

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of citizens and Crown grazing leaseholders in the southwest part of the province. They're concerned about the government's intention with their refusal to renew leases on a long-term basis. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure current Crown land lessees maintain their first option to renew those leases.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by producers from Maple Creek, Fox Valley, Abbey, and the town of Beechy.

I so present.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the dangerous and deplorable condition of Highway 58 between Chaplin and Shamrock. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 58 in order to avoid serious injury and property damage.

And this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Shamrock and Bateman.

I so present.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of residents of the Southwest who understand the importance of the cattle industry to agriculture and indeed to the province's economy. The prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure current Crown land lessees maintain their first option to renew those leases.

Mr. Speaker, and as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from the community of Cabri near Swift Current.

I so present.

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

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

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Davidson, Moose Jaw, Bladworth, and Rosthern, and Regina.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens in Saskatchewan that are concerned with the government's agreements to deal with the Crown land leases. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure current Crown land leases maintain their first option to renew those leases.

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

The signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are all from Spiritwood.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received.

A petition concerning renewal of Crown land leases; and

Another petition concerning repairs to Highway No. 47 South; and

Addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 4, 5, and 10.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

Clerk Assistant (Committees): — Mr. Van Mulligen presents the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, in a moment I'll move that

the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations be concurred in. May I just say that the committee's work is current. There are a few outstanding items before the committee, which are under review by others and will come back to the committee in due course. And we look forward to the next set of annual reports for the committee to review.

And having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of those who have been instrumental in helping the committee throughout the course of its deliberations, the least not being the Clerk's office and our committee Clerk, Viktor Kaczkowski, and all those who helped the committee, Mr. Speaker.

And having said that, I move, seconded by the member for Swift Current:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations be now concurred in.

Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 10 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: how much money did the province of Saskatchewan receive from the 600 million transition fund announced by the federal government in 2002?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon it gives me great pleasure to introduce several of my constituents, most of whom are ranchers from the Cypress of . . . sorry, the constituency of Cypress Hills. And these are the kind of people, Mr. Speaker, that historically were called salt of the earth. It's a long time since we've heard that kind of description but today it gives me great pleasure to introduce members of the Saskatchewan landowners and lessee rights group.

And the chairman of that group is Raeburn Jahnke, from the Tompkins area; Ross Beierbach, from south of the Cypress Hills; Rob Oldhaver, from the Abbey-Cabri area; Howard Eiserman, from Maple Creek; and Dustin Fyke, from south of Sceptre, right in the heart of the Sand Hills.

Accompanying those gentlemen — who are all my constituents — is Orin Balas from the community of Ponteix and George O'Bertos, who is a long-time civil servant, has served the provincial government over about 30 years, I believe, in the area of land. And I would like the Assembly to welcome these very important constituents and friends to this constituency . . . I'm sorry, to this House.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I

want to join with the member from Cypress to welcome the ranchers from the landowners and lessees organization that are here today.

I met with them earlier this morning and had an opportunity to have a conversation with them around the importance of the treaty land entitlement and the impact that it has on them as ranchers. And we had a wonderful discussion this morning.

I had one question of them only, and that was about the strength of their MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), and they refused to answer, Mr. Speaker.

So I'd ask all members of the Assembly to enjoy with me their presence in the Assembly this afternoon. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to draw to your attention and that of the members, a group who's seated in your west gallery. This is a group of six grade 11 and 12 students from Miller High School in the constituency of Regina Victoria. They are accompanied here today by their teacher, Mark Balon, and their associate teacher, Brian Norton. They're here to view the question period, to have a tour of the Legislative Building, and I'm looking forward to an opportunity to meet with them shortly thereafter.

At this point, I would ask you and all the members to please welcome them to our legislature today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Provincial Men's Lacrosse Teams National Champions

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to inform the Assembly about an incredible accomplishment by our provincial lacrosse community. Saskatchewan sends a provincial junior and senior men's lacrosse team to compete in the Canadian championship every year.

Like many other Saskatchewan teams, our lacrosse teams were extremely successful this past year. Last October our Saskatchewan senior men's field lacrosse team won the national championship in Lennoxville, Quebec. Team Saskatchewan had three players named to the first all-star team and three to the second all-star team.

