

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand once again today to present petitions on behalf of good citizens of our province who would like to see the Humboldt territory operations office for Sask Housing Authority remain in Humboldt. And their prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the proposed closure of the Humboldt territory operations office for Saskatchewan Housing Authority and to renew their commitment to rural Saskatchewan and maintain a full, functioning territory operations office in Humboldt.

And the signators on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the city of Saskatoon and the city of Humboldt.

I so present.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from injured workers are concerned about not being covered by WCB (Workers' Compensation Board). The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to acknowledge the concerns of the taxpaying citizen by causing the Government of Saskatchewan to ensure that absolute fairness and equitable treatment be given to those injured and disabled people and their families and be diligent in this most urgent matter.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Gravelbourg, Moose Jaw, Glentworth, and Saskatoon.

I so present.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I have a petition of citizens concerned about the proposed closure of the Humboldt territory operations office for Saskatchewan Housing Authority. 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 proposed closure of the Humboldt territory operations office for Saskatchewan Housing Authority and to renew their commitment to rural Saskatchewan and maintain a full, functioning territory operations office in Humboldt.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Humboldt, Muenster, and Burr.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional papers nos. 7, 11, 18, 24, 59, 132, 157, 164, and 165.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce a very capable young man in your gallery, Mr. Jason Dearborn, the nominated candidate for the Saskatchewan Party in the Kindersley constituency.

Mr. Dearborn is looking forward to the time when the Premier will call the by-election. I believe he set out as his goal to see if he could receive as high a percentage of the vote as his predecessor, Mr. Bill Boyd. And of course, the longer the Premier delays in calling the by-election, the better chance Mr. Dearborn has of reaching that goal.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of the House to welcome Jason Dearborn here today. And also we're looking forward to the time when the Premier does in fact call the by-election.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like . . .

The Speaker: — Once again, I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and to the Assembly, students who are seated in the west gallery from W.H. Ford School. There are 47 grade 8 students today. They're accompanied by Mr. Holloway and Ms. Kruger.

And I would like to welcome them and ask all members to join in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature, 16 grade 8 students from Davin School, just close to the legislature here. And they're seated in the Speaker's gallery. And they're accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Wynne Edwards.

I'd ask all members to welcome them here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to my colleagues in the Assembly, 28 grade 7 students from St. Josephat School in the heart of my constituency. And, Mr. Speaker, they're accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Jensen; chaperones, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Beisel, and Mr. Evans.

And I'd like all of you to welcome this group here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Western Canada Farm Progress Show

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, June 19, marks the beginning of an annual event that has helped to make not only Regina famous, but Saskatchewan as well.

Tomorrow marks the beginning of the annual Western Canada Farm Progress Show at Regina's Exhibition Park. This year is the 25th anniversary of this premier three-day event here in Regina. That's a significant milestone, Mr. Speaker, because it represents 25 years of success and progress in agricultural invention and innovation.

Mr. Speaker, it's a well-known fact that Saskatchewan's agriculture industry has some of the best innovators in the country. And we need look no further than at the vast array of products and machinery on display at the Western Canada Farm Progress Show.

It's here, Mr. Speaker, where new inventions are showcased and seminars and demonstrations are provided. There are also features like the antique truck and tractor display and the Outstanding Young Farmer awards which honours individual achievements in young producers out of eight regions across the country.

Mr. Speaker, we know that producers across the Prairies are preparing to face some of the most difficult challenges yet. Therefore it's important that we recognize the many contributions that they make to agriculture over the years.

Congratulations and good luck to all those involved in this year's Western Canada Farm Progress Show.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Canadian National Institute for the Blind Volunteer Awards

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend, there was a very special event in Regina, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Saskatchewan Division, had a program honouring volunteers. They called it, Sharing our Vision, the CNIB Saskatchewan Awards for Excellence in Volunteering.

Mr. Speaker, there were five particular volunteers honoured for their outstanding contributions in service of the blind and visually impaired. But I should say at the beginning, as did the CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind), that there are many volunteers from all walks and professions including our own, the hon. member for Regina Victoria, who offered their time, their labour, their encouragement, and their ideas. This gathering was to recognize all of their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, the new division-wide awards this year honoured the following individuals especially: Andy Hartung from

Regina was given the CNIB volunteer pin for his work maintaining the building on Broad Street, and for other services; Elaine Parr of Yorkton for 25 years of service in her community; Bob Jansen of Shamrock for fundraising initiatives in rural Saskatchewan; my good buddy Ron Filleul of Regina for eight years on the board, three as Chair; and Herb Essenburg of Saskatoon for overall achievement.

Mr. Speaker, we don't say it often enough, volunteers are the arms and legs and eyes of our community. I congratulate these five and all CNIB volunteers for their well-deserved recognition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hafford Youth Wins Kickboxing Trophy

Mr. Weekes: — Fourteen-year-old Jessica Reid of Hafford was a trophy winner at a kick-boxing competition at Schanks Athletic Club in Calgary. The tournament was sponsored by Schanks Athletic Club, *The Calgary Sun*, and the National Kickboxing and Muay Thai Club, and was sanctioned by the World Kickboxing Association.

Jessica was just starting her second year of full contact kick-boxing and Aurora Karate and kick-boxing instructor Wolfgang Manicke felt that she was ready to compete. As the youngest fighter at the tournament, Reid was determined to match her 15-year-old competitor.

The three, two-minute rounds were full of excitement, adrenaline, and blood as Jessica focused her attention on defeating her opponent. And defeat her she did.

Jessica's mother, Allison Reid, says Jessica took an instant liking to kick-boxing. She has a natural ability to seek out the weak areas in her opponent. Her determination and dedication are definite advantages to her select sport.

"Once I am in the ring, I become totally focussed," says Reid, "I can't hear anyone but Wolfgang." Although she remains calm when discussing the event, Jessica's eyes reflect an inner excitement. It is apparent that her dedication, determination, and love for the sport will take her far.

The patrons, my colleagues, and the management of Poverino's, a great restaurant in Regina, would like to join in and congratulate Jessica on her achievements.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Reducing Fly Ash Emissions at the Boundary Dam

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to inform members of the Assembly about an important environmental investment being made by SaskPower, one that will have a particularly important impact when it comes to helping preserve our province's air quality.

SaskPower is investing another \$9 million in a project that will virtually eliminate fly ash emissions at the Boundary dam

power station near Estevan. This new investment comes on top of a five-year, \$62 million initiative that has already reduced fly ash emissions from the power station. Fly ash, Mr. Speaker, is a fine ash that is produced when coal is burned at our thermal power stations.

SaskPower's new \$9 million investment will be used to upgrade the electrostatic precipitator on unit 6 at the station which collects and traps the fly ash. By the time the project is complete next summer, about 30,000 person-hours of construction work will have been created, Mr. Speaker.

The scope of this investment at the Boundary dam power station — now totally \$71 million for the fly ash removal project — is an excellent example of the steps that SaskPower and our government is taking to meet the growing electricity needs of our provincial population, while at the same time reducing the environmental impacts of its operations.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Barb Byers Goes to Canadian Labour Congress

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the long list of MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) and NDP (New Democratic Party) high-ranking supporters leaving the province continues to grow.

In the past we've seen the likes of Doug Anguish and Dwain Lingenfelter move out, along with several other of their compatriots. And now, Mr. Speaker, another NDP'er — high-profile NDP'er, Mr. Speaker — is leaving as well.

Mr. Speaker, Barb Byers is leaving the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour to work within the ranks of the Canadian Labour Congress. Mr. Speaker, Ms. Byers leaves behind a union organization that under her leadership has been set back many years. We want to ensure the people of Saskatchewan understand, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan Party understands the importance of and the relevance that unions serve.

It is our hope on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour selects a new president that is more willing to work with business in Saskatchewan and be more open to discussion instead of marching forward without understanding their consequences.

Mr. Speaker, this may be one of the few times that a person's exit from Saskatchewan may actually be a net gain for our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

President of Greystone Management Honoured

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the member from Meadow Lake praised a constituent who was named one of the quote "top forty under forty" achievers in

Canada by the *Globe and Mail's Report on Business Magazine*.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to announce to the Assembly that I too have a constituent who has been named to this illustrious group. You may have noticed in yesterday's *Leader-Post* that Rob Vanderhooft was named to the top 40 and there are a number of significant reasons why he was chosen.

(13:45)

The highlight of this would be that Mr. Vanderhooft is the president and chief investment officer of Greystone Management Investments of Regina — an investment company that manages \$13 billion in assets right here in Regina. A firm, Mr. Speaker, that consistently beats the "pants off Bay Street money managers," according to Bruce Johnstone of the *Leader-Post*.

In his brief time as president, Greystone has had a five-year average return on Canadian equities of 16.3 per cent, which puts it among the top 4 per cent of Canadian money managers, and about 10 per cent better than the Toronto Stock Exchange.

Ten years ago, there were 25 Saskatchewan based clients, now there are more than 700 from across North America, with satellite offices in Edmonton and Winnipeg.

One more significant detail, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vanderhooft came to Regina from Winnipeg, and he brings with him a family with three children under five.

All this is good news, and I congratulate Rob Vanderhooft for his success, for his recognition, and for his wise choice of a home.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Appreciation for Highway Road Crews

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as many of you have probably noticed, highway construction and repair is occurring at a feverish pace throughout the province.

The province has 7,200 kilometres of thin-membrane highways that require maintenance. Crews were out in full force early this spring hoping to fix more of the roads. So far department crews have sprayed 2.34 million litres of asphalt, placed 5,300 tonnes of coat mix, and coated 1.48 million square metres of sealed coat patching to repair the roads. Crews have worked more than 32,000 hours to repair spring road damage on thin-membrane surfaces.

Mr. Speaker, 87 crews, with 290 trucks, along with 456 other pieces of highway equipment like packers, graders, and oil distributors are ready to repair the roads, as are the numerous men and women hired last year as part of government's commitment to road repair and rural revitalization.

Mr. Speaker, this government greatly appreciates the work and effort of these people and hopes that they understand how valuable they are to our province's infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, we also hope that the people of this province will have the patience and slow down when passing road crews this summer. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Support for Agriculture

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has now received over 2,500 postcards slamming this NDP government for cancelling the property tax rebate and cutting the crop insurance coverage.

These cards are being sent in response to an open letter to the Premier, a letter that blasts the Premier for his weak leadership on farm issues. It says, and I quote:

These actions come at a time when our producers have been severely impacted by subsidies in other countries and by federal agricultural policies. The province does not need to add to these difficulties, and yet that is exactly what you have done.

Mr. Speaker, how can anyone take this Premier seriously on farm issues when his own policies are attacking the farm families of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, just a couple of days ago, I tabled for this Assembly a series of reports of which this government has been involved in, in providing the work that we've done for farmers over the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker. And it goes back to a variety of different presentations that we've made regarding the work that we've done for Saskatchewan farmers and also for Canadian farmers, Mr. Speaker.

And I asked the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, I asked him to table for us the work that he has done for Saskatchewan farmers in the last three years of which he's been the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker. And do you know what the Leader of the Opposition has done for Saskatchewan farmers, Mr. Speaker? Absolutely . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, please. The member has to have the opportunity to respond and to be heard while he's responding.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, to date now . . . it's been about five days since I tabled that report and I asked the opposition leader to table the work that he's done for Saskatchewan farmers in this province, Mr. Speaker. And I have yet to receive a scrap of paper from him to show us what he has done for Saskatchewan farmers. Because there is no plan for agriculture over there, there's been no engagement on agriculture over there, and they're completely bankrupt, Mr. Speaker, of any ideas regarding this issue at all, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, if all of these NDP agriculture policies are working out so well, then why are we receiving, along with that government, over 2,500 postcards complaining about their policies for agriculture?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — These are not exactly fan mail, Mr. Speaker. And here's some things that they that have to say. From Tyvan:

It sure would be nice to have a government . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, order. Order, please. I invite the member for Watrous to continue.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From Tyvan, he wrote:

It sure would be nice to have a government behind us, but we know they are not.

A postcard from Maidstone:

You are destroying agriculture, not helping it.

A postcard from Asquith:

We are not being heard by our NDP government.

A postcard from Marchwell:

These program changes cost our farm nearly \$22,000. This is not acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Premier attacking the farm families in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — It's just been, Mr. Speaker, in the last three weeks that the Saskatchewan Party has woke up and found out that there is an agricultural issue in Saskatchewan at all, Mr. Speaker. They woke up and discovered that there is something happening in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, because there hasn't been any kind of involvement by the Saskatchewan Party at all, Mr. Speaker.

And I say to the Saskatchewan Party, don't get involved in agriculture because every time you get involved you destroy the work that's being done in Saskatchewan. The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, is the guy who said we should be supporting the AIDA (Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance) program in Saskatchewan. What do we get? We got an AIDA program for Canada and Saskatchewan.

It's also, Mr. Speaker, the same Leader of the Opposition who was in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, while he was a member of the Canadian Alliance. And he said, Mr. Speaker, that we shouldn't be supporting farmers today who are being abused by the subsidies of the US (United States).

And now that the Leader of the Opposition has done a 180, Mr. Speaker. We're happy about that. But I bet you in the next

couple of weeks we're going to see that guy hightail out of this province for farmers as quick as it could happen, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting to hear that minister talk about people hightailing it out of the province, when his former Agriculture minister was in Mexico when AIDA was being . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — According to the open letter, the NDP Agriculture minister has stated that crop insurance and education taxes are not a priority to farmers. It says, and I quote:

If you disagree with Mr. Serby, please mail these postcards.

Well the Saskatchewan Party has received over 2,500 postcards from people who disagree with that Minister of Agriculture.

Here are a few more. From Ogema, it says:

If this government is committed to help agriculture, why are they taking away programs that help farmers?

From Eastend:

Crop insurance is of no value without spot loss hail.

Lashburn:

Farmers in Saskatchewan have been struggling for years with little or no help from their provincial government. What is it going to take to make agriculture a priority? Premier Calvert and company are backing away from their responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, why is this NDP government and this Premier attacking the farm families of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to set the record straight because the member has now been on her feet on a couple of occasions talking about what's happened with crop insurance in the province. And I want to just set the record straight, Mr. Speaker.

Because in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, last year, in the year 2001, there were 34,307 farmers that signed the crop insurance program last year, Mr. Speaker. And this year we have, have signed the crop insurance program, 34,754, Mr. Speaker. We have more contracts this year, Mr. Speaker, than we had last year, Mr. Speaker. Last year in the forage rainfall program, Mr. Speaker, we had just under 200,000 acres insured, Mr. Speaker. This year we have almost 4 million acres of forage land insured in this province, Mr. Speaker.

So while the member's on her feet, Mr. Speaker, abusing the crop insurance program, Mr. Speaker, there are more people participating in the crop insurance program this year than there

were last year, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it might interest the minister to know that this is the worst drought in history. So therefore it's not surprising that farmers are buying even an inadequate program.

