Corporation under the leadership of Chief Harry Cook. And I would wish that the members opposite would understand where Chief Harry Cook is coming from. He's a remarkable man, he's an excellent leader, and he would do wonders to help promote the North, but the people on that side under the NDP rule seem to think that they have to have the control of the North.

Well the reason that the La Ronge area is going positively forward, Mr. Speaker, is due to these two people: Chief Harry Cook and Ray McKay. They have abandoned the NDP rule about ownership and said the heck with it, we don't need them, we want the government to stay out of our face. Let us go forward. And that is what they're doing.

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

**Mr. Allchurch:** — You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I looked through the Throne Speech to see where the member from Cumberland was coming up with his idea about promoting health care in the province of Saskatchewan. And I looked through the Throne Speech and I found where it said Saskatchewan is a leader, a national leader, in providing training geared to Aboriginal students — often delivered through Aboriginal and northern training institutions.

The northern health science access program and the northern nursing education program are incentives that will be valuable

to increase the number of northerners training as health professionals in this province.

Well you know something, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a positive. But that's the same thing that was in last year's budget and the year before budget. It's the same rehash over and over and over. When is the NDP government, instead of promising things, going to start doing things, Mr. Speaker?

That's what the northern people of Saskatchewan want. They want the NDP government to start doing in the North what they're asking them.

And so therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to say that I've been to the North. I understand some of the problems; I don't understand all of them. But I know that the people up in northern Saskatchewan need this government to start going forward with the proposals that's going to help the northern people, not only in health care but all other care situations in the province of Saskatchewan.

I am pleased to second the motion put forth by the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

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

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I would like to take great pleasure today, stand up today to say one thing to the opposition critics: you're fired.

The bottom line here, Mr. Speaker, is every time . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. Order. As the member knows, all comments are to the . . . Order. Order. All members, all members know that comments are to the Chair and through the Chair.

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would point out, Mr. Chair, that they're fired, Mr. Speaker, as northern affairs critic.

Because every time they stand up here and pretend to care for the North and cry these crocodile tears, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out what their leader said about northern Saskatchewan, about Northern Affairs, and the role that the northern governments play when it comes to the design of health and of training for this great province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

What does he say? And I quote, Mr. Speaker, from an article that the La Ronge *Northerner* . . . And the quote is:

The Sask Party reps were also questioned about whether the Department of Northern Affairs would still exist if they formed government and about how their views on trimming the civil service are going to go over with government employees. The answer? Likely not.

Mr. Speaker, I say again that they're fired. And every time they get up, once every 1,000 days and pretend to cry these crocodile tears for northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Chair, I would say to them that you're not fooling northern Saskatchewan people. You insult their intelligence when you get up and you talk about what role that they play and how you care so much about

northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They have never cared, and they will never care, Mr. Speaker.

And they make reference to one of the most exciting employment and training institutions in northern Saskatchewan and that is the Kitsaki Development Corporation.

And what did they do, Mr. Speaker? When they're in power, their provincial cousins the Tories, Mr. Speaker, their rate of making sure Northerners were trained and Northerners were working at the mining sites, 50 per cent of Northerners, when they're in power, were working at some of these northern mines then, Mr. Speaker. And plus, Mr. Speaker, \$20 million in contracts for northern Saskatchewan people.

Now what happened, Mr. Speaker, what happened was when the Northern Affairs portfolio was designed and the member from Cumberland House came along and we said it is time for economic and social justice for the people of the North, we will train northern Saskatchewan people. What happened, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chair? It went from \$20 million in contracts for northern Saskatchewan people to 200 million, Mr. Speaker. And we went from 500 employees in northern Saskatchewan to 1,000 employees, Mr. Speaker. Now that is economic and social justice.

And what do they say? Northern Affairs likely will be cut. So now they stand up here and they criticize what economic and what employment opportunities and training opportunities exist for the North, much less health, Mr. Speaker.

And I would point out, Mr. Speaker, \$30 million in three years and that's a lot of commitment in northern Saskatchewan. And what did they put in, Mr. Speaker? A big fat zero, Mr. Speaker. The PC government of the '80s, the twin cousins to the Sask Party, have not and will never commit to northern Saskatchewan.

We stood here and we opened La Loche's hospital, Mr. Speaker. We are going to open Stony Rapids' hospital. La Ronge has their hospital. Ile-a-la-Crosse is slated next. Other communities — Beauval, Buffalo Narrows — they're all slated to be served, finally, when it comes to health services and health facilities, Mr. Speaker. And it's on this side of the House that we're putting our money where our mouth is, Mr. Speaker.

And I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that it took a great amount of effort, it took a great amount of effort. And unfortunately, the Minister of Health and I could not attend La Loche's grand opening. We were here in the Assembly listening to some of the reports about Fyke, Mr. Speaker.

The Fyke report, we were both members of that committee and we're sitting here, fighting for more health services for northern Saskatchewan so we couldn't even go attend La Loche's grand opening because we were here fighting for more services for northern Saskatchewan.

And I want to publicly thank, Mr. Speaker, the member who was once the minister of Health, the member from Saskatoon Mount Royal, the member from Yorkton and, most important, Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Eastview. And these three ministers served as the Minister of Health and they

forwarded many northern health issues. And they're the ones, Mr. Speaker — not those members opposite — they're the ones that made a difference in making sure that the North got their fair share of some of the hospital construction that is necessary to make sure health care was on top of the list.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, we have the current member, the current Minister of Health, he's doing a tremendous amount of work to champion northern causes, Mr. Speaker. And those guys want to shut down Northern Affairs; they're crying crocodile tears. I'll tell you the Nile is not just a river in Egypt, it is actually a state of mind.

And that member gets up from Saskatchewan Rivers . . . I say to him, you're fired. And the member gets up from Shellbrook-Spiritwood, you're fired too because your leader said there's no more . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order, Order. All members direct comments to the Chair and through the Chair.

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, they're fired because their leader said no more Northern Affairs. The North has not and will never register on the Saskatchewan Party, the former Tory Party — they are cousins, they are bonded by blood and that's who they support, Mr. Speaker, and that's who they are.

There's no question, Mr. Speaker, the North has specific challenges. There's diabetes, there's much injury, there's many preventative measures that are necessary in northern Saskatchewan.

We have to recognize, Mr. Speaker, that the North needs to be served. It needs to be served. And what we don't need is silly, petty politics being played by the members opposite, crying crocodile tears when they never have and they never will care about the North. And the people will not be fooled, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Fyke Commission got up and very clearly . . . the Fyke commissioner got up and said, we support, we support the three-board system in northern Saskatchewan. And we support a four-hospital system in northern Saskatchewan. And we support greater service and better access to northern people.