Mr. Speaker, this is the third year in a row that Saskatchewan has won the national championship and the fourth in the last five years. In fact the team has not lost a game at nationals since 1997. Additionally, the senior men's team was nominated for the Saskatchewan Sport Team of the Year at the Sask Sport annual banquet held last week.

Team Saskatchewan's success does not end there though, Mr. Speaker. Our junior men's field lacrosse team also won its national championship, the First Nations Trophy, in Kelowna this past September. This is the first time that Saskatchewan has won the junior men's title. Four players were named to the

all-star team and two positional tournament MVPs (most valuable player) were named. This is only the second time that the senior men's champions and the junior men's champions have been from the same province.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan legislative intern, Bill Cooper, who I'm working with, was a member of the senior team for three of those four teams and coach of the juniors' team. By the way, I challenged the member from Swift Current for a pick-up game of lacrosse at least until Bill goes and works with him.

So would all members please join me in congratulating the outstanding achievement. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

**Congratulations to Country Gospel Singer,
Lorraine Hartsook, of Eston**

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to applaud the achievements of Ms. Lorraine Hartsook of Eston.

Lorraine was born and raised a country girl and always had a passion for singing and performing. She's now recognized as an international artist, bringing her talents to Europe, the United States of America, and Canada. She's released five CDs (compact disc) and has been acknowledged in her field, winning Christian Entertainer of the Year in 1997 by the American Country Gospel Association for the American Country Gospel Association Northwest Region, and recently by the Saskatchewan Country Music Association with Country Gospel Album of the Year for her latest release, *Be Real*.

Among numerous nominations in the past was one by the Canadian Gospel Music Association in November 2002, again for *Be Real* as the Best Country Gospel Album of the Year.

I also travelled with Ms. Hartsook in 1993 to Colorado to visit Pope John Paul II. Now we didn't speak with him personally but she was very entertaining on the ride down with her guitar and she continues to be endearing to her whole community.

Please join me in congratulating Lorraine and wishing her continued success.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

**Western Aboriginal Business Summit
Held in Saskatoon**

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last evening in Saskatoon our Premier had the honour of making opening remarks to several hundred people attending the opening of the first Western Aboriginal Business Summit to ever be held in Western Canada.

People attending the Western Aboriginal Business Summit are Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal business people, government officials from all the Western provinces and territories, and political leaders such as Yukon Premier Dennis Fentie and Northwest Territories Deputy Premier Jim Antoine, as well as representatives from all of the Western provinces and territories.

This summit, including a trade show, will be a companion event to the National Business Summit, a two-day event held on February 19 and 20 in Toronto. The objective of the Western Aboriginal Business Summit is to facilitate the development of meaningful partnerships between Aboriginal business and non-Aboriginal private sector.

Mr. Speaker, this summit will also centre on best practices, networking, and development of the four key strategic sectors of the economy, namely resources development, emerging economies, forestry, tourism, and tradition economies.

It will also have a strong how-to component, addressing issues such as access to capital, labour force planning and, Mr. Speaker, get this, long-term sustainability — something the members opposite might want to listen to, not unrealistic promises and tax breaks like the members opposite propose. But I see nothing here of slogans, only good, long-term, sustainable, economic planning, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

Coming Home Campaign

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and members, last session I had the pleasure of telling you about the kickoff for the Coming Home Campaign. This campaign was organized to raise funds to equip and furnish our new Parkland Place, 105-bed, long-term care facility.

On the kickoff day, 700,000 of their \$1 million goal was already in place. Today, just four short months later, I'm even more pleased to tell you that the Coming Home Campaign has already met and surpassed their goal by raising \$1.13 million.

This goal was reached because of an extremely competent committee and generous community support and faith in this project. With the donations that are still coming in, the campaign committee is satisfied they'll be able to meet all of the furnishing and equipment requirements for the new Parkland Place.

Mr. Speaker, once more I'd like to ask the members of this legislature to join me in congratulating the fundraising committee and the people of our district. On behalf of our district, I would also like to express the thanks to the current — and previous — Minister of Health for their support and belief in the needs of providing long-term care in our community. We all look forward to the completion of this project.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan's Crown Corporations

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a few facts for the members opposite to consider, and after they hear them I hope they will decide to scrap their policy of selling the Crown corporations.