Obviously the Premier is not listening to this message nor is his minister. So I guess I'll read some more farm fan mail from Saskatchewan producers. From Glenavon it says:

If the government had their priorities correct, they'd be improving crop insurance instead of dismantling it.

From Perdue:

Crop insurance is a complete joke.

From Lafleche, to the NDP:

How come the rural areas don't vote for you? You cheated the farmer out of the GRIP program, now you increase our land taxes. Got any other monkeys you would like to throw on our backs?

Mr. Speaker, why isn't the Premier and his Agriculture minister listening? Why did he pick this year, of all years, to attack the farm families of this province? What does the Premier . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. One of the procedures, one of the traditions of the Assembly is not to do something indirectly that you cannot do directly. And I would ask the member to be very cautious in reading — order — and I would ask the member to be very cautious in what she wishes to read into the record so it would not infuse . . . impugn any motives that would be dishonourable to this legislature.

Order. Order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, this Assembly knows and the farmers of Saskatchewan know and farm leaders in this province know the work that this government has been doing in building a strong farm agricultural policy for this country, Mr. Speaker, of which we've been leading the way on many fronts, Mr. Speaker. And soon we'll see in Canada, Mr. Speaker, a brand new agricultural policy framework of which this government has been leading the parade in, Mr. Speaker.

Now we know that there hasn't been satisfactory support, Mr. Speaker, for the crop insurance program or for the CFIP (Canadian Farm Income Program) program. But we've stood up, Mr. Speaker, for Canadian and Saskatchewan farmers and said, front and centre, that we need to change those policies, and that's what we're working at changing, Mr. Speaker.

But the members opposite to date, Mr. Speaker, have not on one occasion put forward one idea about what Canadian agriculture, Saskatchewan policy should look like. Not one. And day after day they stand in their places, Mr. Speaker, and criticize what we have, which is an easy process to do, but they haven't put forward one idea, Mr. Speaker.

Because you know why, Mr. Speaker? That leader is bankrupt of ideas, Mr. Speaker. That leader and that party has no credibility. And, Mr. Speaker, that leader will be replaced, Mr. Speaker, before the next general election in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Answers to Opposition Questions

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in the House we saw a pathetic sight. The Premier was upset because the Saskatchewan Party was focusing on his bumbling leadership. First he tried to wiggle out of his responsibility and then he begged us to change the subject and ask about something else.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Saskatchewan Party has been asking questions all session, but we either get the wrong answers or we get no answers whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, that's a result of weak leadership. In fact, there are 76 questions on the order paper that the NDP refuses to answer — questions on Crown investments, waiting lists, education, safe water. The list goes on and on.

Mr. Speaker, we are asking a lot of questions but the NDP government is refusing to answer them.

Is this any kind of a Premier? Is this any kind of a government? Will the Premier stand in this House today and order his ministers to start answering the questions we're asking?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — This is a question. Yesterday I suggested . . . Mr. Speaker, if the member from Rosthern could just calm down, just calm down.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I think in the tirade, Mr. Speaker, I heard a question from the Leader of the Opposition which was to the effect, would the ministers of the Crown answer the questions that the opposition brings to this House? The answer is yes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

Mr. Wall: — Well that's very good news, Mr. Speaker. Very good news indeed. Because my question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Premier.

Earlier this session I asked the minister responsible for Crown Investments Corporation a series of written questions. I specifically asked the minister to provide a breakdown of SaskTel investments return for the years 1992 through 2001, including their cumulative profit or loss.

The minister is the one who likes to say that SaskTel's record of investment internationally is a good one. He has actually affixed a number to it. So we asked him, Mr. Speaker, for a

breakdown. We asked him in written questions, Mr. Speaker, and I've also asked him in this House privately. And we have not received that breakdown all these weeks later.

So the question to the Premier is this: will the Premier order the minister responsible for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) to answer these questions today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, if I might take the liberty as House Leader and answer on behalf . . .

The Speaker: — A little order please, members.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, as the Government House Leader, on behalf of the government, I'd be very pleased to answer this question.

You know, every day in this session the members of the opposition have been asking questions of the government of which now total something in the neighbourhood of 350-plus questions. And, Mr. Speaker, we have answered the vast majority of them. I can tell you that there have been more questions answered from that opposition than there has been in any session since I've been here, Mr. Speaker, and that's a considerable period of time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Now, Mr. Speaker, what I want to say is the government will continue to answer the questions. We will continue to put hundreds of civil servants to work every day compiling information, some of which they should be asking in Crown Corporations Committee instead of asking through written questions in this House, Mr. Speaker. But in spite of that, we'll answer them.

But I ask members opposite to find some new questions for a change. We're sick of answering the same questions day after day after day after . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have just heard clear evidence that this government is neither responsible or accountable to the people of this province. Once again, that minister neglected to answer the question.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this session I asked the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs a written question. I asked specifically what the total sum of provincial funding provided to the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, including Métis organizations and agencies, was for the year 2000-2001. I also asked the minister to provide a breakdown of this funding. But as in other cases, the minister refused to answer this question.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a difficult question to answer and it is of interest to all taxpayers, including Métis people, who want to know how much funding the government does contribute to these organizations and what it is used for. Why did the minister refuse to provide that information?

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier order the minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs to answer this question today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, again I'd be pleased to respond on behalf of government. What you have witnessed here is another way of asking the same question.

That member knows full well that written questions will be answered during the course of the session and at the end of the session. It hasn't changed; this process has gone on in this place for many, many decades. Even before those members, any of them, came to this House, Mr. Speaker, that's been the process.

What I would like to ask members opposite, would they please scour their membership lists around this province, try and find some competent staff to prepare them to come in here with some new questions because we're really getting tired of answering the same questions day after day after day after day.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the same old, same old — ask a question, get no answer.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this session the member from North Battleford asked the Minister of Health a question: how many patients per day on average were added to the waiting lists of MRIs (magnetic resonance imaging) in the year 2001; and how many patients per day on average received an MRI in the same year? A very simple . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order, order, order, members. Order. Order. Order. Would the member for Shellbrook-Spiritwood continue, please.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question, Mr. Speaker, is very interesting to all people of Saskatchewan. And it's a very simple question.

The minister . . . How long will it take to bring waiting lists to within a four-year waiting time? The question was converted, Mr. Speaker. Why would the Minister of Health not provide this information? Or is he afraid of the information that would reflect badly on the NDP Party?

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier order the Minister of Health to answer the question today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I think I understood what's happened now. You see, what has happened is there's been something called answer overload. You see, we put so much paper in the form of written questions back to their staff that they're reading day and night and they don't have time to think up new questions.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, the 353 questions plus has kept that staff so busy and caucus funds as they will know are limited, which is unfortunate, because I think we'll answer so many questions their staff will be busy through the summer and into

the fall compiling all the information they got. Because, Mr. Speaker, I would bet you that 350 written questions is a record in one session of government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier was accusing the opposition of not asking questions of different departments. And today we hear the minister telling . . . saying that we're asking too many questions. And the facts are, Mr. Speaker, we've asked . . . facts are, Mr. Speaker, we've asked questions of numerous ministers which over the past number of months, Mr. Speaker, have . . . we haven't received answers for. So, Mr. Speaker, we will ask these questions today. And we ask the Premier if indeed he wants us to get an answer, then ask his ministers to respond.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this session we asked the Minister of Learning to provide the name of each published departmental policy report, study, review, or consultant's report undertaken by his department and the Department of Post-Secondary Education from the years 1992 to 2001. We asked the minister to indicate the cost of each report to the department.

Mr. Speaker, this information is valuable to the public to determine what information is available regarding the education curriculum and system in Saskatchewan. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the minister refused to provide this information.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier order the Minister of Learning to answer this question today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, here we are again. They're referring back to questions they've already asked. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, of 353 questions, we have converted 76. There have been 277 answered . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — And, Mr. Speaker, the rest will be answered as they are . . . as a matter of practice in this House.

But while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat curious as well. I want to know if the Leader of the Opposition supports loan guarantees for proponents of ethanol.

I want to know if he supports investment in ethanol. I want to know where his agriculture policy is. And I want to know if Bill Boyd took it home to Kindersley with him, if the Leader of the Opposition would simply get on the phone and ask Bill Boyd to mail it back to him because . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, those members on that side of the House want to know when we're going to answer the questions, and I'll tell him when we're going to answer the questions — right after the next election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — And there'll be a few of them sitting over here and they can ask all the questions they want and they will receive answers, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The people living in resort communities around Last Mountain Lake are very unhappy with this NDP's . . . government's decision to allow Regina sewage effluent being pumped into Last Mountain Lake all last winter. Many residents are noticing an unusual number of dead birds and fish on the lakeshore. And many suspect that this may be due to the increased levels of Regina sewage effluent.

Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the Minister of the Environment a very simple question, but the minister refused to answer. So today I will ask that question again.

To the Premier, Mr. Speaker: how many communities have permits to pump sewage effluent or raw sewage into provincial lakes, creeks, rivers, and any other water body? Mr. Speaker, will the Premier instruct his new Minister of the Environment to answer that question?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, they are so interested in the answer that they had to get up and re-ask it again. And I think that's fair. But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, this opposition has asked more questions of this government than has happened in any session in, I think, recent memory — 353, to which they have received 277 written answers; 76 have been converted which will be turned back to them in answered form, in written form, and they know that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to know, I want to know why members on that opposition side have lost sight of the fact that the job numbers have turned around and forget to mention it.

Mr. Speaker, it rained and the drought went away on them, so they ran out of questions in that regard. I want to know where the Agriculture critic's request for \$10 million for drought assistance went, Mr. Speaker. Because, you know what, one weekend it rained; Monday morning she came in here and she didn't have a question to ask.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Speaker, we ask some questions, we get no answers. We write written questions, we get no answers.

Now a few weeks ago we learned that the NDP government used \$50 million from the Saskatchewan Government Growth Fund. This was to finance acquisition for government cars, computers, buildings.

We also learned that the NDP made those \$50,000 . . . those acquisitions to two companies very close to the NDP without . . . with untendered lease contracts.

Mr. Speaker, I've recently acquired . . . the NDP have recently acquired a new airplane though the lease deal involving SGGF (Saskatchewan Government Growth Fund Ltd.) and other private companies. When asked about these details both in this

House and in written, the NDP refused to answer so we're going to ask it again, Mr. Speaker.

Will the NDP table the full details of the airplane lease, and table the cost analysis of the cost of using this method against chartered aircraft? Will the Premier order the minister responsible for SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) to answer these questions today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I have to admit that I'm somewhat disappointed in the member's memory, because I recall days here when in the rotunda the media had the opportunity to ask the minister responsible as it related to the lease of the aircraft, how it was done, through whom it was done. And those answers were all given.

But the memories of that member is clearly failing, Mr. Speaker, because today he gets up and asks again a question that was answered, I thought in detail and quite eloquently, by the minister responsible, Mr. Speaker.

But what we will do, Mr. Speaker, is the question has been in written form as well, and we will provide him the answers. It's one of the questions that were converted, and as he knows, the answers will be forthcoming and he should not worry about information.

Mr. Speaker, out of 353 questions, 277 answered — but that's not good enough for them. But, Mr. Speaker, you ask those people one question about policy, their policy, and they won't respond.

His economic development policy . . . the Leader of the Opposition disappeared about three days after he was questioned on how he's going to finance it. And do you want to know something, Mr. Speaker? Nobody's asked him a question about it since, and he won't talk about it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 205 — The Protection of Persons in Care Act

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 205, The Protection of Persons in Care Act.

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

Bill No. 207 — The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2002 (Set Election Dates)

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move first reading of Bill No. 207, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2002 (Set Election Dates).

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

**MESSAGE FROM
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II**

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly. Members, I have a message from the Queen of Canada, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, which I wish now to read into the record and I would ask the members to please rise.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

I was pleased to receive your kind message of loyal greetings sent on behalf of the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan for my Golden Jubilee. Prince Philip and I have been deeply touched by the many kind messages. We acknowledge with gratitude the loyalty and support which we have received since I came to the throne as Queen of Canada in 1952, and thank you for the work that you do to help others through public service.

I was glad that your Province had proclaimed a Golden Jubilee Week from 14th to 20th May, and pleased that the Golden Jubilee observance by the Legislature on 14th May and the Victoria Day celebrations on 20th May had both been so enjoyable. I hope that these celebrations were not simply an occasion to be nostalgic about the past. I believe that, young or old, we have as much to look forward to with confidence and hope as we have to look back on with pride.

I send my best wishes to all those assembled and my thanks to the People of Saskatchewan for their loyalty.

ELIZABETH R.

30th May 2002

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to convert for debates returnable questions 348, 349, 350, and 353 . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — . . . table questions 351 and 352.

The Speaker: — Order, please. I would ask the member to repeat the numbers.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To convert for debates returnable, no. 348, 349, 350, and 353, and table no. 351 and 352.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Converted, 348, 349, 350, and 353. Responded to, 351 and 352.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 14 — Funding for Post-Secondary Institutions

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to debate the lack of commitment that this NDP government has to post-secondary education and that they've demonstrated their lack of commitment through their underfunding over the past number of years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, post-secondary education is a broad term that has many aspects to it and affects a large part of our society and our economic activity, Mr. Speaker. The early pioneers of this province recognized the importance and placed a high value on education and post-secondary education. And, Mr. Speaker, this is demonstrated by . . . in many communities and rural areas in early Saskatchewan when one of the first buildings that our early pioneers drew together would put up country schools and schools in our towns and our cities.

And shortly after Saskatchewan became a province, Mr. Speaker, in fact two years after, the citizens of this great province realized the importance of post-secondary education and constructed the first building on the University of Saskatchewan campus, that being the College Building, in the year 1907, Mr. Speaker. And from that time forward more buildings were added, more programs were added, and so on. And sometime down the road, the University of Regina was established and our technical institutes and so on, indicating the need and the importance of educating our . . . not only our young people, Mr. Speaker, but all people of our province.

And this is a trend that we see even more so today. If one attends convocation ceremonies, Mr. Speaker, you will see that we have an increasing number of adult students who are graduating from our post-secondary education institutions, Mr. Speaker, and this is certainly a welcome trend. It fits in with the so-called slogan of lifelong learning. We all realize that as our . . . as things evolve and more information is available and trends change in society, that there is a need for continuing and ongoing education.

And so it's of utmost important, Mr. Speaker, that we . . . that there is a public commitment on behalf of government to post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker.

I might just outline a few of the roles and the purposes of post-secondary education, and as I've already mentioned, and the one that certainly comes to mind when post-secondary education is mentioned is of course the educational aspect of higher learning.

However, also a second and equally important activity of our universities and other post-secondary institutions is research — research that leads to many new inventions, a cure for diseases, technological advances, Mr. Speaker.

And from that research there are economic spinoffs that will develop — not from every research project, as you can well imagine, because there are hundreds and thousands of research projects that take place across this country. And certainly not every one of them leads to a new finding and a worthwhile invention or economic activity that can be taken on and

developed by private industry, Mr. Speaker.