And this government, Mr. Speaker, got up and they said yes, we will follow through with those commitments. And yes, we will make sure the North is being represented and treated fairly. And yes, we will see construction happen, Mr. Speaker.

Now what's really amazing to me, Mr. Speaker, is those members get up and they say, oh, the North's not being served. Well I would say to you, every time that you stand up and you say the North's not being served or you criticize the North, maybe you talk to your leader, and tell their leader to decide whether Northern Affairs is an important aspect of government or it is not. And whether northern Saskatchewan counts, or it doesn't, Mr. Chair. Very important.

They should put their money where their mouth is. There's great profits being made — greater profits will be made, Mr. Speaker. And I will say to the Popsicle party across the way, last election they said oh, we're going to freeze health care;

we're going to freeze education; no more training; no more spending on health care. And as our former premier said, zap, you're frozen.

Our Premier today stands up and says the North will be served. The North will be served, and the North shall receive benefits. Mr. Speaker, that party across the way . . . every time they stand up crying crocodile tears, the North has one thing to say to you: is you're not fooling us; you will never fool us . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. Order. All comments to the Chair and through the Chair. No referring directly to members in the opposition.

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's very important to point out that on this side of the House we have a consistent message.

In the last 10 years we have made great progress. We are standing side by side with our First Nations supporters, we are standing side by side with many Métis community leaders, we're standing side by side by many of the professionals. And we're going to work together to make sure that there's health delivery, Mr. Speaker, to every corner of this province. And on this side of the Assembly, our Saskatchewan includes northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll point out absolutely everybody — from the air ambulance services to the nurses to the doctors that serve northern Saskatchewan people — I commend them because they had the vision and they had the care for their fellow man to travel to the North to provide that much-needed service. There's great training going on, Mr. Speaker, to get more of the Aboriginal people in the North involved with the health care field, and that work will be ongoing.

And what do we hear from those guys, Mr. Speaker? Crocodile tears and zap, you're frozen. Well, Mr. Speaker, the people of the North don't buy Saskatchewan Rivers member's argument; nor do they buy Shellbrook and Spiritwood. Because they're all taken care of — they come from one of the richest areas in the province — yet they stand up, they pretend to care, and the North will not have anything to do about it.

Mr. Speaker, furthermore we look at some of the arguments that they bring forward. We have 25-year leases with the Weyerhaeuser company; we have multi-year leases with a number of other companies in this province. We got agreements with casinos, exhibition associations.

And what does that party do, Mr. Speaker? They get up and they criticize the First Nations agreement. Now we are going to ask the Saskatchewan Party, make up your mind; stop riding the fence; show some leadership. Get your act together with your leader to get a clear, consistent message to the people of Saskatchewan.

And what I will say to you is, don't go north; you're wasting your time. They know there's only one party that cares and only one party that's going to build, and that's this NDP government, Mr. Speaker.

So I stand today in proud support of the motion from the

member from Cumberland House.

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

**Ms. Julé:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's with a great deal of amusement that I stand here and have just finished listening to the rant from the member from Athabasca.

Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I recall just a couple of years back when that member stood with the Liberals on this side of the House and absolutely, absolutely condemned the NDP government for their shabby treatment of the North.

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

(15:30)

**Ms. Julé:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, that member from Athabasca put forward his absolute disdain for this NDP government on their negligence in dealing with issues in the North such as poor roads, child poverty, social housing, poor hospitals, and also condemned this government — his own NDP government — for perpetuating the welfare system in the North that kept people in dependency, kept them down there in poverty row, and did not give them an opportunity to enhance themselves or their lives.

So, Mr. Speaker, the same holds true for today. There is a hospital being remodelled, built at La Loche. There are a couple of initiatives — no doubt about it — and we applaud that. But let's face it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by and large the North is still in terrible, terrible condition, and this government of this day, this NDP government, has a long, long way to go in order to honour and respect the people of the North.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to bring forward just another time, one of the things that's happening right now today. If we want to look at what the NDP government is doing to enhance training in the North or to pay no attention to training in the North, I think they have to look at one more time, at the Minister of Agriculture. And I think that the members opposite should be talking to the Minister of Agriculture.

I think they should be asking him about what training opportunities there are for First Nations people in this province under the commonwealth migrant workers program. Because that Minister of Agriculture today has an opportunity to be bringing the FSIN people to the table to talk about including them in training opportunities for the province.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is known that the federal government, the provincial government, and the FSIN were supposed to be at the table to negotiate training opportunities for all people in this province, including First Nations people. It is also well known that the first meeting went by and the Minister of Agriculture did not call First Nations people to the table to discuss their opportunities here for training.

It is also known by myself and a couple of other people in the First Nations community that they tried to arrange a meeting with that minister on April 6 and that minister cancelled the meeting. And that is what has happened. And he said that he was going to have the meeting further on. Well we're at the end

of April — it's April 30 today — and to my knowledge and from the information I've been getting that meeting has not been yet set up.

So, Mr. Minister of Agriculture, I challenge you to go ahead with that and to show your dedication and your sincere respect for First Nations people who are desperately in need of training.

So, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd also like to mention this article from the April 5 edition of *The Star Phoenix* in Saskatoon. It was written by Mr. Doug Cuthand. And the headline associated with this article, "Budget ignores special needs of Sask. Natives." And here's some of the excerpts from this article, Mr. Speaker, Aboriginal communities in Saskatchewan currently have "the highest rate of tuberculosis in the country."

In Saskatchewan, 87 per cent of all TB cases are aboriginal, compared to 60 per cent of those in Manitoba and 28 per cent of the cases in Alberta.

And he goes on to talk about his concern for the high infection rate. But he says:

But . . . (Saskatchewan's) statistics . . . reflect . . . (that) poverty, unemployment and poor housing which afflict many First Nations and Métis communities (is a major problem).

He also says that he's very disappointed in the provincial government. He says, "we need some special programming if we are to attack" that issue that is very "unique" to our province.

But what did we get in this budget from the provincial NDP government? The government response was, no help for that; there is no special government programming.

Mr. Cuthand says:

And we have institutions such the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies which are looking for partnerships with government. But the government response was zero.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are some actual facts that have taken place just recently. I don't think we need to look back into the '80s and I don't think we need to take a bunch of rhetoric about promises that never come true. We need to look at what is happening today and the government . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Sorry, the member's time has expired.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** — There's now a 10-minute period for questions and comments.