First fact, Mr. Speaker. Our Crown corporations have buy-Saskatchewan policies and spend about \$2 billion in our

province every year on goods and services and employee earnings.

Second fact. Our Crown corporations are important customers for over 12,000 Saskatchewan businesses.

Third fact. Over 9,000 Saskatchewan people work at our Crown corporations; half are located in head offices in this province and half are located in communities throughout Saskatchewan.

Fourth fact. Saskatchewan's four major Crown corporations partner with over 600 local dealers and brokers to deliver telecommunications, insurance, power, and natural gas services all across the province.

Fact five. Crown corporations were established many years ago to provide utility and insurance services at affordable rates to people throughout the province, and that remains their number one job.

Facts six and seven, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party has empty slogans, but we have a plan and it's working.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Organic Producers' Seminar

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 14 and 15 I attended a seminar in Maymont hall, in Maymont, Saskatchewan, concerning marketing organic products. Mr. Speaker, this seminar was sponsored by the northwest Saskatchewan Organic Producers Inc., and the OCIA (Organic Crop Improvement Association) Chapter No. 2.

The seminar, Mr. Speaker, explored several areas. The experience of other farmers with marketing their organic crops, problems and opportunities in marketing organic beef, problems and opportunities in marketing other locally produced organic products — as an example, chicken, eggs, homemade products — the opportunities co-operatives in the future and what can be done to improve the marketing of organic products in Saskatchewan's Northwest. One of the sponsors of this seminar was the Northwest Organic Communities Mills Co-operative Limited.

In April 2002 some organic farmers and other supporters of organic agriculture purchased the old school building in Maymont, Saskatchewan to establish a processing plant for organic fuel crops. By March of 2003 they had invested \$75,000 in cash and time. In February 2003 the business was incorporated as a new generation co-operative. Building modifications, equipment repairs, and installation are progressing. The plant will have a processing capability of 500,000 bushels per year.

The board of directors has established several principles — low capital investment. Detailed planning has been completed. Services offered: cleaning, marketing, finding buyers, shipping, documentation, collection, and value adding.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the Northwest

Organic Community Mills Co-operative Limited initiative and also the organizers of the marketing organic products seminar.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Emergency Medical Services Response Teams

Mr. Forbes: — Not knowing what situations the day will bring is part of the job of paramedics, firefighting units, physicians, nurses, and other staff members of our emergency response units throughout the province.

Last Thursday morning a thick fog in the Saskatoon area made driving conditions treacherous. Four separate vehicle accidents occurred on four separate highways at approximately the same time. One accident involved a school bus with a number of children on board.

These four accidents meant that 21 people required quick injury assessment at the scene. Those 21, and we, should be pleased with the efficiency and quick thinking demonstrated on that morning by emergency response teams.

From the EMTs (emergency medical technician) first on the scene to the ambulance drivers, to the nurses and doctors at the emergency, victims were quickly but thoroughly assessed, delivered to hospital and treated.

Mr. Speaker, in total 21 people required injury assessment, 14 victims were discharged, and three were admitted to hospital. Most were treated at the Royal University Hospital, some at City Hospital.

Fortunately, on this day only one student on the school bus sustained serious injuries but I understand is doing well now. A paramedic from Humboldt and firefighters from Viscount took close to an hour to free the boy on the bus.

Even an excessively busy day like this one is all in a day's work for our excellently trained emergency response teams. Our health care providers offered excellent care to the 21 people involved in these accidents, as they do on a daily basis.

Saskatchewan can certainly have pride and confidence in them. And I am pleased to give them this small amount of recognition today.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, once again hundreds of thousands of dollars of public money has disappeared and no one is held accountable. This is money that was supposed to go to improve the lives of First Nations people in Saskatchewan. Instead, the former CEO (chief executive officer) of SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) misspent \$800,000 on trips around the world, on luxury vehicles, on golf, and numerous other personal expenses.

There's been a three-year investigation and what's being done about it? Absolutely nothing. No charges will be laid. The government has no plan to recover this money. Just like SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company), public money is lost and no one is held accountable.

Mr. Speaker, who is responsible for the loss of this money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, there is a long-standing tradition in parliamentary democracies that the Attorney General of the day will not decide whether to charge a citizen with a crime, but will leave that determination to the police and the law officers of the Crown. It is the constitutional duty of the Attorney General, going back hundreds of years, to uphold the independence of the police and the law officers of the Crown, regardless of political considerations.