But many of the advances — in fact, most of the technological advances, whether it be in the medical field or in the engineering field or in the field of business — quite often if you trace the history and find where that first idea came from, it'll come from someone who was either at a post-secondary education institute or a graduate of a university, Mr. Speaker.

Some of the more prominent . . . and oftentimes universities in particular play a very prominent role in that whole area of taking the pure, basic research and moving it forward through the various steps until it becomes a commercial . . . of commercial value — a commercial idea that private industry can then take and create jobs and produce real value.

And a couple of prime examples, Mr. Speaker, are . . . you might well look south of the border into the US. And that whole area of Silicon Valley started, Mr. Speaker, many years ago by some of the good work that were . . . that was done by a couple of staff members at one of the universities in that area.

There was a staff member by the name of Professor Hewlett and a Dr. Packard. And they worked together and the university saw the value in their work and provided them with a little . . . with a bit of aid in the form of some research money and, in fact, later on some land. And there was then private developers moved in and caught hold of the idea and from that sprung the Silicon Valley, and of course the company that is known to many people who are familiar with computers and the information technology, Hewlett-Packard. But that all started, Mr. Speaker, as a result of work done at a university in the United States.

Another area of economic activity, a cluster of economic activity, that is spun off of a post-secondary educational institution is in the Boston area. A large number of economic development activities are the spinoffs . . . are the result of research that was being done at the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in Boston.

We have some success stories right here in our own province, Mr. Speaker. One needs only to look at the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) and Innovation Place and all the things that are happening there, whether it be biotechnology in which we are a world leader of VIDO (Veterinarian Infectious Disease Organization) infectious diseases in animals, work that originated at the university and has then been taken and commercialized, Mr. Speaker.

And there are some smaller examples at the U of R (University of Regina) . . . at the U of S, I should say, in international road dynamics and other technologies in the transportation area. The U of R currently has some research taking place that hopefully will lead one day to commercialization with its Petroleum Technology Research Centre and the Greenhouse Gas Technology Centre, Mr. Speaker.

So those are some of the areas that . . . besides the basic and foremost purpose of post-secondary education is the educational component, but also research is an equally important aspect of university activity, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time in our province, we are presented with a huge opportunity. And that opportunity is the Canadian Light Source that is currently being constructed at the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

As I've said on many times before in this Assembly, it is a world-class facility that is being constructed. It is the fourth largest . . . fourth most intense light beam that will be in operation on the face of the earth. And it can present this province with some huge advantages, Mr. Speaker.

(14:30)

There are huge opportunities in the health and pharmaceutical area, in environmental engineering and waste management, and the opportunities that this scientific facility presents are unlimited. They're only limited by one's imagination, Mr. Speaker.

Recently I was . . . I read an article, Mr. Speaker, that dealt with the greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide, and how it is related to the Canadian Light Source. There are scientists that feel that through the use of a synchrotron they can develop methods where they can tie up carbon, which has been released into our atmosphere, and tie it up for an indefinite period of time. These carbon atoms have been stored in the earth's . . . below the earth's surface for hundreds of millions of years. And now we are releasing them through the use of fossil fuels and other industrial activities, Mr. Speaker.

And we are seeing the effects of climate change. One only has to look at the bizarre weather patterns that we've had in, in these past few months to realize that we are in the midst of climate change, Mr. Speaker.

And the scientists are telling us that through, through synchrotron science they are hopeful they can develop methods where they could take these carbon atoms from the atmosphere and tie them to elements such as magnesium and permanently return them to the . . . below the earth's surface so that they are no longer causing problems in . . . as far as greenhouse gases and climate change, Mr. Speaker.

So those opportunities exist. And what we need to do in this province is we have make . . . we need to make sure that the resources are in place at our universities so that we can take advantage of these opportunities, Mr. Speaker. And this is where I think, Mr. Speaker, and I know that this government has certainly not stepped up to the plate, Mr. Speaker.

The universities have consistently told this NDP government that in order to just maintain the status quo, they need an . . . over the last two or three years, they've needed an annual increase in operational grant funding of 5 per cent. And that is just to pay for contract settlements, the new salary schedules, the increase in utility fees, things like increases in operating a . . . new facilities that are coming on stream, increased activity in their libraries, and so on, Mr. Speaker.

And what have we seen? What is the record of this government, Mr. Speaker? Well the record is, is not, certainly not one . . . a record that one would have hoped that a government that says it's committed to education and post-secondary education

would be proud to tell the people about. If we look at the funding increases or new money over the last two years that this government has made available to our universities and at SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), to our post-secondary education, it doesn't even match the new money that the universities were forced to ask the students to pay in the form of increased tuition fees.

What has happened, Mr. Speaker, is that this . . . that . . . particularly our universities, and to a lesser extent SIAST, have decided that they can no longer wait on this government to come forth with an increased commitment, with a new commitment to post-secondary education.

So the universities have done it themselves. They've said look, if we're going to be world-class universities, if we're going to be able to compete in the marketplace to replace the faculty that is retiring, we've got to have the resources to be able to do that.

If we're going to do research and play at the world level, and be competitive with other universities, not only in Canada, not only in North America, but around the world, because we do live in a global village, Mr. Speaker, then we're going to have to step up to the plate ourselves.

So what have they done? By and large, universities have . . . their major sources of funding are tuition fees and grants from governments. They have a varied . . . other sources but those are their two major sources of income.

So if the government is not stepping up to the plate then the only other solution that universities have is to ask the students to step up to the plate. So what have we seen then. We've seen an increase last year at the U of S of a 15 per cent increase in tuition fees. The U of R had a 9 per cent increase in tuition fees.

That new money that those tuition fees generated was \$7.3 million from the students — that's new money. And what new money did the government put in place at the universities — 4.7, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't even a dollar for dollar; the students outdid, outdid this NDP government in new money.

And this year, again we're seeing some massive increases in tuition fees, and particularly in some of the colleges at the U of S, an across-the-board increase of 8.8 per cent at the U of R, Mr. Speaker. And that money has . . . is generating \$8.6 million of new money that the students, through increased tuition fees, are providing to our universities.

And what is the government's record? It's \$5.8 million for operating grants, Mr. Speaker. Again, the students have far outdone the government, and that is shameful, as the member from North Battleford says, Mr. Speaker.

So why do our universities find themselves in this situation? Why is this government not able to provide more money? What is the reason, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, this government likes to brag that they're committed to education, whether it be in the K to 12 system or the post-secondary education system. But certainly their commitment is not matched by the fiscal resources that are needed.

And why is that, Mr. Speaker? Well, frankly it's a very . . . the question . . . the answer is very simple. They simply don't have the money. We've seen that in this year's budget, a paltry supposedly \$45,000 surplus which is no surplus at all. If you ask anyone in the province, I think they'll all tell that that's fiction, Mr. Speaker.

And the reason that this government doesn't have the money to provide to education and other areas of responsibility that the government has — whether it be health, whether it be highways, whether it be agriculture, whether it be policing, all those sorts of things, Mr. Speaker — is because of their failed economic development policies.

They've created an environment in this province which is not conducive to outside investment or even investment from within the province because of their overuse and their heavy reliance on Crown corporations, where business people in this province find themselves competing with Crown corporations. And instead of attracting investment and thereby creating more economic activity, more jobs, more people living in the province, more taxpayers so that you have those tax dollars to do . . . to provide for things like education, Mr. Speaker, they've had the opposite effect.

One only has to look at the *Maclean's* magazine issue that was on the newsstands shortly after Statistics Canada released the results of the last census to see the results of these failed economic policies. There was — I wish I would've brought it with me, Mr. Speaker, I have it in my office — there's a map in that issue of *Maclean's* magazine that shows population growth across Canada. And once again, Saskatchewan stands out.

Saskatchewan stands out but for all the wrong reasons. It stands out because it was the only province in Western Canada, and probably I believe if my memory serves me correctly, one of only two provinces all across Canada that had population decline — a decline of the number of the people living in their provinces.

All the other provinces, including Manitoba . . . We often talk about Alberta and the people opposite say well we can't compare Saskatchewan to Alberta because they've got so many other . . . so many advantages. Well let's compare ourselves with Manitoba. Even Manitoba had a population growth and Saskatchewan had a negative population growth, Mr. Speaker.

Another area, Mr. Speaker, that recently which Saskatchewan stood out — and again for all the wrong reasons — and again it had to do with information released by Statistics Canada, was an economic growth for the year 2001. Saskatchewan being I believe the only province across Canada to experience negative economic growth in 2001.

And so what is the impact of that? People will say . . . the members of the opposite side of the House will say well what's the big deal? Well it is a big deal because that impacts on things like education and health and all those sorts of things, Mr. Speaker.

So when we criticize their economic development policy they stand up and they defend it rigorously and that sort of thing. But the question is, Mr. Speaker, to them is how is it working? And

the answer is it's not working very well, Mr. Speaker.

So what are some of the effects, Mr. Speaker, that we see as a result of this underfunding that this government has perpetually passed on to our post-secondary education institutions and particularly our universities? What are some of the effects of this underfunding? Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've already said, the most immediate effect is the large increases in tuition fees that we've seen over the last two years.

Again Saskatchewan is in the news in that area but again for all the wrong reasons. Saskatchewan over the last two years has had the highest percentage increase in tuition fees of any other province across Canada, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that's something that this government should be proud of because I know on this side of the House we certainly aren't proud of a record like that.

We're seeing reduced research activities, Mr. Speaker. In order to . . . As I mentioned earlier, we have this tremendous opportunity right on our doorstep and I'm afraid, Mr. Speaker, that we may not be able to take full advantage of that opportunity for a number of reasons. Because if the dollars aren't there for research activities, you don't have the grad students there to support those research activities. If there are dollars for student aid, Mr. Speaker, that impacts on the number of grad students and we certainly are seeing those effects.

The large tuition . . . or large increases in tuition fees, Mr. Speaker, have a couple of effects at least and probably more. We have, obviously, we have higher student debt. If you have to pay higher tuition fees, Mr. Speaker, many students rely on student loans and of course, they're going to have to take larger student loans and end up at the completion of their studies with a larger student debt. We see students now seriously questioning whether they should attend the universities in Regina or in Saskatoon or look elsewhere outside our province, Mr. Speaker, because of the high increase in tuition fees.

And also, Mr. Speaker, and this is probably one of the most serious effects of larger tuition fees, is the reduced access for some of our students. Those students who don't have the financial resources and their families don't have the financial resources and, if you're looking at higher tuition fees, some of these students may not be able to attend university.

I talked to some of the student body representatives recently, Mr. Speaker, and one of their concerns is that tuition fees are rising but the cap on student loans hasn't changed. So that's really putting students in a difficult position, particularly single-parent families. And, as I said earlier, we're seeing more mature students graduate from university. And many of those students have families and so it's making it increasingly difficult with the increased costs for those students to attend our universities and SIAST, Mr. Speaker.

Another effect of the underfunding as we're hearing from both of our universities is that there's a developing backlog of capital improvements that each . . . and it's building at each university. If the dollars aren't there to replace or renovate and do the major repairs to some of the facilities at the universities, they get put on hold and that account continues to build.

The University of Saskatchewan recently — about a year or so — indicated that they have a capital backlog of some \$100 million. The University of Regina because it is a newer university, a somewhat smaller university, not quite as research intensive, their backlog isn't quite as great but they too are developing a backlog in capital improvements. And this is having some very serious effects.

And probably this effect is best illustrated by the sad state of repairs of the College Building on the University of Saskatchewan campus, the very first building that was built at the university. This was the building that the pioneers back in 1906, 1907 when the university was first created said we're going to build this building and this is where . . . will be the centre of activity at the university and it was for many, many years.

Well now, Mr. Speaker, it is no longer in use. In fact, it is in danger of crumbling. The university is doing its best. It's monitoring the deterioration of the building. They are looking in every . . . at every aspect of how they could preserve that building. They are searching desperately for dollars to at least stabilize the building and I'm hopeful, Mr. Speaker, that they will be successful.

(14:45)

This government has made a token gesture towards that building but it's certainly not enough to ensure the viability of that building, Mr. Speaker. And it would be a provincial shame, Mr. Speaker, if that building were to . . . would have to be demolished because we in this province can't find the dollars to preserve a national heritage site, Mr. Speaker.

And the Minister of Finance, again, the Minister of Finance chirps from his seat that if it's a national project the federal government should involve itself. Well the federal . . . It seems that this province of Saskatchewan is continually asking the federal government for . . . if it isn't for education, it's for health, it's for something else. Isn't it time that this province stood up on its own two feet and looked after some of our own needs, Mr. Speaker?

This College Building, it's not large dollars. I'm told that it's some \$20 million. The university doesn't expect government to provide all that money, they have some of the money of their own, Mr. Speaker. And I think this would be a certainly, as I said earlier, it would be quite a disaster if that building would have to be demolished, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's not only . . . The members opposite may feel that it's only the opposition that feels this way; that the public at large is quite happy with their efforts in post-secondary education. And, Mr. Speaker, I'll just run through a few headlines in some of the papers, Mr. Speaker, from the last two years that will indicate how the . . . what the people of this province think of their commitment to post-secondary education.

I have a headline, Mr. Speaker, from April 11, *The StarPhoenix*, and this is the article that I had indicated earlier where the University of Saskatchewan indicated that they . . . And the headline reads: "U of S \$100 million behind in building

repairs.” And of course the College Building, as I had indicated, is one of those buildings, Mr. Speaker.

Another headline from *The StarPhoenix*, April 20: “Saskatchewan paying price for neglect to health research, an official says.” That’s an area that I didn’t even touch on, Mr. Speaker, the impact of underfunding and the negative impact of health research.

And we all know of the woes and the trouble that we’ve . . . at the College of Medicine and the loss of some of the faculty there, Mr. Speaker, and the continuing concerns. In fact, it wasn’t so long ago that the very existence of that college was in jeopardy, Mr. Speaker. I understand through the efforts of the university that at least there has been some stability there but we don’t know for how long.

Another headline, Mr. Speaker, in *The StarPhoenix*, April 19 of last year, “Programs pressed for cash, university review shows.” Well what that headline is all about is that the university has undertaken an intensive review of all their programs that they are offering, and one of the overwhelming results that they found when they reviewed some 29 programs — and they have many more programs to review but when they were reporting after the review of 29 — is that one of the largest problems to offering quality programs, Mr. Speaker, is the lack of cash. And that’s indicated in this article, Mr. Speaker.

And an item again from *The StarPhoenix* dated May 8. And it’s entitled “Double-digit tuition hike forecast.” And of course that came true; 15 per cent increase in the U of S last year.

And as I’d indicated, because of the lack of funding, it makes the university’s job so much more difficult when they’re recruiting quality faculty. And they, as many other businesses, governments and so on, are finding that they’re in the process of faculty renewal. The baby boomers are retiring and they have to attract new faculty, and their job is being made increasingly difficult due to the increased demands by new staff.