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have a question for the member from Cumberland, that it was mentioned on more than one occasion on the other side of the

House that employment in northern Saskatchewan has increased under the Department of Northern Affairs. And I'd like the member from Cumberland to help understand how employment has risen by explaining to us the unemployment rate in the northern village of La Loche.

**Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Speaker, the member over there talks about unemployment rates. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was devastating under the right-wing Grant Devine government.

When we went in, Mr. Speaker, in answer to that question, we moved the mining employment rate from approximately 20 per cent, approximately rising about 500 workers to approximately 1,000 workers, Mr. Speaker — 1,000 workers — 85 per cent of which were Aboriginal people.

Now when there were Tories, they did not like the program on affirmative action lease agreements. They were against it. This side of the government supports that lease agreement. On forestry, for the first time in history, we have lease agreements with First Nations people — with the five Métis communities up on the west side, with the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, with also Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. You would never, ever, ever see that with the Tories.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's the answer that I give to that member.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question is to the member for Humboldt. She spoke today about partnerships with Aboriginal groups. I'm still not completely sure that I understand their party's position or her caucus's position in terms of the partnership in Indian gaming and I would appreciate it if she could highlight whether or not she supports such.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, to that member, I have mentioned before in this House that the members opposite are absolute masters at diverting from the issue at hand. And this day it is not going to work.

We are not talking about gaming today. We were talking about training and we were talking about health issues — training and health issues.

This side of the House has put forward clearly what our views are on training. What we have put forward today is our views on whether the NDP has been responsibly addressing health issues pertaining to First Nations people and particularly in the North.

So the member is just itching to get up there again. I believe in partnership. We have made that statement very clearly. But we believe in responsible partnerships and we believe that before that happens there should be a great deal of in-depth research and knowledge before those things happen.

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the three so-called rants that were brought forth by the members from the NDP party — and certainly there was just a lot of rhetoric — they talked a lot about the . . . what has happened in northern Saskatchewan since the NDP has taken power in this province. They have talked about what the Department of

Northern Affairs has accomplished in northern Saskatchewan since its inception in 1997. And certainly what we heard also was the health initiatives, the health initiatives, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that have taken place in this province in northern Saskatchewan since this NDP government has come to power.

And certainly the member from Regina Wascana Plains talked about the diabetes in northern Saskatchewan. So I would like to hear from the member from Regina Wascana Plains of some further elucidation on the diabetes initiatives in northern Saskatchewan.

**Ms. Hamilton:** — All right. Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I thank the members opposite for the question. But when we're talking about what we're saying in this House, they don't want to be reminded of the past that so many of their members represent in the areas of what was done in the '80s. And they want to talk about the programs and services that were going to be handled to date.

And so for northern Saskatchewan it's very important that we decide to put forward in our Throne Speech, in our budget, many, many good initiatives. They don't want to discuss those initiatives, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I've talked about building independence, I've talked about employment strategies for the North and health care for the North. And I'm very proud that all our members sit down and discuss those strategies and have been able to put them forward today. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Goulet:** — Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to ask a supplemental question to the member from Humboldt.

I think she's trying to duck the question. She's trying to duck the question. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question on gaming is part of the economic development strategy.

I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, we built the community hall from SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) dollars in my constituency. So therefore it's part of northern development.

Why is it that that member ducks this question? Why is it that she talks about trying to get away from dependency? SIGA itself provides 1,200 jobs, 70 per cent Aboriginal people. It is part of pride in this province; it's part of moving against dependency.

Now that member says she's against dependency, but all of their members were against SIGA. Why are they still against SIGA? What is their real position?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order, order, order. I'd just remind the House that this is a 10-minute question and comment period, so it is fair to make comments relating to the motion but it is not fair to ask questions directly to members unless that member has raised it in the speech. Now the member can reply if he or she wishes, but they're not compelled to. So that's my ruling to the member for Cumberland.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Deputy Chair, I didn't have the opportunity to become involved in the debate but I was listening with interest to the member from Regina Wascana and her concerns about diabetes. And yet,

when the question was asked, it seemed that the member didn't have any real thoughts on this issue.

Mr. Chair, I think that when we're looking at health care in northern Saskatchewan, it's a huge issue. It's something that everyone should care about deeply.

And when we have a member that wasn't . . . couldn't answer the question on diabetes when the . . . when the next thought was . . . continuing on her thought process on diabetes. I really would like the member now to stand and tell us what she thinks her government is doing and will do for the many people in northern Saskatchewan who are suffering from the . . . from a condition, from diabetes, that is just something that is wrecking lives all over this province.

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As in all of the programs I talked about, we're developing the northern health strategy in partnership with the districts. And in partnership with them, there's a co-management process in place that I talked about earlier. And they submitted a joint proposal for the prevention of diabetes and they received \$166,000 over the next three years for demonstration sites to develop their proposal called, working toward a brighter tomorrow.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was saying that when we're talking about all of the things we've done — this was mentioned earlier in my speech — the member opposite obviously didn't really tune in when we were saying that, in partnership with others, when a proposal comes forward, we'd be glad to address it.

It's very, very important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well through the education processes, to talk with children and to put forward prevention and promotion strategies on healthy diets, healthy initiatives towards the prevention of diabetes. And we're also going there. So there are many . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member's time has expired. I recognize the member from Regina South.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question is the member for Shellbrook-Spiritwood who spoke at some length about the role that his party had in terms of developing the North, the vision that they had. I find it interesting that, you know, this approach that he has and yet . . . when I hear nothing from their party and there's nothing in their platform that they talk about.

I would appreciate it very much if he could stand up today and tell us what his leader will do for northern Saskatchewan. What will his leader do in terms of protecting Aboriginal people? What will they do exactly in terms of the Indian gaming agreement? What are they going to do for northern health care? What are they going to do that is in their platform for Aboriginal people and people in northern Saskatchewan today? That's what I ask the member for Shellbrook-Spiritwood, an hon. member, to stand and tell us today.

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll tell you exactly what our platform's going to be . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order, order. The 75-minute debate and 10-minute question/comment period has expired.