In this instance, Mr. Speaker, I'm advised that the police investigators and law officers have determined that there was no evidence of fraud because there was no effort to conceal or mislead. They have determined that whatever else may be said about the conduct, there is no evidence that it was fraudulent and charges cannot be sustained.

As Attorney General, Mr. Speaker, I support the police and the law officers' right to make that determination with respect to the citizen in question and all other citizens who are equally entitled to an independent justice system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, Dutch Lerat admits to spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on personal expenses but he's not being charged because, according to the Justice department, there was no evidence of concealment. Everybody knew he was spending this money. According to Dutch Lerat, that includes SLGA (Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority) and the provincial government. Dutch Lerat said:

I believe SLGA had a clear idea of the money flowing through my hands. I believe the province had a clear idea of the money flowing through my hands.

Dutch Lerat said he is not guilty of fraud because everybody knew he was spending the money. And today's decision by Justice appears to back up that claim.

Mr. Speaker, who in this NDP (New Democratic Party) government is responsible for allowing Dutch Lerat to mispend \$800,000?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I welcome the question that the hon. member asks. And for the hon. member from Gravelbourg and that part of the country, I do appreciate the question because I want to give you the answer, that there were issues and when they were discovered through an audit process, there was action taken on those issues. There were auditors brought in. There was an investigation. We immediately turned it over for an investigation, Mr. Speaker.

All the efforts were put in place to make sure that those issues were addressed, and they have been.

And since 2000, the fall of 2000, with the help and the constructive criticism of our esteemed auditor, Provincial Auditor, we have been able to arrive at strengthening all the control measures that now have made SIGA a very responsible agency in this particular province and a good partnership for this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Once again, once again, Mr. Speaker, no one in the NDP takes responsibility. Dutch Lerat will not be charged because the SIGA board knew about his expenses. And SIGA operates under the casino agreement it signed with the government and the government is responsible for ensuring money is spent properly within the terms of this agreement.

So my question is this: who in the government was responsible for ensuring SIGA money was properly spent?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, there were issues as I mentioned and those issues have been addressed.

The member opposite once again does not have all the facts. There hasn't been hundreds of thousands of dollars lost; \$1.36 million of government money has been recovered. It's back in provincial coffers. So I would hope that that hon. member would do the honourable thing and get the facts right before reporting to the public, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Since we determined that there were some problems, we worked together with the board. We have a new board that's managing SIGA. We have new management in SLGA, Mr. Speaker.

We work closely with these people and I would like to just point out some of the issues that we addressed as a result, as I said, of the constructive criticism of our Provincial Auditor. We have made significant changes, adopted new board structures and compositions. The internal auditor has been selected through a tendering process where SLGA's involved, Mr. Speaker.

Now I'm going to go on and on and table this.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, the people on the Yellow Quill First Nations near Kelvington have been boiling their water for eight years — eight years without a proper supply of drinking water. Eight hundred thousand dollars could have gone a long way in addressing this problem. Instead it was spent on luxury cars and trips around the world and according to the Justice department, everybody knew about it.

According to Murray Brown of public prosecutions branch . . .

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to Murray Brown of public prosecutions branch, there wasn't apparently any effort by SIGA to hide anything from anybody. Mr. Speaker, that means the government must have known and if they didn't, they should have known.

Mr. Speaker, how did this happen? Who was responsible for overseeing these expenditures?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, there was an independent auditor that was in fact hired to look at the affairs of SIGA. When there were some discrepancies found, they were reported to us. We immediately engaged our esteemed Provincial Auditor and as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, we suspended negotiations for a new gaming agreement. We put all kinds of benchmarks in place at the suggestion of our Provincial Auditor. Those benchmarks, the majority, a lot of them have been met to this point in time, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, just . . . as a result of that I just want to point out that since that time, Mr. Speaker, the expenses of SIGA have been cut dramatically and the profits, which will benefit all First Nations people and communities and this great province of ours, have been nearly doubled, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Murray Brown of the public prosecutions branch said fraud could only occur if SIGA was misrepresenting these expenses to SLGA, but there's no evidence they were doing that. He said and I quote:

The Provincial Auditor picked up this information when he did a simple audit of the relationship between SIGA and SLGA.