Many staff, particularly if you’re a research orientated university, they want to know that they will have an opportunity and there is capacity to do some research. And if that capacity isn’t there, they at least would like to know when it will be there and if there can be a commitment made. And if they know that in a year or two down the road there will be some capacity for research, then they are willing to look at coming to our great province.

Because we don’t necessarily have to compete on salary alone. We have many things to offer. And I’ve heard this from some of the faculty people who have made the decision to come to Saskatchewan, whether it be here at the university here in Regina or the university in Saskatoon. They look at our quality of life, at the safety of our communities, among . . . are some of the top things that they will mention when they make that decision to come to this province.

But also high on their list of priorities is their professional development. And oftentimes that is research capacity and oftentimes the answer is, well it’s not the greatest or we don’t have any. And that certainly is a deterring factor in attracting quality faculty.

And quality faculty, Mr. Speaker, leads to quality education. And if there’s one thing in this province that we must stress and we must never sacrifice is the quality of education that we provide to our young people and to all those, to the students that attend our post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker. And of course then there are more headlines dealing with tuition fee increases and so on.

There’s a headline I think, Mr. Speaker, that certainly addresses this topic. And this is in the March 25 issue of the *Leader Post*. The headline reads, “Universities in need of public commitment.” And the article goes on to talk about the things that I’ve discussed, Mr. Speaker — the lack of commitment by this government to the universities.

They’ve done a job of making sure that not too many of the buildings fall down, although some are in danger of crumbling. Another building that comes to mind — and I keep referring to the U of S because the U of S is an older institution, has older buildings. — the Education Building has fences around it because some of the exterior is falling off, Mr. Speaker. It’s crumbling, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the headlines that I read were mostly from 2001 newspaper articles. There are an equal amount from 2002. I have one here, “Students hit with tuition hike,” again talking about the 8 per cent increase at the U of R.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think to . . . a newspaper article that really sums up and crystallizes the problem was an editorial in the *Leader-Post* dated May 31. And, Mr. Speaker, I think I would like to read into the record this editorial because I think in my opinion it certainly crystallizes the argument. And I’m quoting, Mr. Speaker:

Selling the virtues of studying at one of Saskatchewan’s universities to an increasingly skeptical audience has become an urgent assignment in the wake of recent sizeable tuition increases.

There’s no doubt that Saskatchewan students planning their post-secondary education here will take a . . . (sombre) second look at their choices in the wake of tuition hikes of up to 27 per cent at the University of Saskatchewan . . . and 8.8 per cent at the University of Regina . . . The higher tuition fees could also dampen recruitment of international students.

The U of S had a 15 per cent tuition hike last year and with this new increase, medical students will now pay (and get this Mr. Speaker, they will now pay) . . . \$9,205 a year (in tuition fees).

The article goes on, Mr. Speaker, and I continue to quote:

U of S Students’ . . . president Craig Stehr says it is “really distressing” that potential doctors and lawyers will increasingly have to come from wealthy backgrounds.

The U of R had an almost nine-per-cent tuition increase last spring and . . . (a) new hike will add . . . \$309 to fees for two semesters for . . . (the) typical full-time arts student.

Both universities have done an excellent job in growing their campuses and raising standards . . . (They) clearly, getting a university education in Saskatchewan remains the cheapest option for (those) students still living at home in Regina and Saskatoon. But an increasing number will now look at bigger institutions outside the province with comparable tuition and be prepared to pay the extra for accommodation and living costs for a degree perceived to carry more weight.

Others won't be so lucky. Many from less well-off backgrounds in the province simply won't be able to afford to get a university education.

Ultimately, insufficient government funding from the two universities is to blame for tuition hikes of at least four times the rate of inflation.

We suggest the government — which lost \$28 million in (its) . . . recent ill-advised attempt to grow potatoes — . . . (reinvest) its priorities and make an investment in the future of its young people. Their education guarantees solid returns for years to come.

Mr. Speaker. I think, as I said, Mr. Speaker, I think this editorial certainly crystallizes the argument, Mr. Speaker.

And interestingly, there is an article just in last week's paper — or I believe it was in perhaps in yesterday's paper — dealing with Saskatchewan's rate of inflation, again a publication from Statistics Canada. And one of the causes . . . or the causes of the higher inflation rate in Saskatchewan — which by the way, led the nation, again; Saskatchewan was first, but for all the wrong reasons, Mr. Speaker — is, and get this, these are the reasons as indicated by this article: 2.7 per cent inflation rate when the national average was 1.5, I believe it was. And the reasons were increased utility rates, property taxes, tobacco taxes, and tuition fees. Can you believe that — tuition fees — Mr. Speaker.

And the article goes on to say that these are all items that are in the realm of government control. What really caught my eye, Mr. Speaker, is that the increase in tuition fees is one of the reasons why we have a higher inflation rate in this province then all across the country. I mean, this is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, therefore I would like to move the following motion, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Redberry Lake:

That this Assembly condemns the provincial government for its failure to provide post-secondary institutions in this province with stable long-term funding resulting in large increases in tuition fees for students.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great privilege and honour to second this motion condemning the government for its failure to provide post-secondary institutions in the province with stable, long-term funding, resulting in large increases in tuition for students.

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious concern that has been developing for many years and the government has failed to address this

situation. In its annual report on university tuition fees released August last year, StatsCanada said that for the second consecutive year the largest average increase in tuition fees were in Saskatchewan, at a whopping 12.4 per cent increase.

In the last two years, Mr. Speaker, tuition fees in Saskatchewan have increased by more than 20 per cent. This means another dubious distinction award for this province as this increase represents the fastest growing tuition fees in the country.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, in the last decade according to StatsCanada, tuition fees have more than doubled in this province — more than doubled, Mr. Speaker. Year over year from 1991 to 2001, Saskatchewan students saw tuition fees increase by more than 100 per cent. In the past five years alone tuition fees have been hiked by more than 40 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, this in fact is proof that the NDP government has been offloading its fiscal mismanagement onto the backs of students. One needs to look no further than the significant increases in tuition fees.

In the recent . . . The recently ousted minister . . . Environment minister had the gall to tell students during her very short term as Post-Secondary Education minister that she had no problem with students existing on a diet of Spam and Kraft Dinner as she was able to make do when she went to university in the 1960s and '70s.

Based on this and other comments from the members opposite, it's obvious that the NDP has absolutely no idea about the reality of post-secondary education in this province. Not only is there a lack of access to health care, there's also a lack of access to post-secondary education in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in case it's lost on the members opposite, we feel it's important to point out that the tuition fees do not cover the full cost of educating students. There are many other so-called costs involved as well. For example, we all know that a good portion of the students who may be attending a university or a technical institute are from a rural or remote area, meaning that when they relocate they have also . . . have to cover other costs as well, such as accommodations and food.

(15:00)

It's not unusual, Mr. Speaker, to hear of student loan debts topping 30 or \$40,000 or more after the completion of the four-year program, even more for extended periods of study, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that once these students are done their post-secondary education, that money has to be paid back fairly quickly. So these students go to where there's some promise of growth of income. These students go to where the jobs are and now we know they are not staying here. They are leaving the province for other jurisdictions.

Frankly, all of Saskatchewan has had enough of the NDP government offloading its responsibilities of providing adequate funding to the universities and colleges.

Mr. Speaker, when we speak of the huge debt that many university students have had to take to get through university, I'd just like to quote from, actually it's a CBC (Canadian

Broadcasting Corporation) news item on August 2000. It says, Mr. Speaker:

Months after graduating from post-secondary institute of their choice, young people encounter one of the most unwelcome truths of adulthood: (deep) debt sucks. These are young people who received student loans, 5,000 . . . 10,000 . . . \$40,000 — and must start repaying them. For some it's like a mugging in a dark alley.

The loan doubtless enables more young people to attend universities and colleges and technical schools, but the burden of youth debt — amounts many homeowners owed on the mortgages 20 years ago — raises questions of the efficiency of the student loan program.

Mr. Speaker, the students consider it's like a mugging in a dark alley how the province of Saskatchewan is treating their university students.

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), a coalition of student governments from universities across the country, says, "student brains have been taken hostage." (Says the national director.) . . . national director, says a study on student debt is "long overdue."

And, Mr. Speaker, as we see, the government is not addressing this concern at all. As my very able colleague, the critic for post-secondary education has pointed out in his comments in the last few minutes that the government has really let down the students and the young people of Saskatchewan, have not helped them out, instead they have raised tuition costs.

And it's not only it's raising tuition costs, raising the cost of the . . . to the student and to the student's family. That is bad enough in itself. But we're also seeing the universities, especially University of Saskatchewan, buildings crumbling. There's some of the buildings are actually in such disrepair that they've been . . . had to be cordoned off, they are actually dangerous to enter. There's a lack of seating and room for classes.

And the whole point of our motion is that the provincial government needs to put in place the stable, long-term funding which means that the universities will have some plan in place so they can continue to begin to build and repair the structures in the university and have some ability and knowledge of their funding so that they can make some long-term plans as far as hiring future faculty, not only the repairing of the buildings but just improve the access of university to students in the province.

As I mentioned earlier, it's just not the cost of the tuition. It's also . . . the students have to bear a considerable cost in accommodation, food, and travel. As we know, many students come from many areas of Saskatchewan and many have to travel many hundreds of miles. And in particular the Native community, the Native students who . . . it is very important that they have access to a university education, have . . . Many of them have to come from a great distance away in order to take university classes and this is becoming quite burdensome on them and their families as well.

Obviously things cannot continue as they are. The

government's policies are not sustainable as they are and things have to change. Now whenever we talk about increased funding for anything the government always trots out numbers that they can't afford it. They always don't have money for many things, but they never take the steps in order to turn the economy around.

As we have seen in many other jurisdictions, in particular the . . . in Ireland, the Irish experience, they took . . . they were in a very similar situation as Saskatchewan is today, 10 and 15 years ago. They were an agriculture based economy. They had a . . . they had their over-regulated, burdensome labour laws, overtaxed, and they also had something that's very similar to Saskatchewan. They had on their horizon a huge number of young people that were coming . . . going to be coming into the workforce over the next 10 and 15, 20 years.

And the politicians in Ireland decided a few basic things that they had to do. First they had to sit down and develop a social contract with everyone in the country. That included agriculture, the universities, labour, business, and sat down at a round table you might say — like the government has announced many times which has never taken place — and actually struck a deal on how to deal with some very serious problems in Ireland.

And the problems again are very similar to what Saskatchewan had. The young people in Ireland, as in Saskatchewan, were growing up and leaving their country as they do leave Saskatchewan and go elsewhere to make a living and to live and find jobs.

In Ireland they decided, through their social contract, that they would reduce taxes, they would put incentives out for businesses — both local businesses, European businesses, and multinational companies from around the world including many from North America — inviting them to their country to build factories, to start their businesses or their sub-businesses that they have in other parts of the world.

But any business or industry needs a very stable, highly trained workforce, and the Irish government of the day decided that regardless of the outcome of their experiment, they needed and were going to educate their students. Even if they were going to leave home and go elsewhere, they wanted their students to enter the workforce and enter the world trained and educated to the best possible means so that they would have the best chances in the world wherever they went.

So they set about . . . actually in many cases free tuition to university students and encouraged their students and young people to go to university and get a proper education. As this process was going on — it was very successful — they also through their tax reductions and their deregulation of labour laws and regulations and red tape and promoting their economy and their country around the world, and also because of their social contract they developed with all the stakeholders, were able to turn their economy around.

They had a unique position in Europe as being an English-speaking country in the European economy, as is Saskatchewan; has many similarities. We have a great opportunity. We have an access into the North American

economy, the US economy where we have free trade agreements with Mexico and the United States. And so we have many parallels where we can compare to Ireland and their experience.

Everything came together for the Irish people. They did encourage companies from around the world to set up in Ireland. These companies did come, they did create jobs, and as the young people in Ireland came out of school, they had a very reliable and well-trained, highly trained workforce to work in these new jobs that were developed in the high-tech industry in Ireland. And as we all know, it's known around the world as the Irish miracle.

And there was many things that we must take notice in the Irish experience and the Irish miracle so we can copy and emulate many of the things that they've done here in Saskatchewan, so we can also keep our students, keep our . . . to train our students, to educate our students to stay in Saskatchewan to find well-paying jobs in Saskatchewan, create the jobs and the economy in Saskatchewan to keep our students here and to broaden the tax base. And when we broaden the tax base, we know that the economy is growing. We ultimately have more taxes for the government to spend on the critical areas in the economy: health and education and welfare.

And as we have pointed out many times, the Saskatchewan Party has a plan to grow Saskatchewan by 100,000 people in 10 years. And many of our plans in the Grow Saskatchewan plan is based on the Irish miracle, the Irish experiment. And we believe that we can emulate the Irish experience here in Saskatchewan through co-operation, common sense, and really the desire to improve this province, get the economy going so that we can develop the economy and the jobs for Saskatchewan students and people in this province.

As the member across has pointed out, the EC (European Commission) also has a system of transfers like we have in our federation in Canada. We also rely on the transfers of funds from the provinces to Ottawa. The have provinces transfer funds to Ottawa and Ottawa in turn divvies it out to provinces that are have-not provinces and Saskatchewan is a have-not province. And we, like Ireland, should take that money, take that money and use it to grow Saskatchewan so that Saskatchewan becomes a have province and not continue to be a have-not province.

So we have many parallels like Ireland also has. We have to take advantage of all the things that we have at our disposal. And we have our natural advantages, our natural resources and mining uranium, possible diamond mines, gold mines that we must develop. We must encourage more development in the oil and gas industry to grow the province to give our students, when they come out of university, a very high-paying, good job.

Mr. Speaker, but here we are in a situation where we have crumbling universities. We are leaving our students and our young people with burdensome debt once they are done university. And it's only natural if you have a \$40,000 loan, if they can't get a job in Saskatchewan, what are they going to do. They're going to go where the jobs are, and that's generally speaking, in Alberta, but not just Alberta. That means going into the United States, or going into other parts of Canada and

the world to earn the money they need to pay off their debt and start plans for families and for their retirement in the future. And it's very critical that we put in place the resources to keep these people in Saskatchewan and to grow the province.

And it's not only . . . In Ireland they not only educated the young people, but at the same time they also set in a process of inviting back Irish people who had left the country and invited them back, to come back to Ireland to take advantage of the new reality in Ireland. And there was an overwhelming success, where people from all over the world came back to their home country, back to Ireland to work and live in their native land — much the same as many people in Saskatchewan.

Wherever I have travelled in this country, I talk to people that was born and raised in the province. They wish they could come back to the province of Saskatchewan, they love this province but they are unable to, because they can't make a decent living. So I believe that the government has a . . . must take the steps to ensure that our young people, after they have a university education, that they're able to come back to a well-paying job in the province and live and work in Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to, as I said, I would like to second the motion. And at this time I would like to say to the members opposite that it is still not too late, it's coming a very critical point in the history of Saskatchewan, but we must turn this province around and get Saskatchewan growing again.