### PRIVATE BILLS

#### SECOND READINGS

##### **Bill No. 302 — The Sunnyside Nursing Home Amendment Act, 2002**

**Ms. Jones:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move Bill 302, The Sunnyside Nursing Home Amendment Act, 2002 be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

##### **Bill No. 303 — The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities Amendment Act, 2002**

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And before I move the motion, I would like to make a few remarks about the Bill before us.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, SARM, is an organization known for its leadership in providing services to its 297 member municipalities and its dedication to preserving rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, SARM has a long history of successfully providing a number of services to its member municipalities, including a trading department for the provision of office and other supplies to municipalities; a petroleum product buyers group that allows municipalities to bulk purchase fuel at reduced prices; legal services and insurance services.

Mr. Speaker, SARM has recently requested authority to expand the services it provides to its member municipalities by offering a self-insured property insurance program. This program will provide property insurance coverage for property owned by SARM and by its member municipalities. Mr. Speaker, this is a service that will be offered only to SARM members.

A self-insured property insurance program will complement the present insurance programs now offered by SARM. The property insurance program will operate in the same manner as SARM's present liability insurance program.

Mr. Speaker, with the proposed amendments to SARM's Act, member municipalities will be able to voluntarily purchase property insurance through SARM, and these municipalities will be able to take advantage of the risk experience of rural municipalities rather than paying premiums based on national or international risk experiences.

Rural municipalities want a property insurance program that is specifically designed for the needs of rural municipalities. With open market products, Mr. Speaker, RMs (rural municipality) are unable to do this and they feel the premiums they're paying far exceed the costs for their claims. For example, Mr. Speaker, for the years 1997 to 2000 there were approximately 40

property insurance claims annually, with a loss-to-premium ratio of approximately 33 per cent.

Since SARM's property insurance program will be designed especially for municipal needs and the risk of large claims will be relatively low, RMs feel the potential premium savings will be significant.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as with liability insurance program, SARM will create a reserve fund for the property insurance program that would be used to pay claims against the program. This fund, Mr. Speaker, will be backed by the financial resources of each and every municipality enrolled in the program.

We have seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that SARM has been able to successfully self-insure for liability purposes and we feel the association will be able to successfully run a property insurance program for its members.

Mr. Speaker, last year this legislature made changes to The Rural Municipality Act, 1989 to provide municipalities with the authority to create municipal districts if they so desired. Municipal districts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, can be made up of rural or urban municipalities but the character of the district will remain rural.

This Bill proposes further amendments to SARM's Act that will permit municipal districts to become a member of SARM and participate in its programs and services.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the amendments proposed by this Bill are in the best interests of all rural municipalities and should be supported by all members of the Assembly.

Therefore with that in mind, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would move Bill No. 303, The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities Amendment Act, 2002, be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

#### **Motion No. 7 — Fees For Long-Term Care**

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Speaker . . . or, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to stand in this Assembly and move a motion to speak to . . . a motion regarding long-term care fees in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now I'm sure that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that as you read the motion, many members — especially government members — might suggest that really it is a motion that is maybe inappropriate after yesterday's comments. But I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will find that there are still a number of concerns that are being raised in regards to long-term care fees and the fee structure, and especially the way the government has come forward and how open and accountable that they have been with the public of Saskatchewan.



Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the government brought forward its budget a number of weeks ago and they talked about increasing the fees for long-term care patients in the province of Saskatchewan, at the time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they led the people of Saskatchewan to believe that it was just a very few individuals — very few, if you will, what you would term wealthy individuals in the province of Saskatchewan — who would actually face the brunt of this fee increase, and that the majority of people would basically see no increases whatsoever.

However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we've seen over the past number of weeks, that simply wasn't true. It simply wasn't forthright with the public of Saskatchewan. And as we dug . . . dug deeper into the whole concept of the fee increases — and in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, even spoke to the Department of Health and had a breakdown of what these fee increases would, would mean to the public of Saskatchewan — it wasn't 122 seniors that the government was talking about that would be directly or mainly affected by these increases. But indeed, Mr. Speaker, some two-thirds of long-term care patients in the province of Saskatchewan were going to be affected by the increases.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government over the past few weeks has talked about caring for the poor, about the poverty level and the poverty lines in the province of Saskatchewan. And one has to ask themselves, well what . . . who does the government consider as being poor or falling within the realm of the poverty levels and are barely scraping by? Is it someone making \$10,000 a year? Are they poor? I would suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, based on the costs most people face, we would all consider that that person or individual or family is facing having a very low income and struggling to survive.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you looked at the criteria of this rate increase, even . . . you would have to say that actually we bumped up the level of what we could . . . would consider the poverty line to somewhere in the \$20,000 range. And even then anyone just slightly above that would still fall into a bracket of being considered poor because based on the rate increases, the structured rate increases would take effect as soon as your monthly income went over \$1,000 a month.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my colleagues and I have, over the past number of years, have had family members call our offices — even at the old fee structure — and ask, what are we going to do, there's nothing left in my parents' or my mother's account? By the time you take out the old age security and the supplements, there's nothing left there. In fact, we as family members have to pick up some of the costs.

Because when we talk about costs of taking care of residents in seniors centres, Mr. Deputy . . . or Mr. Speaker, we're not just talking about the costs that are incurred by the . . . that individual taking up that bed and the care that's given to them, providing for them, looking after their daily needs, providing the food, the shelter. We're talking, Mr. Speaker, as well, of just ongoing personal needs that come out of the pockets of these individuals.

And, Mr. Speaker, through the years, time and time and time again, family members have found that their parents have had . . . not had any resources — especially some of the more senior

residents of our province. Many, many of these individuals who in some cases actually moved to Canada, came as immigrants to this country, worked diligently and worked hard to raise a family, and didn't have the second source of income that we have . . . we see most families, most couples today finding themselves, where both individuals are working and so there's two sources of income.

They were . . . they had that single source of income. Some of them were small-business people; others were raised on farms and really didn't have the opportunity to build up any kind of a savings account, and worked very hard because they believed in this province, to build this province, and to build for their future with the idea that if push come to shove and they actually needed this care and the services that they worked hard for, that they would be there for them and that they wouldn't have every dollar taken out of their pocket by a health system that they had worked so hard to build.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, as we saw in the past and as we're seeing today, the government in its changes to the fee structures actually went and started digging deeper and deeper into the pockets of our seniors.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we applauded the Premier yesterday when the Premier got up in this Assembly and addressed the question that was posed by the Leader of the Opposition, and the Premier basically said that he was going to put everything on hold. He thought it was appropriate to put everything on hold because they began to consult with people, they began to consult with individuals across this province.

They just nicely started receiving letters in their offices and phone calls to their offices from individuals and seniors across this province, and family members who found themselves being put in a real bind as a result of this initiative by this government.