(14:00)

That's why there were no charges — because there was no evidence of concealment. The government must have known what was going on and at the very least they should have known what was going on.

Mr. Speaker, who was responsible for overseeing SIGA's spending? Who allowed this to happen?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, once again as I pointed out, and there's no denial of fact that there were issues; they were addressed. There was an auditor that brought to our attention the fact that there was some concerns. It was brought to our attention; we immediately responded and we acted.

And as I pointed out, expenses have been cut because . . . And I've tabled the document that has indicated all the details of adding . . . adopting policies. We're working with SIGA, SLGA. We're strengthening our relationship and we're strengthening the commitment that the . . . both SIGA board,

SIGA management, and SLGA are working towards, and continuing to respond to the auditor's requests.

You know, I wonder, Mr. Speaker, we're getting back to where we were some time ago where there is not much respect for what First Nations is attempting to do. So I just want to remind what Mr. Hermanson said, the Leader of the Opposition, and I quote — to the FSIN — Hermanson . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor laid it all out in great detail. Luxury vehicles, trips on the Concorde to places like London and Paris, green fees, fishing equipment, all bought using money that was supposed to go to First Nations people.

The Provincial Auditor, doing a simple audit, found \$811,906 of misspending by Dutch Lerat. But the NDP government . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please, members.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, \$811,906. But the NDP government apparently missed it or they chose to look the other way.

Mr. Speaker, how could this happen? Who is responsible for allowing Dutch Lerat to get away with this, with this flagrant abuse of public money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, I can very much appreciate why the member and those members opposite constantly dwell on the negative aspects. They do not wish to look at the progress that's been made in the last two years.

The Speaker: — Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, SIGA has significantly, since that time because of the measures put in place working with our Provincial Auditor, who by the way has indicated that progress is being made on this issue . . . In the past two years, Mr. Speaker, expenses at SIGA have decreased by \$9.3 million. The net income, Mr. Speaker, in 1999-2000 went from 13.4 million to 24.8 million — money that will go to communities around this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that working with SLGA and with SIGA, I have a great deal of respect for those people that want the very best of everything in our relationship for the people of this province. Obviously those members don't.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, I find it alarming, I find it alarming that the minister of the Crown thinks that \$800,000 gone missing is not serious and that we are somehow being negative. I think the people of Saskatchewan will judge whether \$800,000 gone missing . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, the minister refuses to answer the question so I'm going to ask the Premier. Mr. Speaker, after six long years the Premier was finally forced to admit the government messed up with SPUDCO. He ordered a review and admitted his . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier admitted his government had misled the people of Saskatchewan over the SPUDCO issue.

Once again today we see an NDP government trying to cover its tracks, and we see evidence that the NDP should have known about the abuse of public money by Dutch Lerat.

Mr. Speaker, what is the Premier going to do to get to the bottom of this? Will the Premier order an investigation to determine how his government allowed this flagrant misuse of public money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, once again I just want to quote what the Leader of the Official Opposition in a speech to FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) said last February. In his speech, the Leader of the Opposition said, he believes, and I quote:

. . . the financial success of the . . . (SIGA) is one of the great and largely untold business success stories in Saskatchewan.

You said that, Mr. Leader.

. . . I am impressed with the direct and business-like approach both SIGA and FSIN have taken in addressing the governance challenges . . .

And that's what we've done, Mr. Speaker. We've addressed those and we've made a commitment to continue to do that. We're working together, not against, First Nations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister must know that it is Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming that is responsible to oversee the spending of public money that is generated from SIGA.

Mr. Speaker, before the Premier entered politics, he used to campaign against casino gaming even coming to Saskatchewan. But now he runs a government that is . . . that is dependent on gambling revenue; a government that is willing to turn a blind eye when it sees this money being misspent.

Why is the Premier refusing to take responsibility? Will he order an investigation into who is responsible for allowing this abuse of public money by Dutch Lerat?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess my answers have not been heard by that member because they don't want to hear the good facts. They don't want to hear the good success and progress that's been made despite the fact, Mr. Speaker, once again the Leader of the Official Opposition stands before

the chiefs of the First Nations of Saskatchewan and he says — *The StarPhoenix* reporting on his speech Mr. Hermanson delivered, and I quote:

Hermanson praised the FSIN for running a successful gaming business and complimented it for addressing "governance challenges" at SIGA . . .