Thank you.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to enter this debate today, to try and set a little bit of light on the situation, and reality.

At the end of my remarks, I'm going to be moving the following amendment. My amendment will be that we remove all words after Assembly and replace with:

express its support for the groundbreaking effort made by the provincial government increasing access to post-secondary education for Saskatchewan people and working with universities and SIAST to provide stable funding.

(15:15)

Mr. Speaker, I assume we debate both the main . . . the motion and the amendment concurrently. And I want to point out the motion deals with, it says we need long-term, stable funding. And the opposition would have the people of Saskatchewan believe that there's no such thing as long-term, stable funding in post-secondary.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let me just start to put an end to that little mistruth. I have before me the historic operating grants to universities and federated colleges. 1994-95, universities got \$162.663 million. And that number — that's '94-95, '95-96, '96-97, and so on — the number every single year between then and now has either stayed the same or increased. It was, remember I said, 162 million. It's now 206.92 million for the year 2002-2003. And that's up from 197,870. That's for

universities alone. For federated colleges, the number went from 5.161 million to 8.41 million in that ensuing time.

Mr. Speaker, I simply draw those numbers out right now to point out that there has been ongoing, steady, dependable funding from the provincial government. The federal government funds, the provincial government funds, but we have been steady and growing and we're very, very proud of what we've done with post-secondary education here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Redberry talks a bit about Ireland and he speaks in fine words about bringing people together. Sounds wonderful to bring people together. I just don't know how in the world it is that day after day in question period, we'll have opposition members taking runs at urban Saskatchewan, taking a run at Regina. They did it again today, misrepresenting . . . misrepresenting what's going on with Wascana Creek, misrepresenting completely what's happening in terms of Regina and so on.

This is a group that hasn't learned a lesson from the '80s. The opposition haven't learned — even though some of them were around then — they haven't learned from the '80s, Mr. Speaker. They're still following the Grant Devine belief and that is you pit one group against another. You have rural and you have urban. And if we can just keep that rural support solid, we'll be all right. That's their belief; divide, divide, and divide. But you know what, they think it's divide and conquer, Mr. Speaker. What it really is, is divide and lose.

All of Saskatchewan wants education funding, they want our post-secondary education system to continue to grow, to continue to expand, to continue to be inclusive.

What I want is for my family, many of whom are in rural Saskatchewan, to be able to access either of our two very fine universities or our SIAST institutions or our exceptionally fine regional college system in Saskatchewan. What I need throughout . . . What we need throughout all of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is to work together because it is in our interest to make sure that we grow our universities, that we improve our SIAST, that we improve our regional college system.

And that's what this administration has been all about, Mr. Speaker. I went through the numbers; I'm not going try and beat the numbers to death. But I am going to say that on this side of the legislature, on the government side of the legislature, we believe in inclusivity, we believe in working with people, we believe, Mr. Speaker, that education is critically important to Saskatchewan. And that's exactly why we increase funding. Well increase . . . Post-secondary funding went up seventeen and a half million dollars this year alone, Mr. Speaker.

It's a good story we have here. We believe in working together. We believe that we can make it better.

I want to contrast that a little bit, a little bit, Mr. Speaker. We run on a policy. We ran our last election and education was one of the major planks of our election platform, one that we're very, very proud of, Mr. Speaker. We're very, very proud of it.

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Watrous on her

feet?

Ms. Harpauer: — With leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery I would like to introduce 10 grade 7 and 8 students from Simpson. They're accompanied with their teacher Travis Edwards, and with chaperones, Rob Garner, Joanne Gingrich, and Anita Richardson.

And I hope they enjoy the proceedings and we will meet with you shortly. So if everyone would welcome them here please.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 14 — Funding for Post-Secondary Institutions (continued)

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was talking about inclusivity and about the belief of government members that we need to have just an excellent post-secondary system, whether it be university, SIAST, or regional college.

I have been talking, Mr. Speaker, about our commitment to steadily increasing the budget, the tools, giving the tools to post-secondary institutions. We've done that through some very, very trying times. We've done it again this year, increasing the post-secondary budget, the total of which is now five hundred and eleven and a half million dollars. It's a substantial budget for post-secondary education. I won't, won't stand here and say that it's everything that everyone would dream for. But I am standing here proudly saying it's five hundred and eleven and a half million dollars.

And I want to contrast that, Mr. Speaker, with the members' opposite election platform. You may recall the election platform of the Saskatchewan Party dated October 31, 1998 titled *The Way Up*, Mr. Speaker, and I have a copy of that in my hands. *The Way Up*, they call it.

And I looked through it as I was preparing for this debate. And I'm looking through it right now. *The Way Up*, the summary, there is some tax cuts, some work first plan; there's — well, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 — 11 major planks here. I read, I looked at it very carefully, couldn't see anything about education — not a thing.

So I thought well, it'll be on the next page. Well, no, the next page is about tax cuts. Well the next page. No, the next page is about highways, Mr. Speaker.

Well I thought it might be on the next . . . No, the next page is about welfare, work for welfare. Then I thought it might be on the next page. Well no, Mr. Speaker, it's not on the next page of the members' platform because there they talked about jobs.

Then the next page is agriculture. The next page is Crown corporations. The next page is health care.

I think you're getting the idea, Mr. Speaker. I don't know, there's half a dozen or eight more pages here roughly and then we get education. That's where it fits in members opposite's election platform. That where post-secondary education fit.

And then they have the gall to stand up in private members' and piously pronounce that they're all in favour of increased funding. They're all in favour of looking after our universities and our SIASTs and our regional colleges.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you read their page on education. I defy anybody to find a single word in there that says there is going to be any increased funding. It's just missing, Mr. Speaker — it's missing.

What do they promise? They promise a freeze. Zap, you're frozen. Frozen, Mr. Speaker. Contrast that with what we have been able to do, even as I pointed out a little bit earlier in my speech, in some very trying economic times.

Mr. Speaker, we have a real commitment to working with our education system. We have a commitment to making an education system that is absolutely the very finest that we possibly can for our province, for our people, and we are going to continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, we believe in commonality; we believe in working together, inclusiveness. We do not believe in divide. And I know that the theory is divide and conquer — it doesn't work.

And in fact I predict that when the time comes, the people of Saskatchewan are going to recognize the divide and conquer strategy that the Saskatchewan Party is employing and what it will be, they'll try and divide and they will be divided, and the people of Saskatchewan will conquer and there will be a government in the government benches. I predict it will be led by the current Premier, and I predict that the government . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — I believe that's going to happen. I believe that's going to happen because the people of Saskatchewan want to be part of the future. They want their education system to continue to grow. They want to see funding continue to increase, as we can and as we can afford it, and there are many other demands for the treasury dollars, Mr. Speaker, but education funding is going to continue to be a major part of it.

Mr. Speaker, part of why we want to make sure that our funding stays . . . continues to grow . . . I want to talk a little about research and development because I know the hon. member for Arm River spoke a little bit about research and development. I want to say that the investments and grants to the universities for research and development is increasing — these grants are increasing, these investments are increasing.

There are more than 60 patents and 16 licensed technologies that have been produced by the University of Saskatchewan. There are 33 spinoff companies that have been created by the University of Saskatchewan Technologies Inc., and these 33 spinoff companies, Mr. Speaker, employ about 1,400 people — significant employment, significant job growth led by our post-secondary institutions right here in the province. The

combined revenues, incidentally, of these spinoff companies are estimated to be about \$190 million annually, Mr. Speaker. It's a very, very impressive performance and one that they and we are very proud of.

I want to talk a little bit about SIAST, the Institute of Applied Science and Technology. And I want to point out that there were just over 47,000 students that attended SIAST — 36,000 were part-time.

Mr. Speaker, it's a remarkable, remarkable number of students that SIAST has been able to help. And part of why they have so many students attending is that things like when they check, 96 per cent of the students rate their overall program quality as good to excellent; 92 per cent of labour force graduates are employed; 93 per cent of the labour force graduates responding — those who responded — were employed in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It's just remarkable what SIAST is doing. It's remarkable what's happening in post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, there is very much more that I could say about this but I know that I want to leave . . . Well I shouldn't say I want to leave. I know that my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Idylwyld has a fair amount that he wishes to say on this.

I want to simply sum up what I'm saying. What I'm saying today is that we on the government side have been very, very proud that we have increased the post-secondary budget year after year after year. At the same time, we provided year after year after year a balanced surplus budgets for the people of Saskatchewan.

(15:30)

Mr. Speaker, we're increasing the post-secondary budget at a rate that exceeds inflation. We're very proud of our commitment. It has been a long-term commitment to post-secondary education. It has been solid.

Our partners in the universities, at SIAST, and in the regional colleges all know just what commitment there is on this side of the House. They know how committed we are to working together. They know that it's real.

Mr. Speaker, we have that commitment. On the other side they ran on a program of freezing education — zero, zero increase — that was the program. That was the program. The member from Watrous says rate of inflation, which has been running about one, one and a half, some years two per cent rate of inflation.

Mr. Speaker, it is astounding, it is astounding that even now that members opposite will heckle that their commitment to post-secondary education is oh, rate of inflation for increase. Mr. Speaker, and then they have the audacity to come with a motion that says that they have a commitment to long-term stable funding.

Well maybe they do, Mr. Speaker, maybe they do have a commitment to stable long-term funding. Their idea of stable long-term funding for post-secondary education is freeze it and watch it continue to diminish and diminish and diminish in importance. Watch it serve ever fewer students. Watch it serve

the people of Saskatchewan in an ever diminished way, Mr. Speaker.

You cannot have a healthy and a vibrant post-secondary education system if you're going to starve it to death. You cannot do it. You just can't starve it to death.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, we are proud of it. I think at that stage . . . at this stage I'm going to take my place by moving the amendment that removes all words after the Assembly and replace with the following:

express its support for the groundbreaking effort made by the provincial government in increasing access to post-secondary education for Saskatchewan people and working with universities and SIAST to provide stable funding.

Mr. Speaker, I so move, seconded by the hon. member from Saskatoon Idylwyld.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm very honoured to speak on this very important topic. It's one that I've dealt with in my professional career as a teacher, as I see students go off to university and SIAST, and I think it's very, very important.

I want to talk just a minute about the motion that was moved by the member of Last Mountain-Touchwood and the weaknesses in the thinking of this, and in a minute you'll see what I mean. He talks about condemning the provincial government for its failure to provide post-secondary institutions in this province with stable, long-term funding plans, resulting in large increases in tuition for students.

So what is our history? What has it been for the last five years? In 1998-99, it was a 5 per cent basic increase. In '99-2000, it was a 5.2 per cent increase. In 2001, it was a 2.5 increase. In 2001-02, it's 3.5 per cent. And this year, 2002-03, it will be 2.3.

Now just on that fact alone, that would say this motion is faulty and is poorly thought out. But there's something that he really misses, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and this is the beauty of the amendment. Because what is the purpose of post-secondary education? The purpose is to allow our citizens to have access to a good, strong post-secondary education. And that's what it's really all about — is access.

All right. Now times are kind of tough, and we wish that tuitions could be almost free. Maybe that would be a wonderful goal. But what we really want, in real terms, is access. Access is the key to a well-educated citizenry. And that's what I think it's all about. And while we work really hard to keep tuition fees down and provide stable funding — and I think we do that, and the facts speak for themselves — the key is access.

Now I want to talk a little bit about what are the facts around . . . what kind of students . . . what is our population here? How many kids actually do take advantage of our post-secondary education? Well Saskatchewan has the highest percentage of

youth, in the 18 to 24 years of age bracket, enrolled full-time in university of all the Western provinces. Our 23 per cent of youth are enrolled, and this is above the national average of 20 per cent.

And as my colleague said, Saskatchewan is investing more than \$4 million this year to assist post-secondary institutions in using technology for students on and off campus.

Now what is the success of our universities? It is reflected in the annual *Maclean's* magazine ratings and the progress report on universities revitalization. So what is our ranking here in Saskatchewan? Well according to *Maclean's*, University of Saskatchewan jumped from 15, number 15 to 11 this year — pretty good in one year.

Now what are they saying? What are some of the things that they are saying about the University of Saskatchewan? Well of course they talk a little bit about the Canadian Light Source synchrotron. And they say:

It is perhaps the strongest symbol of Saskatchewan's new vigour in its drive to boost research capacity. The \$173.5 million device is due for completion in 2003 and ranks as one of the country's premier science projects.

Now it goes on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I quote:

The university is already a research leader in chemistry, physics, geology, and agriculture.

Now, what about this? And as I've talked about earlier about access, and I'm not sure if the members opposite and the Saskatchewan Party are so concerned about equity and access, but we are. We think this is a critical thing. *Maclean's* says, and I quote:

(Saskatchewan) University of Saskatchewan has also identified improved access for Aboriginal students as a major priority. The number of Native students has more than doubled in the past 10 years to roughly 2,000 students today.

And I think that's pretty worthwhile. That's a laudable goal.

Now what does the president of the University of Saskatchewan has to say? Well he was quoted in *Maclean's* magazine as saying this . . . this is, and I quote:

"This is a very attractive place to go to university for all kind of reasons," says MacKinnon, noting that the lower cost of living is an asset for cash-strapped students.

Well there you go. It's a little cheaper to live in this province and it's a good university to go to, and I think that's worthwhile. But, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what twiggled me . . . what occurred to me while I was reading this was, what about minimum wage? That's another way of providing access or resources for supports for the youth in this province.

Now we had that debate and we passed that. And where was the Saskatchewan Party on minimum wage and a way of improving access to post-secondary education? Where were they on that? I

think they were silent on that issue. There are all sorts of ways of supporting the youth and they weren't there on that issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What about the University of Regina, Mr. Deputy Speaker? How were they ranking in the *Maclean's* standings? Well last year, they were 11, this year they are number 7. And what are they saying about the University of Regina?

Well here, and I quote:

And university officials are justifiably proud of their six-year-old scholarship program, which covers first-year tuition for the (top graduates) top graduate of every high school in the province, and tuition for subsequent years if the student maintains the requisite grade point average. Clearly, Regina is determined to attract the best. "We provide high-quality, traditional liberal education," says president David Barnard, "with an emphasis on relevance to the real world."

And I think that's important, that we're looking to attract the best — very, very important. Now this may be, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a kind of a thorn in the side of the Sask Party, but *Maclean's* goes on. It talks about some of the strong traditions that the U of R has taken some pride in.

And I want to talk about this one because I'm a graduate of the U of R, and also a graduate of the U of S. I think both fine universities. But here, given that . . . and I quote:

Given that Saskatchewan is the birthplace of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the forerunner of the NDP, is not surprising that the . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. If the member for Regina Dewdney and the member for Swift Current have a conversation that they'd like to take, please take it behind the bar. It's distracting to the speaker and the acting . . . the Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you. I'd like to start that over again because I think this is important. And I quote:

Given that Saskatchewan is the birthplace of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the forerunner of the NDP, it is not surprising that the university has a history of solid research into social issues. Its school of human justice, unique in Canada, and its faculty of social work, both founded in the 1970s, were . . . (responses) to (the) grassroots demands. The Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, located at three campuses, and operating at more than a dozen off-campus sites, is the only First Nations-controlled university college in Canada. And next year, the federated college's administration will be consolidated under one roof in a new facility designed by the renowned architect Douglas Cardinal.