And so the Premier basically said:

“What I've heard very clearly from the public is these changes have brought about at least a perception (and I find that interesting, he says, a perception) — and in some cases a reality — of significant change at (to those with) more modest incomes . . .”

And I'm quoting from the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* of Monday or Tuesday the 30th.

Mr. Speaker, a perception? I don't think that the family members and the seniors who sat down and started looking a lot more closely at their incomes and what the fee increases were going to mean to them, I don't think they were just saying this is a . . . we perceive this is what is going to happen.

The facts are, as they looked over the chart, as they plugged in their monthly income, they could see exactly what was going to happen. It wasn't a perception any more, it was a reality. And I find it interesting the Premier would talk about this, that some preconceived notion that we're going to be actually stealing from the seniors to provide for their care.

Mr. Speaker, we all know what has happened over the last

month. We know that over the last month as individuals, as family members — and I've had family members call because of the concern of the costs that were spiralling for a relative — they called my office, and my colleagues have had calls, and we've had letters to our offices.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, just recently I think it was the Minister of Health suggested that we should send the letters over to him because he hadn't seen any of the letters — when a lot of the letters we were receiving, Mr. Speaker, were actually coming . . . we were cc'd (carbon copy) copies of letters that went to the Premier or letters that went to the Minister of Health.

And these weren't letters that just went in the last few days or didn't just arrive on the Premier's desk on Saturday or Sunday of this past weekend, Mr. Speaker. They've been there for a while because we've had the letters in our possession for a while.

(16:00)

And what does that say, Mr. Speaker? It tells you that the public of Saskatchewan, whether they're young or old or possibly individuals who unfortunately due to health related problems find themselves in a care centre, can understand when the government starts digging into their pockets and asking for more when all along they thought that this government cared about them; that this government was going to provide for them and meet their needs; that medicare and the NDP, wrapping itself in the flag of medicare, meant that they would be looked after when they needed assistance.

Through their productive years they provided to the coffers of this province to provide health care to those in need. And when they came to a position of finding themselves in need they expected that that same courtesy would be given to them — that they would be provided for; that they wouldn't be asked at the end of the day, oh I'm sorry, it's costing us a little more and our budget is a little tight and we're not exactly sure where we're going to find the money so we're going to have to come to you because seniors in this province have too much money.

Mr. Speaker, I find that very callous and I believe over the past month we've seen for a good period of time there were a lot of calluses that were building up on the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, on the Health minister and on the Premier as they just seemed to shrug off the fact that this is just a minute issue; nobody really cares.

But as of yesterday or as of this weekend and as of . . . from the Premier's comments, it's quite obvious, Mr. Speaker, that there were a lot of people in this province that care; a lot of people that came to my colleagues and I. And we weren't just dreaming up a story; we were bringing first-hand, first related incidents of the hardships that would be created for individuals.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier indicated that this policy would be on hold and the government would likely outline a new fee schedule policy within 10 to 14 days . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . My colleague says 7 to 10 but I'm reading from *The StarPhoenix*. And possibly that maybe the reports weren't . . . didn't catch the Premier's comments. But they did

catch somebody else's comments in regard to the debate here and the callousness of individuals . . . is the Premier's comments, it says in *The StarPhoenix*, were:

. . . were in stark contrast to the steadfast defence of the policy that began on budget day, when the government claimed only 127 seniors would face the maximum charge of \$3,875 a month . . .

And I quote from the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix*:

Even as recently as Friday, Highways Minister Mark Wartman bellowed from his seat during question period: "I am not ashamed. It's the right thing to do."

Is that what this government believed — that it's the right thing to do? To take from . . . And the member from Regina Qu'Appelle says the same thing. He . . . (inaudible) . . . he obviously believes it. And it's quite obvious that most of the members across that . . . on that side of the Assembly believe the same thing.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, it's very appropriate that this motion come forward. Because, Mr. Speaker, while this . . . the changes are put on hold, Mr. Speaker, one has to ask, what will the review come forward with? What will the Saskatchewan . . . the people of Saskatchewan be presented with when it . . . when the review is complete?

Will the review indicate, Mr. Speaker, that at the end of the day the government has reviewed this policy and they found, well 90 per cent of a person's income was a little excessive, so we're going to move it back to 85 per cent? Or — no, we'll move it back to 80 per cent, and that'll put . . . rather than \$166 a month in a person's pocket, it may mean \$300 a month in a person's pocket.

Mr. Speaker, if that will be the case . . . And we reserve judgment because right now, today we really don't know what policy the government's going to come up with. But I think based on where the government has been in the past and some of the promises that the government has made in the past on other issues, we want . . . Mr. Speaker, we will continue to follow, very interestingly, we will follow this policy. We will follow very closely the review the government is coming forward with and we will be interested in finding out at the end of the day what the government has arrived at.

Mr. Speaker, and when we talk about policy and the . . .

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find it appalling that the member from Regina Qu'Appelle would find seniors in this province as being so phony in their idea of challenging a government policy and really bringing . . . calling this government to task when it hits them in their pocketbook after they've worked so diligently all of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, from *The StarPhoenix* there is a quote here and I want to just read:

Any plans for nursing-home increase should be scrapped

altogether (and this is the Leader of the Opposition) . . . because they are already too high compared with most other provinces.

And, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about these rates, the government would like to brag about the fact that they are one of the best in the province when it comes to providing health care and providing access to services. But if indeed these budgeting . . . these increases in seniors' care fees would have gone ahead, the new budget would see Saskatchewan residents' fees the third highest in Canada behind Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. And when you compare this to other provinces, the current maximum monthly charge in Manitoba is \$1,800; and in Alberta, 978.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what will the review show us? Will the government finally realize the problems they have created? Will they really repent of the wrong that they have committed? Will, as they review this policy structure, will they take into consideration the needs of the seniors across this province of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, yesterday . . . and coming back to *The StarPhoenix* article, it says, a quote from *The StarPhoenix* article of April 30:

"Clearly, Mr. Stevenson's case drew more focused attention to those who are part of long-term care who are not at the end of life," Calvert said of the Regina computer programmer who would have had to pay nearly all of his working income as a result of the proposed fee schedule.

Mr. Speaker, it wasn't just long-term care residents and what most of us would think of as the elderly. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately there are individuals who due to physical needs beyond their control and health problems that they face have also . . . need to rely on the services of long-term care facilities.

And, Mr. Speaker, when an individual who's really created a life . . . a livelihood for themselves and been involved in the public sector and worked for 22 years finds that because they need the services of long-term care, at the end of the day all they have left in their pocket is \$166, you can see why the public of Saskatchewan were really crying out and decrying this callous move by this government.