Mr. Speaker, that's what the Leader of the Opposition said. Now the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy is being critical of all the efforts that have been made both by SLGA and SIGA — the good people at SIGA, their management and their board — to do something good for this great province and for all our people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker . . .

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister doesn't understand the severity of the situation so I address my question to the Premier. Hopefully he'll be a little more attentive.

The people of the Yellow Quill Reserve cannot turn their tap . . . water tap on without the fear of insects coming out the water faucet. Eight hundred thousand dollars would have went a long ways to fix that water problem.

One of his ministers, a minister in the NDP government, knew that money was being misspent that was supposed to go to the Indian people of Saskatchewan. They knew that, because as the Minister of Justice has said, no fraud was committed. That means that this was public knowledge, knowledge of one of the ministers on that side of the House who allowed the \$800,000 to be spent unchecked, who did not raise the red flag, and as a consequence, First Nations people in Saskatchewan can't even trust their drinking water.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier which of his ministers should be accountable for this tragedy?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to assure you that what I say in this House is what I say at the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, is what I say when I'm in the community — unlike the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, he wants to talk about, he wants to talk about involvement with the First Nations people of Saskatchewan. Let me tell him about involvement.

We have developed with . . . in partnership with First Nations in Saskatchewan, a development plan for education and economy. Last night I spoke to the Aboriginal Business Summit in Saskatoon. I reported to them last night, Mr. Speaker, that today in Saskatchewan high schools 13.5 per cent of the students are Aboriginal students — that's a tremendous gain from 10 years ago. In our universities, that's 13.5. In our technical institutes

it's 18.5 — that's a tremendous advance, Mr. Speaker.

This man, this Leader of the Opposition stood up, stood up and praised the work of SIGA at the FSIN. He comes into this House, he goes on to other platforms and criticizes, and at his member. He's the fellow that needs to be . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Treaty Land Entitlement Claims

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning several ranchers and Crown leaseholders from southwest Saskatchewan met with the Minister of Agriculture to discuss the issue of Crown land lease renewal, and I'd like to thank the minister for making some time in his schedule available for my constituents.

According to the existing lands Act legislation, Mr. Speaker, Crown land leases are to be renewed if the leaseholder has met all of the conditions of the lease. However there have been a number of specific cases in the southwest where leaseholders have applied for renewal but decisions have been delayed.

In one specific case, Mr. Speaker, application was made in May 2002 and to this date no renewal has been granted. Instead the leaseholders who have met all the requirements have been granted one-year permits.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain why the NDP is not following its own established policy for lease renewal and is leaving these leaseholders unable to make long-term plans for the future viability of their ranches?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — I rise again to answer the question. This has now been I think the third occasion that the members opposite have asked me about this question — the member from Cypress and the member from Humboldt asked me this same question a couple of days ago. And I say to the member again, I understand the sensitivity around the treaty land entitlement, and the land selection piece, and the lease arrangements that the Department of Agriculture has with ranchers in Saskatchewan.

We intend, Mr. Speaker, to continue to work through the process. We've frozen the TLE (treaty land entitlement) selections. We've frozen them, Mr. Speaker, for the past year because we want to find a resolution, Mr. Speaker, between those lands that have been selected by First Nations people and ranchers.

I've said on many occasions, Mr. Speaker, that ranchers have been tremendous stewards of the lands. I've said on many occasions, Mr. Speaker, that our ranchers in Saskatchewan require the farm land in order to retain their economic viability as producers, Mr. Speaker. And it will continue to be my objective to find winners on this case, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, many of

the Crown leases that have not been renewed were actually named in treaty land entitlement claims recently. Now the TLE process, which by the way is nothing new to this province and has really worked quite well for all the parties involved over the last 10 years, includes provisions to resolve third party interests, which includes the compensation of leaseholders.

Now the NDP's current approach of not renewing leases abrogates the leaseholder's right to participate in the TLE process, as outlined in the documents that this government negotiated and signed. These leaseholders have a right to be compensated according to that agreement.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain for us why the NDP is changing the rules now and messing up this process after 10 years of successful TLE negotiations and settlements in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member from Cypress knows the answer to his question, Mr. Speaker, he knows the answer. And that is this, Mr. Speaker, that we have today First Nations that have selected lands that are under the lease of the Crown . . . that are under the lease with the Crown to ranchers. We have asked for third parties, Mr. Speaker, to resolve that on their own, and they have been unsuccessful in renegotiating some of those on their own.