I think again a strong signal that our province prides itself on access; very, very important.

Now what's hot? *Maclean's* has this very interesting column called "What's Hot" in each campus. And what's hot at the

University of Regina — one student/one loan. A provincial agreement with the federal government amalgamates student loans and extends interest relief. So we are providing access. And I think that's really, really important.

Now what about SIAST? It's really important to think about SIAST. Not only universities but also the other post-secondary institutes. Now in 2000, the year 2000, the graduate survey had indicated the following: 92 per cent of the labour force graduates, those working or looking for work responded, were employed, all right; 93 per cent of the labour force graduates who were employed were in Saskatchewan; 82 per cent of the labour force graduates responding were employed in a training related occupation. So they're getting an education and they're staying here. And that's really, really critical.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Forbes: — Now what is SIAST doing about equity and the whole topic of access to those who probably most need access to post-secondary education so they can improve their role in our society? All right? SIAST has experienced impressive results in many of its programs across all campuses in the year 2000-2001 — for example, Aboriginal ancestry. Wascana Campus noted an increase from . . . to 2.7 per cent from 8.4 per cent in '98-99. And Aboriginal graduates increased by 1.3 per cent. So things are on the move. They're growing well.

What about students with disabilities? The enrolment rate of students with disabilities in programs has increased significantly at Palliser and Woodland campuses. Palliser Campus enrolment increased to 4 per cent from 2.9 per cent one year earlier. And in the same time, Woodland Campus enrolments increased to 5.7 per cent.

And what about visible minorities? Enrolments in visible minorities increased as well at Wascana.

And what about women? Woodland Campus enrolment, percentages for women in predominantly male programs increased in industrial training from 3.4 per cent to 5.7 per cent. And graduates in technology increased from 16.4 per cent to 18.8 per cent. This is very, very important. And as well, women account for 55 — over 55 — per cent of all students enrolled at SIAST. So a critical thing.

Now the other thing that's very interesting is when you're dealing with equity and access, you just can't make a blanket policy that one size fits all. You have to think of the different barriers that block people from full access to post-secondary education. So what are some of these issues?

Well one is, what about the rural students compared to urban students? Now what are some of the ways that we're lessening their barriers? Well we have a higher away-from-home living allowance, so folks who have to live away from home in the city have a higher allowance to provide for that. All right? Now they're away from home, we provide for return transportation allowance based on one . . . on the cost of one return trip to their family home each semester. So we're thinking about that as well, those kind of expenses. Okay?

(15:45)

And as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, upon request, students who must move away from home to go to school are allowed relocation expenses to a maximum of \$600. So again providing access for those who need to move away from home. This is a very, very important thing.

What about single parents? Again, another group who needs access to post-secondary education. This is very, very important. All right?

Last year, in the loan year, we . . . they indicate that there was over 2,700 single parents who will receive over \$30 million in assistance. A very, very important project . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh no. I think this is critical.

So what are some of the . . . Now we've talked about student loans and what are some of the positive things about student loans. Well Saskatchewan is the only jurisdiction in Canada that provides monthly assistance to students.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can speak to this because I know students who have had that, have had student loans, and they appreciate that monthly allowance. They don't get it all at the beginning and you know how some may have a hard time budgeting. They appreciate the monthly allowance — very, very important. All right?

Saskatchewan's program, maximum assistance levels, and contributions to debt management are among the most generous in Canada. So we pride ourselves on that.

And we also have special programs for special incentive students — non-status Indian, Métis, northerners, and single parents — they're allowed additional debt relief in the form of remission to further allow . . . to lower their debt load. Very, very important programs.

So Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is in the top three provinces with respect to the weekly maximum loan amounts allowable. And currently Saskatchewan's the only province with a graduate tax credit program that's specifically targeted to the graduate student. Very, very important things.

So what kind of things have happened especially now . . . Now let's move away, let's talk about something that encourages excellence in education. What kind of scholarships, those kind of programs, are we providing for? Well last year the tuition scholarship program provided over 300 program . . . or 325 scholarships equivalent to first-year tuition. Very important signals to students in grade 12 that we are thinking of them. It's very important for them to do their very best.

We are also thinking about students with disabilities. What about students with disabilities? They need access as well. All right? So persons with disabilities are provided with supports for disability-related costs associated with employment and training. And we provided over \$5 million for that. Last year changes to the Saskatchewan student loan program improved interest relief and debt reduction benefits, ensuring an effective safety net for persons with disabilities who rely on student loans to access post-secondary education.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I wind up my remarks, I want

to tell you about a new initiative that I think is very, very important to increase access right across this province, and that is Campus Saskatchewan.

We are looking at all sorts of innovative ways or approaches to improve our student . . . or our citizens' access to post-secondary education. We know it's not just young people. We know it's all sorts of people who need improved access to post-secondary education for their chances to have a good quality life in Saskatchewan.

So last year we thought of this project, and so we're talking about enhancing access to learning through information and communication technologies to the tune of \$4.2 million. This is very, very important . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . 4.2 and that's just very important.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, how are we meeting the needs of individuals and communities? This is very important. What kind of people, how many people are accessing our post-secondary programs in Saskatchewan?

Well there's over 28,000 students enrolled in degree programs. There are over 6,700 people enrolled in diploma/certificate programs. There are over 6,600 people enrolled in apprenticeship programs. And there are over 4,800 enrolled in basic education programs.

This is critical to the success of our province. The regional college system has approximately 34,000 enrolments and there were an estimated 2,100 enrolments through technology enhanced or Web-based programs.

Now as I talked about some of the sectors of our society that need access, what about Aboriginal enrolments? In the year 2001 at the university, universities, they estimate about 10 per cent of students at the universities were of Aboriginal descent — very, very important. SIAST was over 17 per cent, and in the apprenticeship programs there was just about 6 per cent; basic education, 50 per cent; JobStart/Future Skills, 20 per cent; and Career Employment Services, 20 per cent. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we take this very serious, the access to post-secondary education — very, very important.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think this is critical that we think about the . . . what does it really mean when we talk about tuition fee increases. We take this very seriously. We would love to see, well, a situation different than it was in January when we talked about the difficulties facing the budget and some of the challenges in terms of lower revenues from resources, the September 11 tragedy, all that, how that impacted.

If we could change the world, of course we would. And we know that one of the basic things would . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, no Sask Party would be a good start, would be a very good start. But we know we have to make some difficult choices. And so what we do is we think about access and how important access is, especially for those who have challenges and find it difficult to enrol in programs in post-secondary education.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I second the amendment and I will go

on record as being opposed to the main motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments regarding the motion that's before this Assembly and the funding of post-secondary education in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker . . . or Deputy Speaker, I find it very fitting that we're debating this motion at this time, as most grade 12 students currently are . . . either have begun their final exams or are preparing to, and within the next day or so will be entering into their final exam process and will be writing those exams, looking forward to the end of this month — which is about 10 days away — and their graduation from grade 12. And then looking beyond that time period of when they've completed their high school education and looking forward to an opportunity of post . . . in most cases, a post-secondary education.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about post-secondary education, I think it's important that we keep in mind that not everyone need attend a university. Now I know the directors and the boards of universities may not take that very well because most universities would like to see students come to their colleges because, of course, they're looking for enrolment numbers and they're looking for those numbers in order to access the tuition fees that are necessary for their colleges to move forward.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's keep in mind that there's more to the world that revolves around us than just having a university degree. There are needs in other fields of education and fields of opportunity for young people as they look to careers for their future, whether it's in the heavy-duty mechanical field, whether it's in the technical industry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whatever the case may be. And I know we have, and I believe the member from Idylwyld made mention of, our colleges and our SIAST institutions and the other avenues of post-secondary education.

However the motion before us talks about the fact of the universities in our province, and over the last some 10 years — almost 10 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker — we have seen a government that has off-loaded as they have suggested that they're doing this to balance the budget and they've made . . . they've accused other governments of leaving a horrendous debt at their feet. Or they've accused the federal government of off-loading responsibilities onto them and the realities are that there's responsibility at every level.

In fact we heard just recently . . . I just read an article recently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as Mr. Martin left the federal financial post, and everyone was giving him accolades for how well he balanced the budget. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sure the Minister of Finance in the province of Saskatchewan would say well yes, Mr. Martin balanced his budget but look what he did to us. And we have the member from Melville I'm sure would agree with that, that we have as a result of one government trying to balance its budget, passing it on to the next and then on to the other levels of government.

And what we have in this motion here today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it all comes down to the fact that at the end of the day, as taxpayers, we have to pay those bills, whether it's putting . . . helping our sons and our daughters receive their post-secondary education.

And as a result the universities in our province face the same problems that other universities do. And the fact that in order to provide the services that they would like to provide, to provide the access to the colleges that they would like to meet, they need the funding and they need a long . . . they need a long-term commitment.

Just an annual commitment or waiting for an annual budget to come forward to find out what they're going to receive to determine whether or not they're going to be able to meet their fiscal responsibilities isn't good enough. And the government at times has given hints that we need to start looking at the long term.

And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can look at certainly the Department of Highways has begun to look beyond just the immediate annual expenditure and started to project and bring forward ideas as to how they are going to put proposals forward in regarding . . . as to how they're going to meet the ongoing demands of upgrading our highways and maintaining our current highway structure.

And so the Department of Highways has come forward with a three- or a four-year plan in regards to expenditures. And it's a plan that certainly the Saskatchewan Party caucus has brought forward, and we went into the last provincial election with a plan. At that time it was a four-year commitment and an ongoing commitment to maintain a certain level of funding in order to address the crumbling road system in the province of Saskatchewan.

And so we have the same thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in education. And when it comes to post-secondary education, universities need to know more than beyond where they are today. They need to know what's the vision for the future in regarding . . . regards to funding for their institutions so that they can maintain the infrastructure that is necessary to continue to provide the programming that our post-secondary education, post-secondary students are looking for.

And as I mentioned a moment ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the grade 12 students that are currently trying to put their minds to their final exams and as they prepare for final exams, and they don't really want to have to be worried about the fact that they may have applied to a university and find that as they've applied and finally are accepted into the program, find that the tuition has increased since they've applied as the universities sit down and address their budgets.

And so this motion before us, while it condemns the provincial government, basically calls on the provincial government as well to put in place a long-term commitment, to make a firm commitment to our post-secondary institutions and colleges so that the funding will be there and they will be able to then come up with a long-term plan that keeps a reasonable tuition fee in place so that our young people, as they graduate from high school, will then be able to look forward to moving on to that

post-secondary education, receiving the training in the field that they have a vision that they would like to work in or that they would like to be involved in, and knowing that when they begin their program, their tuition fee will at least be level or there'll be minimal increases rather than substantial increases which may in some cases, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . And my colleagues and I, I think have faced it on many occasions, students coming to us and finding that the tuition fee increases have been substantial enough that with the minimum wage level increases that the member from Regina Idylwyld talked about, just do not give them the opportunity to provide the funding or even to provide . . . put aside adequate funds to allow them to continue their education.

(16:00)

So, Mr. Speaker, Deputy Speaker, I believe this motion is an important motion. It's an important motion because it really addresses the need for governments to look long term rather than short term when it comes to funding for our post-secondary institutions and colleges and universities, in order that our young people have the opportunity to access the education and the tools that are necessary to build and to move forward in the economy of the 2000s and as we look forward to building our province and growing our province, and it's important that we address this issue.

And so therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel it's important that we address this issue and we speak to the issue and I feel it was important as well that each and every one of us take the time that is necessary to bring forward the arguments and the points so the government is aware of the concerns that are out there.

And I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

Mr. Goulet: — Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I of course will be supporting the amendment and go against the motion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in regards to post-secondary education in this province we have a very, very proud record. As I looked at the fact you know overall from K to 12 and also post-secondary, the budgeting, which is the topic of the debate, you know, has improved even though we are in challenging times. And, Mr. Speaker, we had a record budget this year at \$1.2 billion.

And I was listening to the debate by the member from Moosomin and I was quite surprised in regards to his earlier comments you know vis-à-vis the idea of the universities versus the idea of the colleges. He seemed to be implying, you know, something of a division in that regard and I thought that was just quite unfortunate. Maybe it's the policy of the Saskatchewan Party which plays a dividing role, you know, from the urban to the rural and to the North, and plays a dividing role between the colleges and the universities. But I thought it was quite unfortunate in terms of the way he was wording his commentary.

But I would like to just put it on the record what we do have you know vis-à-vis, you know, the technical institutes and the colleges and also the universities because for us on this side of the House, for the coalition government, we are very, very proud of our strong universities and strong colleges and strong

technical institutes. And also a very, very strong aspect in regards to Aboriginal institutions in this province.

I would say that these are the facts from . . . and he was talking about a long-term program, so I'll give you the facts on funding increases from 1998 to this year, 2001-02. And in relation to the universities, the funding has increased in those years by 15.3 per cent which is \$28.2 million. If it had been inflation, it would have increased by only 10.7 million, but we've improved it by 28.2 million.

The Saskatchewan Party position has always been to increase it by inflation. And that's what the provincial position was. So their increase would have been over \$18 million less for the universities if they had put their policy into place, you know, during this period of time.

When I looked at the SIAST funding, that has increased by \$16.7 million — I mean, 16.7 per cent, pardon me. And that's \$10.9 million. Now if the funding had been provided according to the Saskatchewan Party plan, it would have been \$3.8 million. That would have been \$7 million less than what we provided as a coalition government.

The other thing is that on the regional colleges, we increased the amount by 35 per cent which is \$3.4 million. Now if the Saskatchewan Party followed their policy on inflation, it would have been \$563,000. Again it would have been \$3 million, approximately \$3 million less.

So when you're looking at the Saskatchewan Party over there, sounding as if they're going to increase tuitions and all of that, I just have to look back at the record I have in here, *The Sheaf*, March 17, 2002. And when he was being interviewed by the students, by *The Sheaf*, this is what the quote that says in the paper. It says:

. . . Hermanson (feels tuition fee) feels tuition is still competitive and that Saskatchewan schools are at the middle of the pack.

You know, they sound as if they would increase tuition in their debates today but this is what their leader says. This is March 17, 2002 in *The Sheaf*, in Regina, this year. Hermanson, quote:

. . . Hermanson feels tuition is still competitive and that Saskatchewan schools are in the middle of the pack.

On scholarships and bursaries . . . (he said) . . . (it is) "more of a university and . . . private sector initiative, rather than a government initiative."

And that is what the Leader of the Opposition, that says, contrary to a lot of the statements, you know, being made by the members over there, who would think that they would be including . . . would be improving the tuition.