Mr. Speaker, you talk about . . . Yesterday we had the privilege of listening to the ACRE committee — this committee that the government put together hoping that within four years they could come up with some ideas about how we can revitalize Saskatchewan, and specifically, more specifically, rural Saskatchewan.

And I'm not exactly sure if the government was expecting a report as quickly as it had arrived. I have a feeling that when the government talked, put this commission in place, this ACRE committee in place, and talked about a four-year review and talking to people across this province, talking to groups and agencies that they were hoping that while this was taking place they would have time to actually move forward with an election and they wouldn't have to address the issue of rural depopulation and the loss of jobs.

Ms. Speaker, as we listened to the ACRE committee last night and when we look at this motion before us and long-term health care fees, the committee said, and I'm quoting from their document. When it talks about revitalizing the rural committee:

Lack of health care service and uncertainty about access to health care services such as primary health care, home care, emergency services, are a major concern for rural Saskatchewan residents. People need to know what health services they can be assured of receiving within their rural communities.

And they commented, the government has:

Development can only happen with the assurance that adequate health and emergency services are in place within rural communities.

They also talked about, they also mention, Mr. Speaker, the need for financing, the need for equity, the need for companies who would look at establishing rural Saskatchewan — finding the equity in order to build their business.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no doubt that the province of Saskatchewan has many rural residents who do have . . . have provided for themselves and have built up good savings accounts. But, Mr. Speaker, at the same time, these residents, I'm sure, would just as soon invest in their community and invest in business opportunities so that young people can move to the communities and become taxpayers and help grow their communities rather than find their savings whittled away as the government increases the fees on their heavy-care services.

So, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't just a matter, it wasn't just a matter of taking from individuals who are living in our care homes and our senior homes. It was a matter of taking from the population of this province because of the opportunity for those savings accounts that are out there to actually invest in job opportunities and job creation and economic activity in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we continue this debate. Because I believe we can't just let, let it die based on the comments that the Premier made yesterday about the fact that it will be put on hold. Mr. Speaker, I believe it's important that the government listen very carefully and not just review these changes. And while the Premier's indicated that things are on hold, hoping that it would kind of die off and then in another 7 to 10 days or 14 days or who knows, maybe a month from now, come up with a new policy and find that it really hasn't changed that much.

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want and I hope . . . I trust that the Premier was really sincere and really acknowledged that . . . and recognized the hurt that he was creating for individuals and for families, and that his instructions to his committee will be to take a serious look at these increases and let's . . . ask themselves, is this . . . is this important.

I think, Mr. Speaker, what you will find is that, even today, there will be many seniors who will be contacting their MLAs on the government side of the House, will be contacting the Premier's office and the Minister of Health's office, and basically saying to the Premier, Mr. Premier, we want to thank

you for having pulled back, for having stopped in your tracks and for take . . . reviewing this policy because it is a negative policy and it is the wrong thing to do. It's an attack on seniors.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think as well, one of the reasons the government has really, really gulped on this one is because a lot of their long-term, hard-core support comes from that seniors group, and it comes from individuals who have, as I indicated earlier, worked very diligently, worked very hard all their lives and built for their future only to find that the government they believed in was going to pull their savings accounts right out of their hands because of the fact that, unfortunately, they may need the services of a heavy care facility.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we debate the issue. It's important that we keep the issue at the forefront so that people will demand of this government a clear and honest and straightforward policy that doesn't penalize the seniors because they have provided for a rainy day by providing a savings account.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, it's important that the government members realize that the people, the seniors of this province, built this province in the past and they would like to have a part in building the province in the future; and they don't want the resources that they have set aside just being absorbed by a government. Because this government has been unable, unable to balance its books, unable to manage the resources in this province and, as we've seen in this budget, starts to attack areas of the good money managing, whether it's by seniors, whether it's by the Wildlife Development Fund, or whether it's the other funds in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that have been put aside to help people in need.

(16:15)

Mr. Speaker, this motion is very appropriate. And it's important for us to, as I've indicated, to continue to raise the profile on the motion. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it's important that, as we've been talking this afternoon, that this government realized that they did make a mistake and they don't just . . . and they don't just place . . . We don't want the Premier and his ministers to play lip service. We want the Premier and his ministers to recognize the mistake they have made, the fallacy of their move, and actually to move, move . . . step back, Mr. Speaker, and recognize and allow our seniors to live their final days with dignity rather than having that dignity taken away as they watch their savings account disappear through exorbitant fee increases.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the member from Estevan:

That this Assembly condemn the government and, in particular, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Finance, and the Premier for not being totally forthcoming with the people of Saskatchewan regarding the true impact of the new fee structure for long-term care in Saskatchewan.

I so move.

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm extremely pleased this afternoon to enter into debate on the issue of long-term health

care fees.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that listens to the people of Saskatchewan. We heard yesterday the Premier of Saskatchewan stand up and say to the people of Saskatchewan and the people in this Assembly that the government had listened to what the people had said.

And the government was going to put on hold its policy, take a step back, look at the impact, and come forward with a new position.

Well, Mr. Speaker, a government that listens, a government that listens, Mr. Speaker, is a government that cares about the people of Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about this government and its listening.

This government went on the road last summer in a bus, visited community after community throughout the province, listening to the concerns of the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, during that tour, the Premier and members of the government talked to more than 6,000 people on their tour, Mr. Speaker. And during that tour, Mr. Speaker, they listened.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite . . . I can barely hear myself speak, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad you were able to deal with the noise in the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. The Speaker would prefer if there weren't any comments regarding any rulings.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a government that listens to the people of Saskatchewan. It works very hard at listening to the people of Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, yesterday, yesterday the Premier stood up, put on hold a policy that the people of Saskatchewan had concerns about.

And what did he say, Mr. Speaker? He said very clearly it's the role of government to solve problems not create problems. And when we hear a concern raised by the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we're going to work to address it.

But he also went on to say, Mr. Speaker — and I think people need to understand this — that budgets are about making choices. And choices are not always easy. Our financial situation in the province requires us to make difficult choices. It's easy to be in opposition and promise all things to all people.

And, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite continually promise all things to all people. But as a government you have to make those difficult choices. But when, but when one of those choices creates a difficulty, Mr. Speaker, a government that listens is willing to review that policy put forward, Mr. Speaker.