So what we've said, Mr. Speaker, is that we put together today a interdepartmental committee of Intergovernmental Affairs, of Agriculture, of Environment, and of Government Relations to see if we can find a compromise solution in order to deal with First Nations and ranchers, Mr. Speaker, because on this side of the House that's how we deal with differences, Mr. Speaker. We deal with them, Mr. Speaker, trying to resolve the issues that stay in place before . . . to make it better for both sides. That's how we do things on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, there has to be some security of tenure on behalf of the leaseholders in order for them to completely and clearly negotiate their own third party interests. They are losing those interests every time this government sticks its nose in the process.

Mr. Speaker, last week in the Throne Speech the NDP discussed a 10-year beef production strategy for the province. Presumably it's a strategy designed to promote and increase beef production here in Saskatchewan. That's a good thing. But at the same time the government is making its intentions known, many long-term cattle ranchers in the Southwest are either not getting answers regarding their land lease renewals or are being told that their leases are part of a government review and their future is uncertain.

Mr. Speaker, a good percentage of Crown land leaseholders are beef producers and would have a pivotal role in any strategy to increase beef production in this province. Many of these leases have been held by ranchers for several generations. Mr.

Speaker, why is the NDP undermining its own plans for increasing beef production in this province by sending a shock wave of uncertainty through the whole industry?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no doubt that the ranchers in Saskatchewan today are contributing to the growth of the beef industry. There's no doubt about that, and they will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker. And we have people who are moving to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, who are helping us grow the industry in our province.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have First Nations people today in Saskatchewan who are buying land, who are buying livestock, who are establishing ranching operations in Saskatchewan because they too, Mr. Speaker, are interested in growing the livestock industry.

And when I say, Mr. Speaker, that what we're doing is that we're trying to mediate a solution, what does the Leader of the Opposition from his seat call out? He says, Mr. Speaker, that that mediation process doesn't work, is what he hollers out from his seat, Mr. Speaker.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that on this side of the House we're going to work with ranchers, and First Nations people, and communities to make a difference, Mr. Speaker, and rural municipalities — which is different from what they do on their side of the House, Mr. Speaker. That's different.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Goulet, seconded by Ms. Hamilton, and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. Hermanson.

Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I begin my formal remarks in support of the Throne Speech, I do want to note that we are meeting here today in this legislature against the backdrop of . . .

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

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I said, we are meeting here today against the backdrop of war. And I would remind all members of this House on both sides that however much fun their acrimonious debate and banter back and forth amongst each other is, there is something more important happening today in this world. There are people who are in danger of losing their lives, Mr. Speaker, and I think it is

important that we acknowledge the international situation.

Like the member from Saskatoon Greystone and many other members in this House, I'm sure, on all sides — Liberal, Saskatchewan Party, and New Democratic Party — I strongly endorse and respect the Prime Minister of Canada's position with respect to this war.

However, now that war has started, we have to look to the future.

Mr. Speaker, a very wise young woman, 23 or 24 years old, said this. She said, it is far, it is far too complicated . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order. I would ask the member from Wood River to pay attention to the Speaker when the Speaker has risen, and not to interrupt.

Members have been interrupting the person who is speaking, the member from Saskatoon Southeast, and I found it very difficult to hear her remarks. And I would ask members to respect each other's right to speak in this House without being impeded.

Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for your courtesy and for the courtesy of many other members in this House, and I hope it has an exemplary effect on those few who are not listening.

I do want to say and I want to quote this very wise young woman, who said, it is far too complicated, the situation in Iraq, to have a simple for or against position.

Mr. Speaker, can you imagine holding a child in your arms, hearing the bombs dropping, and knowing that those that you hold so dear will soon disappear from this world?

Can you imagine being an American soldier, struggling in a gas mask and protective gear and watching your comrades die? Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, hearing the cries of fear from civilians and from military personnel alike and knowing that you're unable to do anything about it?