So those are the facts that we do have. And I'll look at some of the facts as well on the grants to the universities and federated colleges.

Just after the Grant Devine era, their buddies over there, of course with the Devine fiasco, they had to change their name to

the Saskatchewan Party.

And this is what the amount was in regards to the operating grants: there were \$178,296 . . . one hundred and seventy-eight million two hundred and ninety-six. And it is now two hundred and fifteen million three hundred and thirty in 2002 and '03. Again you will see the increase, even though that they were in trying times.

Of course they're cringing over there because I talk about Grant Devine, and the reason why of course they changed their name from the Progressive Conservatives to the Sask Party.

And it is one thing that I know from the historical record, that indeed when the Tories were around, it was a shameful record, of course. And the record was such that the interest payments on the debt were larger than all the money we had spent in schools, in elementary schools, more money than we spent in universities, in the technical institutes, etc. The Grant Devine debt, the Grant Devine interest payments on the debt were larger than all the money we spent in the province of Saskatchewan. And that was the shameful record of the Tories, who were the same right wing friends as the Saskatchewan Party.

Of course they were a little bit shameful about the Progressive Conservative record, so they changed their name to Saskatchewan Party. But it's the same policy, the same . . . it's the same practice.

And that's what they do; they try to deny that and they cringe on . . . (inaudible) . . . and they shake a little bit, but indeed they know that's quite true — that the policies are quite the same whether you look at the . . . When I listened to Grant Devine in his speeches back in when I was in opposition in '86 to '91 period, I listened to them at that time and they sound the same. Not very much difference. They will choose a few little different words, but essentially and fundamentally they were the same.

And when I listened to the member as well, he was talking about the idea of not only the fact that they would increase tuition, but how would it be possible because their policy in the last election was to freeze everything. You know, they would freeze . . . And I mentioned how much you would lose in the universities, SIAST, and the colleges because of that freeze.

And again for the record, the universities today, in the past three years received an extra \$28.2 million, and inflation would be 10.7. So that would be \$18 million less, is what they would get. Just imagine how high the tuition fees would be if indeed there was \$18 million less in the universities.

And also in SIAST, they had an increase of \$10.9 million. With the Saskatchewan Party policy, it would have been 3.8 — again, that's \$7 million. You would have seen also a larger increase in tuition payments in regards to the SIAST system.

So what you're seeing in the colleges as well is \$3.4 million. Under the fact of the Saskatchewan Party freeze idea, only by inflation, it would have been 563,000 — again, close to \$3 million less. And that amounts to quite a bit in regards to not only the excellence in programming that we do have in this

province and also for student support, but also in regards to other things that we put in the budget.

This year on the budget, the Saskatchewan Party was criticizing us when we put more money in capital. And they were talking about this fudge-it budget idea. You know, they were mad at us because we were giving extra money in regards to the university programming. And they were mad basically because we were putting, you know, quite a decent amount of money in regards to the capital side of the picture. And we were, overall in K-12 and post-secondary, we were putting \$90 million. At post-sec the amount was 50 million and at K-12 we were at 40 million.

As a matter of fact we had some other enhancements in the Centenary Fund for \$10 million. So what we were looking at is quite a budget in terms of capital at around \$100 million. And it's something that was very, very positive in this province.

But I was very, very surprised when the Saskatchewan Party chose to attack that idea. They said that it was, you know, playing around with how you do accounting and all of that. They were trying to play the old politics because they knew that the idea of accountability was bad in regards to their old friends, the PCs (Progressive Conservatives) from whence they changed their name. They knew that the PCs had a very, very bad name on the question of accountability.

So all of a sudden, they were trying to tab us with this idea that we were not accountable. And basically, of course, we were above board in regards to accountability. We utilized a brand new system that our universities appreciate and that the extra \$100 million we put on capital is something to be proud of, not to be negative.

The Saskatchewan Party chooses to be on the negative mood all the time. The doom and gloom scenario. They are not proud of what the universities do.

And I'll give you a little bit of an example. University of Regina . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member asked me who wrote that speech for me. Of course I wrote it myself. Because I know that when they talk they have extremely bad research numbers from that side. So I wouldn't rely on their researchers.

But I do my own research and I do my own level of information, and of course, our excellent staff provided me with these excellent information that I do provide for you.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will continue. The U of R this year, in terms of quality programming, they've got a new Bachelor of Arts in police studies. It's actually the first one where you have — in Canada — where you have Saskatchewan Indian Federated College working in conjunction with the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police); a tremendous program.

Again, you have a Master of Aboriginal Social Work — the first of its kind anywhere in North America. And also a Bachelor of Science in, actuarial science, you know, trying to look at math, stats, and bring it all together to make sure that there is accountability in systems, etc.

(16:15)

And then we're looking at the aspect of a research park where in both Saskatoon and Regina, both top-notch. At the U of S it's pretty amazing overall on the research . . . (inaudible) . . . they get about . . . over \$100 million worth of research funding. Of that, approximately, over, approximately 30 per cent, over 30 per cent comes from the province; actually, it's \$31.6 million. And it is something where we have a first-class institution in research on both universities on the petroleum side over here and also in Saskatchewan, which we knew of in a very many areas of research, from the Research Park. And when I used to be in SOCO (Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation), we used to get all the nitty-gritty reports on it and I was very, very proud of those developments.

But the Saskatchewan Party doesn't have any time to talk about these new developments, these new positive developments. And I look at the capital programming they'll have in Saskatoon: a new kinesiology building, Thorvaldson, the Spinks addition, you know, after one of the presidents, you know, of the universities there. You will have the College Building being improved. They'll have the College of Agriculture— will have a new sixth floor over there. And also the STM (St. Thomas More College) at half a million dollars.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, the members from across don't know how to be proud of their universities. They don't know how to be proud of the different colleges. They don't know actually how to be proud of the fact that a lot of the buildings are going up. And they don't know how to be proud of the profs of this province who access not only public sector money, but private sector money in regards to getting the top level research that is very important for this province and this land.

And I think that . . . the other thing I did notice about the debate is that when I listen to the members vis-à-vis the issue on Aboriginal people and education, I find that passage strange that indeed the only time that they raise Aboriginal issues, when it's negative. They will only raise issues on Aboriginal people in the House, the Saskatchewan Party, when everything is always in the negative.

You know, they'll raise the question about . . . they feel guilty about their old friends the Tories who put us in this debt by \$15 billion and interest payments, etc., from way behind. And they feel that they have to pound away at somebody on accountability, so they go at SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) and Aboriginal people, First Nations people all the time.

You know what? Ninety per cent of their questions in the House have been on the question of accountabilities. Maybe they are so, so guilty about being old Tories that indeed they have this gumption to attack somebody on the issue of accountability.

But that's one thing that I have noticed about their idea. They don't know how to be proud of Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. The best institution in, not only in North America but in the world, in regards to getting Aboriginal people to be true, strong partners in post-secondary education. You're seeing a brand new building going up in this province here in Regina, a tremendous building, and it's moving up with many different

programming.

In Saskatoon, you're seeing the history that was made, you know, vis-à-vis the Indian and northern education program, the ITEP program, Indian teacher education program, the native . . . (inaudible) . . . program that was there — 80 per cent of the grads, you know, from all over Canada have gone through that program.

And also the fact that you have a program, an M.B.A. (Master of Business Administration) program, dealing with First Nations people at that university. You also have a nursing program you know to be very, very proud of; strong partnerships between the university, First Nations, Métis people on Gabriel Dumont Institute, and also in regards to the Gabriel Dumont college idea.

And you're seeing also the same dimension with the technical institutes. Dumont Technical Institute and Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies — again first-class institutions. Something to be very, very proud of, something to be very positive.

What does the Saskatchewan Party say? Zero. Absolutely nothing. You know, I sit in day in and day out in this House waiting for them to come out for one time to say something positive about Aboriginal people. But they keep saying only the negative stuff.

So that is why I chose to enter the debate to make sure that we stand up here to say that we are proud of the educators in our province, proud of the universities, proud of SIAST, proud of the community colleges, the regional colleges, proud of the institutions by First Nations and Métis people. To say that the capital development are there.

And I think that in that sense, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I felt pretty good to come out and say these things because I see the negative doom and gloom by the Sask Party; the fact that they will try and use trick words in regard to tuition when their leader said otherwise. And also the fact that when it comes down to education they would freeze everything, and that indeed the amount that they would be good would be a way million million dollars less than what we do provide today.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be . . . with the support in regards to the amendment, I move to adjourn the debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

Motion No. 15 — Co-generation of Electricity and Wind Power

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to enter into debate this afternoon on a subject that is near and dear to my heart, namely work that our government is doing with respect to renewable energy development in the province of Saskatchewan, and my hope, Mr. Speaker, that we will do even more in the months and years ahead on this file.

And at the end of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be moving the following motion:

That this Assembly recognize and applaud SaskPower's and the government's commitment to environmental responsibility and stewardship through its development of cogeneration of electricity and wind power, and urge continued expansion in these two important areas.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have a number of remarks that I want to make on this matter. And I want to begin, Mr. Speaker, by saying that it's my dream that over the course of the next 50 years, Saskatchewan will move to a renewable energy economy; an economy, Mr. Speaker, that ultimately won't rely on fossil fuels.

Now these steps, Mr. Speaker, many small steps are needed to accomplish this very large goal. But before I speak directly to the question of wind power and cogeneration of electricity, and the significant progress that we've made in the last three years on this file, Mr. Speaker, I want to say a word about energy conservation. Because I believe a renewable energy economy cannot be achieved in any industrialized country in the world without a sound energy conservation program.

We're not going to be able to move to a renewable energy economy if we keep using more and more and more energy, Mr. Speaker. We have to level out our energy demand and use energy more efficiently. And that is the prerequisite to ultimately achieving a renewable energy economy.

And so, Mr. Speaker, what our Saskatchewan government is moving forward on is a file in which we're trying to make progress on energy conservation, wind power development, and cogeneration of electricity all simultaneously. And I think it's this work across these various forms of energy development, Mr. Speaker, that is ultimately going to get us to where we . . . the dream that I ultimately am hoping the province of Saskatchewan will achieve.

So let me say just a word about conservation first, Mr. Speaker. This government in the last several months has launched several new exciting energy conservation initiatives. Just yesterday, Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the minister responsible for Crown Investments Corporation, and myself were at a news conference at Gregg's Plumbing & Heating in Saskatoon where we announced an extension of the prime rate loan program for residents of this province to be able to borrow money over a five-year period to upgrade their furnaces and other natural gas appliances and install energy efficient equipment in their homes, Mr. Speaker.

And I might say that residents who are listening to the television broadcast may want to consider a furnace upgrade because SaskEnergy now makes available to all residents of the province a five-year loan at prime rate. And that prime rate stays in effect, Mr. Speaker, at the same rate of prime as the date that the loan is taken out for the full five years. And people can borrow up to \$10,000 to upgrade their furnaces, their hot water heaters, and other natural gas appliances in their home and achieve through this upgrading, Mr. Speaker, very significant efficiencies.

For instance, if somebody chooses to upgrade their furnace to a mid-efficiency furnace, they can be looking at savings of \$200 a year; to a high-efficiency, 95 per cent efficiency furnace, savings of over \$300 a year, Mr. Speaker. And we're the only province in Canada, I'm proud to say, Mr. Speaker, that has this kind of a program available.

Well over a number of years, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that there are significant savings, not only for residents in terms of their energy costs but also in terms of reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Every one of these upgraded furnaces, Mr. Speaker, on average for a homeowner, will result in carbon dioxide emission reductions of 2.2 tonnes per year, Mr. Speaker. That's just one of our initiatives.

We're also, Mr. Speaker, upgrading the 11,000 senior citizens housing units in the province of Saskatchewan. And we're going to see there, Mr. Speaker, reduced energy demand over a five-year period that's in the 10 per cent range. So a 10 per cent reduction in energy use in the 11,000 senior citizens housing units in the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, the good news there is that again the economics of this are very positive for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. It's the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that pay the energy bills on our 11,000 senior citizens housing units.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're investing \$1 million a year there for each of the next five years. The work is already underway. And, Mr. Speaker, in year seven, two years after that investment of \$1 million a year for five years, two years later all of the money will have been fully recouped for the people of Saskatchewan through energy savings, Mr. Speaker.

So in year seven, the \$5 million is fully recovered and after that, Mr. Speaker, it's all savings for the taxpayers of this province and it's again a significant reduction of CO₂ emissions for our province.

Let me just give you one more example, Mr. Speaker, of an important energy conservation initiative that we're taking in the province. The minister for CIC and myself were recently — and the Premier — were recently in attendance at the Warman High School, Mr. Speaker, this spring. And there were about 400 students who were gathered in the assembly and senior officials from the Saskatchewan Valley School Division, and we announced, Mr. Speaker, a major energy conservation initiative for Sask Valley School Division in which they'll be upgrading energy efficiency in 18 of their schools, Mr. Speaker, with a total investment, Mr. Speaker, of \$2.5 million. Again all paid for through energy savings, Mr. Speaker, with a significant reduction again in carbon dioxide emissions and savings in terms of fuel bills for local ratepayers in that school division.

Well I just use this, Mr. Speaker, as three examples of energy conservation initiatives that the province has taken that lay the foundation for the transition to a renewable energy economy and we will need to undertake dozens and dozens of these kind of energy conservation projects to truly lay that foundation, Mr. Speaker. But the work has started and it's started in a substantial way.

Now, Mr. Speaker, complementing this work then — and speaking directly to the motion — is the work that has begun with respect to wind power, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan Power Corporation is moving with GreenPower on a number of fronts.

But for me, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most exciting is the work that's being done in the area of wind power. And in this regard, Mr. Speaker, we have launched two very important projects: one of which is already operational and the other of which is under construction this summer, Mr. Speaker.

(16:30)

Already we have completed construction on an important 11 megawatt wind power station at Gull Lake that has been developed by the SunBridge Corporation in conjunction with the Government of Saskatchewan, and with assistance from the Government of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

And in fact the federal government is contributing to this project in a way that's very positive and in a way that our government very much appreciates, Mr. Speaker. Because they are making a commitment to purchase power for federal government buildings in the province of Saskatchewan and through those purchases are contributing to help make this project at Gull Lake a possibility, Mr. Speaker. So it's a very good example of co-operation between the federal and provincial government.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that completion of this project is now very near at hand, and in fact, later this month members of the Assembly are being invited out to Gull Lake to participate in the official opening of the project. So here, Mr. Speaker, we have 17 turbines that are completed and will . . . and are now fully operational.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, in this budget that we just brought down this spring, in March of this year, we announced the start of a second wind power project in the province of Saskatchewan — this time fully the responsibility of the Government of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, again, we're using government facilities to help make this project viable because the province . . . provincial government buildings are supplying 15 per cent of their power needs by purchasing power from this second wind power project, which is again going to be in the Gull Lake area. And we're in the early stages of construction, Mr. Speaker, on that project.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we are going to finance part of that project by making available a GreenPower purchase option to industrial customers and business customers in this province, and to all residential consumers in the province of Saskatchewan.