And that's what this government's doing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are upset because they had an issue that they thought was of concern to the people of Saskatchewan. And it was. No doubt it was a concern to the people of Saskatchewan. But this government listened and this government's going to deal with that concern, Mr. Speaker.

Now the members opposite are upset because they like to get an issue that they can go on and raise fear about, and doom and gloom about the province. They like to fearmonger, Mr. Speaker.

Well this is about the future. And this is about an issue that was a concern to the people of Saskatchewan and this government's reviewing that position. And this government will bring forward a new position, Mr. Speaker, in the days ahead. And we're going to consult with additional groups — seniors groups — before we bring forward that position, Mr. Speaker.

We heard yesterday the Premier say that he spent last week in various communities around the province talking to people about the issue. We heard him talk about how he talked to seniors about the issue. And through those discussions and through those concerns raised, Mr. Speaker, he brought forward the position of the government that we're willing to, as any good government should, Mr. Speaker, be willing to reconsider, to review, and look at any policy position, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we went around the province last summer, and we're every day around rural Saskatchewan and throughout our constituencies in the province. And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry but it's just . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. I'd ask the members to allow the member who has the floor to be able to heard.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very, very pleased with the opportunity to speak this afternoon about the good things that this government does, Mr. Speaker. And the most important thing it does, Mr. Speaker, is listen — listen. That's what this government does.

Now the members opposite, they don't like to listen. It's obvious, Mr. Speaker. They like to create fear. They're too busy yelling, Mr. Speaker. Too busy talking about things that they're trying to create anxiety and fear over, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we take the concerns of seniors very, very seriously. And I can tell you that on this side of the House the well-being of seniors is a top priority, Mr. Speaker. And that if seniors are concerned about this policy, Mr. Speaker, we're going to review this policy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in their motion, the members opposite cast aspersion upon the Premier, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Finance.

Well I want to say something, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier of Saskatchewan is a very caring, compassionate, kind individual, who will never, never, ever do something with the intent to hurt an individual in any way.

And when we have a problem to deal with it takes a brave Premier to stand up and say, Mr. Speaker, that if there are concerns about this issue we're going to review it. Because the members opposite, they're not really concerned about reviewing the issue. They're concerned about politics only, Mr. Speaker, just cheap posturing and cheap politics.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, on this side of the House we are truly concerned about seniors. So we are going to take a few days to go out and consult with seniors groups to hear what their concerns are regarding long-term care fees; to talk to them about what their needs are in this system. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to take time to talk to individuals like Ken Stevenson who brought forward a very, very important concern.

Unlike the members opposite, I spoke with Ken Stevenson. I went through his particular situation with him, spent some time dealing with his needs. His needs outside his home in the nursing home, Mr. Speaker; his needs at work, his special needs of transportation, his needs for recreation and other things — that he is a viable adult in our community trying to live a life after a very devastating accident.

And, Mr. Speaker, I spent time talking to that individual. Did the members opposite? No, they saw it as a political opportunity. It's important to understand the circumstances, not take advantage of political opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite keep talking about they want an answer. Well they're going to get an answer in the days ahead, Mr. Speaker, but they're going to get an answer that is meaningful to the people of Saskatchewan.

Because, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, they keep talking about calling an election. They're supposed to be in the House, I think at this point, listening. But we listened. I'm afraid, Mr. Speaker, that not everybody listens.

Mr. Speaker, today we had members of the opposition continue to raise the issue of long-term care fees. And they keep saying that they haven't got a decisive answer. I think that it was made very clear yesterday when the Premier stood in this House and said that this policy is on hold and he will review this policy and in the next few days bring forward a recommendation . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. The member for Cumberland, why is he on his feet?

**Mr. Goulet:** — Leave to introduce some special guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce, out of your gallery, nine grade 12 students from Minahik Waskahigan School. Now our members of course say the word Ta wow. And this school is from Pinehouse and we have of course their teacher Gloria Belcourt and also with them is Bella Pederson.

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

And I've asked them to say we are very proud of them to be there, Mr. Speaker, and also to be very proud if they passed their grade 12 at the end.

And I think it's very, very important, Mr. Speaker, to have a special welcome to the students and the teachers and also . . . (inaudible) . . . Pederson from Pinehouse.

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

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

#### Motion No. 7 — Fees for Long-term Care (continued)

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to continue my speech and talking about what the members opposite position was on health care.

Mr. Speaker, in their platform in 1999 they said they were going to freeze health care. Freeze the health care budget. Now, Mr. Speaker, they went on in little, minute letters there in saying that it would go up by the rate of inflation. They went in little, minute letters and said it would go up by the rate of inflation, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to explain to the people of Saskatchewan what that would mean in practical terms. Because in practical terms, Mr. Speaker, in practical terms this budget this year went up 5.8 per cent or \$129 million. Far in excess — far in excess — of the amount of money that the miniscule little increase would have meant that they would have put forward.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that today we put \$2.34 billion into health care, Mr. Speaker. That's more than \$3.4 billion more since 1999.

Mr. Speaker, how could they . . . they claim they can do everything. They're going to deliver everything, Mr. Speaker. They're going to cut taxes, they're going to give everybody every benefit, Mr. Speaker, and you know what, Mr. Speaker, it just doesn't add up.

Mr. Speaker, now . . . Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are yelling across the House. Well, Mr. Speaker, the reality is they're promising all things to all people. They're promising about how they can deliver things to health care, Mr. Speaker. They're saying that they wouldn't do anything with long-term care fees yet, Mr. Speaker. We've put far, far more money into the Health budget than the members opposite would have. And it's about making tough choices.

(16:30)

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have made a commitment. The Premier of Saskatchewan stood in this House and made a commitment to the seniors of Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatchewan on long-term care, they'll put this policy on hold and to review it. The man is a man of great integrity. His word is his honour.

I'd ask the members opposite not to continue to play games saying, we're going to do something. The Premier said he'll review it. Let the review occur.

Now, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier is a man of great integrity. If he says it's on hold and he's going to review it, it's on hold, Mr. Speaker. And it will be reviewed.

And in the coming days, in the coming days the government will bring forward a new, a new position. And what's that position today, Mr. Speaker? That position's under review. We clearly want to understand this issue . . . all the intricacies of this issue, Mr. Speaker.

And we thank those seniors, as a government we thank those seniors and people who brought forward concerns. We're not upset, we're not angry, Mr. Speaker. Those were legitimate concerns of the people of Saskatchewan. And a government that listens, Mr. Speaker, a government that listens will react to the people's needs. And that's what this Premier has done.