And those listening to the broadcast this afternoon will soon receive in their SaskPower mailings, Mr. Speaker, an invitation to participate by purchasing GreenPower from these wind turbines. And if there's a lot of interest by consumers in the province of Saskatchewan, we'll be able to build more turbines, Mr. Speaker.

But these . . . the purchase of GreenPower for provincial residents is available in blocks that are 100 kilowatt hours, Mr. Speaker, and which roughly works out to an additional monthly purchase of \$3.50.

And let me just say, Mr. Speaker, a word about what can be purchased when you buy 100 kilowatt hours of GreenPower. It's enough electricity, Mr. Speaker, for five computers and a printer for eight hours a day, all month long. Or, Mr. Speaker, it's the equivalent of 20 loads of laundry. Or it's the equivalent of two high-pressure sodium farmyard lights burning every night for a month. So that's what you can purchase with 100 kilowatt hours of GreenPower.

And, Mr. Speaker, for those who are in a position to afford it, I want to encourage residents of the province to buy a block of GreenPower and add it to their power bill and make a contribution toward Saskatchewan moving more quickly to expanding wind power in our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, those are the steps that we've made so far with respect to wind power. And these two projects, Mr. Speaker, when they're fully operational — which will be by this fall — will give us the third largest wind power capacity in all of Canada right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And that's just the start, Mr. Speaker, because what the motion talks about is urging our government to expand in the area of wind power even further, Mr. Speaker. Because I believe there's ultimately no reason why we can't look at not just 17 megawatts of wind power but — which is the third largest in Canada — but that we could go to 150 or 200 megawatts of wind power in this province. That's ultimately, Mr. Speaker, where I believe we should be heading.

There is not a reason in . . . not a reason, Mr. Speaker, why Saskatchewan can't ultimately have the largest wind power capacity of any province in Canada, and certainly in terms of the percentage of wind power in our total grid, the highest percentage of wind power of any province in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — That's the objective that I ultimately want to see us heading towards, and we've made an excellent start, Mr. Speaker, in the last two years.

And that's just the beginning, Mr. Speaker. If the people of Saskatchewan re-elect this government, which I'm confident they will, just watch us in terms of moving forward on GreenPower, Mr. Speaker. Just watch us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Now, Mr. Speaker, the resolution, the motion before us, also talks about cogeneration of electricity. And I do, before I conclude my remarks, want to say a few words about cogeneration because there are some very exciting things happening on this front as well, Mr. Speaker.

And for those who are listening to the broadcast, Mr. Speaker, some may not be familiar with cogeneration. So let me just say

that cogeneration of electricity is basically the simultaneous production of electricity and steam from a single fuel source, Mr. Speaker. So essentially what's happening is that that single fuel source is generating electricity for our power grid, and steam usually for industrial purposes, at the same time, Mr. Speaker. That's the purpose.

So rather than just using the fuel source to generate electricity, one has the advantage of getting both steam for industrial purposes and electricity for the grid at the same time. And usually, Mr. Speaker, this process uses combustion gas turbines, heat recovery steam generators, and steam turbine technology — all being used on the same site.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that we now have one cogeneration project in the province that is complete and that has been functioning for a couple of years, and we have two other important cogeneration projects that are underway; in fact, one is very near completion, Mr. Speaker, at the Queen Elizabeth power station. A second should be completed by the end of 2002 at the Cory potash mine, and a third project, Mr. Speaker, is already complete and it's the Meridian cogeneration plant in Lloydminster. So, Mr. Speaker, three exciting projects that the province of Saskatchewan has invested in.

And let me say again, Mr. Speaker, that the direction on cogeneration has been made possible by the election of a New Democratic Party government in the province of Saskatchewan. And I'm convinced that these kind of projects wouldn't be happening if the NDP was not in government, Mr. Speaker.

So let me just say a word about the Meridian cogeneration plant in Lloydminster, Mr. Speaker, because this is a project that was . . . that began . . . production at this plant, Mr. Speaker, began in December of 1999. And the plant, Mr. Speaker, uses two gas turbines burning natural gas to generate electricity. And the waste heat from the gas turbines creates steam that drives a single-steam turbine to generate additional power, Mr. Speaker. So this was our first initiative, located in Lloydminster.

Since then, Mr. Speaker, we've gone on to start two other projects. One, Mr. Speaker, is the project that I was making reference to at the Queen Elizabeth power station. And this is, Mr. Speaker, a retrofit of the power station in my home community of Saskatoon.

And essentially what our government has done, Mr. Speaker, is that we've installed six 25-megawatt gas turbines and we're capturing the exhaust gases to produce electricity. And we're — as a result of this work, Mr. Speaker — we're increasing the efficiency at the Queen Elizabeth power station from the previous 30 per cent up to 45 per cent.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know that what this is going to do is mean that we're generating more electricity and at the same time reducing the CO₂ emissions that go into the atmosphere from each unit of electricity that is produced.

So this is a win-win situation for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And it's another example of how SaskPower is doing its part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the province of Saskatchewan through this kind of a very good investment.

The total investment, Mr. Speaker, by the people of Saskatchewan through SaskPower Corporation, is \$140 million. And I'm very pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that this new retrofitted plant is soon going to be opening and I'm very excited about it, Mr. Speaker.

I want to touch on one other cogeneration project, Mr. Speaker, and that's the project at the Cory mine site. We're constructing a 228-megawatt cogeneration station that should be completed by this November. And this, Mr. Speaker, is a joint venture that combines the skills of SaskPower with ATCO Power of Alberta, and of course with the Cory potash mine, Mr. Speaker.

And SaskPower is going to be purchasing the electricity generated by the power station and the thermal energy, at the same time, will be sold to the Cory mine site for its use. So, Mr. Speaker, here we have a third example of a situation in which we're generating power to meet the needs of SaskPower electrical customers, and at the same time we're contributing, Mr. Speaker, to providing the industrial steam that's needed for a major industrial project, in this case the Cory potash mine, Mr. Speaker.

So instead of the Cory mine needing a fuel source for its own industrial use, it simply is able to take advantage, Mr. Speaker, of the electrical generation that will take place on-site, that will be fed into the larger grid, and at the same time, its steam needs for the Cory potash mine are being met directly through the project, Mr. Speaker. So it's another win/win situation.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me sum up by saying that the motion before us speaks to first of all the accomplishments of this government in the last two years with respect to wind power and cogeneration of electricity. And what we've managed to do, Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of this term in government, in just three years, Mr. Speaker, is launch three major cogeneration projects, three major projects for the cogeneration of electricity, one in Lloydminster and two in the Saskatoon area. And at the same time, Mr. Speaker, on the wind power front, we have launched Saskatchewan's first two wind power projects, both in the southwest corner of the province, in the Gull Lake area, Mr. Speaker.

By the end of this year, all of those projects will be complete. And they will make, Mr. Speaker, they're going to make Saskatchewan a major leader, Mr. Speaker, on both wind power and cogeneration of electricity. And this is just the beginning, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I urge . . . in conclusion I urge that the Government of Saskatchewan not look back for a moment but only look forward with respect to expanding work on both wind power and cogeneration of electricity, so that we become Canadian leaders, North American leaders, and I ultimately hope, Mr. Speaker, world leaders on both these fronts, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very excited about the direction that our New Democratic Party-Liberal coalition government is going on these files, Mr. Speaker. And this coalition government is going to continue work throughout this term. And we're going to, Mr. Speaker, if we're re-elected, continue work on this file for many years to come.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(16:45)

Mr. Prebble: — So in conclusion, I want to move, Mr. Speaker, the following motion — and I should have stopped talking about one minute earlier — but I move:

That this Assembly recognize and applaud SaskPower and the government's commitment to environmental responsibility and stewardship through its development of co-generation of electricity and wind power, and urge continued expansion in these two important areas.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — And that'll be seconded, Mr. Speaker, by the hon. member for Regina Elphinstone. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to take part in this debate. And it's a particular honour to take part in this debate as the seconder to this motion given the mover of this motion.

The mover of this motion, of course, is the member from Greystone. You know, here we have an individual who's dedicated decades of his life to the cause of the environment, to the cause of making sure that mother nature is there for our children and our children's children and generations on. And, you know, it's perhaps a measure of his commitment and his passion in this debate that he was nearly moved to speechlessness at the end of his comments.

But quite seriously, Mr. Speaker, it is a real privilege to follow after the member from Greystone in this debate because he has been a tireless defender and promoter of causes that work for the betterment of our environment and for the conservation of our environment. And on this side of the House, he's been the man fighting for the green plan and he's been the man putting the green plan into action.

And it's a tremendous achievement and, as a younger MLA on this side, I can only hope to see more of it in the days and months and years to come. So it's a real honour, Mr. Speaker, to take part in this debate coming after the member from Greystone. It's also a little daunting giving the member's considerable knowledge and experience on this file. But I'll give it a try anyway, Mr. Speaker.

Now when it comes to wind power and it comes to hot air, of course, when people have, you know, their elected representatives holding forth on these two subjects, they figure, well at least they're speaking of that which they know, Mr. Speaker. But we've only recently begun . . . begun to turn the wind into power and to use the hot air to good advantage instead of the perhaps more frustrating ends to which it is put in this place.

For example, Mr. Speaker, on April 22, SaskPower began offering GreenPower . . . Mr. Speaker, the member from Cypress Hills is so excited about this he can't wait to share

about the hot air. And the wind power. He's looking to get in the debate I guess.

Mr. Speaker, April 22, SaskPower began offering GreenPower to its customers. Now don't take my word for what the people had to say about GreenPower being available. Here is what Ann Coxworth, program coordinator of the Saskatchewan Environmental Society, said:

We've been looking forward to this day for a long time. Wind energy is an environmentally appropriate choice for Saskatchewan.

You know, truer words were never spoken in this land where we're famous for W.O. Mitchell's *Who Has Seen The Wind*. Well we've seen the wind, Mr. Speaker, and we're turning it into power for the conservation of this planet.

Jim Maddin, mayor of Saskatoon — the members opposite are quite interested in Saskatoon; perhaps they'll be interested in what the good mayor of that city had to say — the mayor of Saskatoon, Jim Maddin, quote:

Saskatoon continues to show innovations in protecting the environment. We fully support the GreenPower initiative and are proud to offer its benefits to our customers in Saskatoon.

End quote, Mr. Speaker.

You know, the member from Greystone had made mention of how initiatives like this are innovative, they're cutting edge, and they're going to be what plays a big part in this government being returned with a strong majority. And I think that's borne out in the comments of the mayor of Saskatoon.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, in my remarks I'll be touching on some of the things that the member from Greystone had said, given his encyclopedic knowledge on this file, so you'll have to bear with me if I repeat a few things. But as with good information sometimes, Mr. Speaker, it bears repeating.

Anyhow, in terms of the GreenPower that's available for three fifty, for \$3.50, you can buy a block of 100 kilowatts of GreenPower. Now that's enough electricity for five computers and a printer to run eight hours a day for a month. That's also enough, Mr. Speaker, to run 20 loads of laundry or to power two high pressure sodium farmyard lights every night for a month.

Now if you were to buy 100 kilowatts of GreenPower each month for a year, it would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 90 kilograms, which is the same offset that comes from planting about 240 full-grown trees or driving a mid-size car 3,200 fewer kilometres per year. That's tremendous — that's tremendous — progress, Mr. Speaker. There's no other word for it, that this advantage, that this option, is available to the people of this province, I think is wonderful. And I think in the year to come we'll see the people taking us up on this offer.

You know initiatives like this don't come into practice just by wishful thinking of course, Mr. Speaker, they come in place because there are commitments made such as the commitment

that was made last June when the Government of Saskatchewan made a 10-year commitment to purchase GreenPower to meet 16 per cent of electrical needs in provincial government facilities.

You know it's often said, Mr. Speaker, that it should all start in your own backyard, and certainly the Government of Saskatchewan is proving that. The Government of Canada is also another strong supporter, with a long-term commitment to purchase GreenPower for federal facilities in this province.

SaskPower itself, their head office, will use GreenPower to meet the needs of the Regina head office beginning this fall. The city of Saskatoon I'd alluded to . . . or I had mentioned the comments of Mayor Maddin earlier, they're very excited about GreenPower.

And in terms of commercial and industrial product, as of March 6, 2002 commercial and industrial business customers were able to purchase GreenPower, wherein the University of Regina's greenhouse gas technology centre was the first industrial customer for GreenPower, agreeing to purchase \$20,000 of GreenPower per year.

GreenPower for industrial customers can be purchased in annual blocks at a base price of \$3.50 per 100-kilowatt block. Now negotiated contracts are available for the purchases above \$100,000, so again, Mr. Speaker, it's on a reasonably cost-effective basis.

Now the member from Greystone had touched on the projects that are ongoing in wind power. Again, tremendous developments. And he'd also had a bit to say about the projects that are ongoing in terms of co-generation. But I just wanted to get into some of the specifics around one of the projects at Boundary dam.

Now from 1998 to 2002 SaskPower invested an estimated \$66 million to reduce fly ash emissions at Boundary dam power station through the installation of electrostatic precipitators. Now when this was completed, Mr. Speaker, Boundary dam power station will meet current guidelines for coal-fired generating plants.

The electrostatic precipitators will remove 99 per cent of fly ash from the stacks, reducing emissions to within the federal government guidelines for new power stations. Now you think of the '70s when these concerns again were just coming on stream, and you think about the big plumes of smoke that were going up from those stacks. You know hopefully some day, Mr. Speaker, we'll reduce those plumes right down to nothing.

Other things going on at Boundary dam. You've got the Boundary dam boiler and turbine optimization. You've got the Boundary dam induced draft fans. You've got turbine upgrade on Boundary dam unit 6. You've got primary air heater upgrades on Boundary dam unit 6 as well. You know again, Mr. Speaker, some tremendous initiatives underway, doing some tremendous things.

There are a number of things to touch on, Mr. Speaker, and the member from Greystone had made some mention of the conservation projects that are part of this whole green plan

initiative and in terms of GreenPower. And I just wanted to briefly touch on a contract that was recently signed between the SaskPower and Saskatchewan Valley School Division No. 49.

They've signed a \$2.5 million energy performance and maintenance contract to upgrade 18 schools and administrative facilities. And here's what the Chair of the school division, Harold Klassen, had to say:

This energy management project coupled with the Destination Conservation program, (another excellent program I might add parenthetically, Mr. Speaker) will be a great learning experience for all of us.

Not only will we have upgraded systems but also enhanced comfort for teachers and students. And because of the retrofiting will take place on weekends, evenings, and summer months, there will be no interruption to our 4,600 students and teachers.

And they're going to save a lot of money doing it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, given that I'm sure a number of others would like to participate in this debate at a later date, I will now move adjournment. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave to go to government business.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, it now being 5 o'clock I think it would be appropriate to recess until 7 o'clock.

The Assembly recessed until 19:00.