Well, Mr. Speaker . . . The members opposite continue to make noise, Mr. Speaker. There, they quieted down. Thank you.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we are going to put forward a new position on health care. But it's not going to be a position . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Members, I would ask you to refrain from the loud discussions that are taking place from across the floor in order that we can hear the member who is speaking.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are reviewing the long-term care fee policy. And we will bring forward a new policy in the days ahead.

But, Mr. Speaker, I need to reiterate to the people of Saskatchewan and to the seniors of Saskatchewan that the opposition, the opposition says very plainly that they will increase the Health budget only by the cost of inflation. That was their position. And, Mr. Speaker, we far, far exceeded that.

Now how do they square that circle, Mr. Speaker, that they're going to deliver all health services? They're not going to be increasing any fees or anything in health care at all, and deliver it within that budget, Mr. Speaker. It's not possible to do — they're empty words, Mr. Speaker.

And the members opposite, they continue to talk about how they're going to do this and how they're going to do that. And they're going to deliver everything that's . . . (inaudible) . . . today and they're going to add more to everything else. Well, Mr. Speaker, that adds up to about \$3.4 billion more than we have, Mr. Speaker. So how can they do that? But yet they're out there telling everybody they can do everything.

And Mr. Speaker, this is the government . . . (inaudible) . . . And this government and its Premier, its cabinet, and its members of the caucus are out continually listening to the people of Saskatchewan. And we're going to continue to listen.

And our listening has delivered results, Mr. Speaker. And it will continue to deliver results for the people of Saskatchewan. And it will on the long-term care fee issue as well, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite talk repeatedly about their concerns about health care and education and all the

issues, Mr. Speaker. But what are they doing? They're simply playing petty politics, Mr. Speaker. They don't have to make any decisions; they don't have to make choices. They're playing petty politics, Mr. Speaker.

And we saw a very similar practice in the 1980s, Mr. Speaker. Promising all things to all people, and the only way to deliver that is go in debt in a very serious way, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, we can't do that. We have to bring forward viable options to the people of Saskatchewan on a continual basis.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to let other hon. members have the opportunity to speak on this issue, but I'd like to make an amendment, Mr. Speaker, and the amendment is such, Mr. Speaker. I amend Mr. Toth's motion:

By removing all words after "Assembly" and replace with the following:

commend the government for listening to the concerns of Saskatchewan people by conducting a review of the proposal for increasing long-term care fees.

Mr. Speaker, I submit, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion and to this amendment. I think the original motion hit me as kind of a tragic irony when talking about being forthcoming. You know, as a new member, as we went through all the question periods and all of those kinds of things, I was stuck by the level of misinformation, the petty politics, the emotional fervour that was raised in this House.

And so I think this government takes a lot of pride in listening to people — that's why I ran. I think this government listens carefully — makes sure that people have accurate information.

And today, in the member's remarks, the member from Moosomin, I just want to quote a little bit what he said. Right off the bat, he was talking about what we were talking about over here. And he said the government was saying things like, and I quote:

The . . . (government) would not . . . (or) the majority would not see any increases.

He said, I quote:

The majority would not see any increases.

Now, I thought to myself, that's not right. I've heard the Minister of Health say several times that about a third would see no increases. So I just flipped back in *Hansard*. On April 22, this is what the Minister said:

The basic payment for long-term care is . . . (and it) deals with people who receive the old age security plus the senior's supplement. And that is the bottom line. Those people, about 3,000, there's no change at all that takes

place.

Mr. Speaker, that's about a third; that's not a majority. So who's forthcoming? Who's telling the truth in this House?

So I'm really worried about that. I think this is a problem about being forthcoming.

And then, here is another one. Here's another example about who's forthcoming. This one really, I think, went below the belt here. On April 26, the member from Thunder Creek in his question said:

Mr. Speaker, I have another letter from a person concerned about the long-term care fee hike. It's an e-mail from Mr. Cliff Belter who asks and I quote:

What happens to a couple (that makes) making \$3,300 per month in pensions with one person in a care facility.

. . . he goes on to say:

What happens is that the payment to the health Board is 828 plus 90 per cent . . . for a total of 2,903. (This) . . . (is the) information on rates . . . taken from the Sask Health site.

He says:

My question is how does this one not in the facility survive on \$397 per month and what will your party do about it if you are the next Government?

Mr. Speaker, I'll answer the last question for Mr. Belter by assuring him that the Saskatchewan Party will cancel this unfair tax on long-term care fee for the residents.

Now that's fair for the member from Thunder Creek to say what his position is. But I think it's incumbent on us as MLAs to be helpful to this person and say, get the accurate information because this is inaccurate. Who is forthcoming with accurate information from the Department of Health? And all the way through this, and I did not hear at all or had any kind of indication from the members from the opposition when they received these letters — and it's fair to come to the House and read the letters — but we had no indication at all that they were forthcoming with any help or giving them any indication where they could get accurate information if they themselves did not have that.

We never heard them talk about this Saskatchewan Health drug plan and extended benefits income assessment unit. Never talked about the toll-free number. Day after day we would talk about that. So the question is, when we listen, how do we balance out or how do we strain through this information or misinformation? And this is a problem; this is a problem.

Now, Mr. Speaker, many people have asked me, so how's it going in the House? You know, as a grade 8 teacher, I would often say what we often do and, Mr. Speaker, you can relate to this — we kind of practise that line of Jerry Seinfeld where you practise tranquillity now, tranquillity now.

But I'm amazed in this House how people can go from calm to moral outrage in five seconds flat and then back to calm. And I saw a little bit of that last Tuesday night, the moral outrage. And I think this is a challenge. And the member from Regina Dewdney over here talked about the challenges we have. And we have to listen very carefully about the issues that face the people in this province. There will be tough choices made. And so we all have to work through this together. And I think this is important, that we all listen carefully and we are all helpful.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think there is challenges for us all here. And we all have to be forthcoming. And sometimes, sometimes, we all have to be a little bit more ethical. And I think that sometimes when you withhold information, not being forthcoming, there's an ethical question here. And we all have to be ethical and we have to give accurate, complete information. Accuracy is really important.

And at the end of the day, I think all members in this House agree that seniors face challenges. And every day they want to make sure that they are not a problem for anybody else. And they've saved money for their old age and they want to pay their own way. And we don't want to put them in a stressful situation feeling that they are at risk. So we all need to be helpful. We all need to be helpful. And the first thing is being listening, giving accurate information, making sure it's accurate. But the big thing is being helpful.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to adjourn the debate on this motion. Thank you.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:44.