These are the pictures that we see daily on our television screens, Mr. Speaker. We cannot possibly understand what it was like to live under the Saddam Hussein's regime. And we also, Mr. Speaker, cannot imagine what it is like right now to live under this new circumstance, this new reality of shock and awe, bombs and battles.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that it is not about winning a war. It is about winning peace in this world. And we have to understand that that peace will only be attained with sensitivity to the Iraqi people.

Mr. Speaker, we sit here in this legislature, we sit here in the comfort of this province, and we feel powerless. But I have to say there are things that we can do. We can react to this war by having a solid discussion about peace measures that we can take.

That's why, for instance, Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech we

have indicated that we will introduce legislation so that Saskatchewan authorities can respond quickly to public security threats. That's why, Mr. Speaker, we have consistently over the last two decades always had money in our budget for the Saskatchewan Council on International Cooperation — \$375,000 of taxpayers' money goes to support international co-operation.

Mr. Speaker, we have within our government people who have been travelling to Moscow, Johannesburg, to other African nations helping to assist in terms of building and rebuilding a strong governance system.

We have our universities opening their doors to foreign students. And indeed, I would hope that they would go a little further, and for the Iraqi students perhaps provide extra scholarships rather than extra tuition for them.

Mr. Speaker, finally we all as individual citizens can and must support humanitarian efforts — not only with our thoughts and our prayers, but with our cash donations. As we know, in Saskatchewan we have a strong and proud reputation for charitable giving, and I hope that we will find it in our hearts to think kindly of the Iraqi people at this time. And finally, I strongly urge us all to support the United Nations in their humanitarian rebuilding efforts that will and must occur when this conflict is over.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorjé: — Mr. Speaker, I started yesterday by commenting on the speech made by the new member for Battlefords-Cut Knife. As I said, I thought it was eloquent and fluent. He talked about the importance of business. I talked briefly yesterday about the importance for balance, for having a strong role for government in public education, public health care, public transportation, and public environmental stewardship.

I did this, Mr. Speaker, because I am a market social democrat. I believe very strongly in the market economy and at the same time I believe very strongly in sound public policies. The opposition would have us say that governments should not be in business. On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we say business cannot and should not run government. We cannot have public services being operated for the profit motive.

Mr. Speaker, we have to work in co-operation and we have to find a balance. In that sense, Mr. Speaker, I am a very strong proponent of our government's position vis-à-vis uranium mining. Mr. Speaker, uranium mining in northern Saskatchewan is fraught with difficulties, as the member for Saskatoon Greystone noted yesterday. At the same time, it is also a solid economic and employment opportunity for First Nations and Métis people in northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is also, despite the dangers — the very real dangers which I totally acknowledge — it is also a much more environmentally sustainable energy alternative than is, for instance, flooding northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I have travelled to the mountains of Kashmir and watched people chopping down the wood on the trees that they need to sustain their lives, but chopping the trees down so that

they can heat their homes. I have been on the plains of Peshawar, just outside the borders of Afghanistan, and I have watched people trying to feed their families and not having any electricity. So in that sense I am a proponent of uranium mining for energy purposes solely.

(14:30)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a bit not only about what's in the Throne Speech, but what is not there because as the poet, and I believe it was Robert Frost, said, "But I have miles to go before I sleep." I still have dreams.

I think that this is a fine, fine Throne Speech, full of an incredible amount of detail and a very active and aggressive campaign of action. And I still want to see more.

I am for instance concerned that we have not seen an increase in social assistance rates for 16 years in this province. I'm talking about the basic adult allowance of \$195 per month. It is a little known fact, Mr. Speaker, but over 50 per cent of the people who are on social assistance caseloads are there because they are deemed unemployable. They are permanently disabled. They have no alternative but social assistance. And they're living as adults, single adults, on \$195 a month.

Mr. Speaker, the other 50 per cent of the people who are on social assistance are there for less than six months. And I do not think that the people of Saskatchewan are so hard-hearted that they would begrudge a small increase in social assistance rates for these people to give them a hand up, an extra edge to get back on their feet again.

I also believe very strongly, Mr. Speaker, that we need to have proper, perpetual protection for the Great Sand Hills.

We need to have solid action on education on the property tax.

And like the member for Rosthern said yesterday, we need to have, Mr. Speaker, high-speed Internet hook-ups for all communities in this province, including the communities of Saskatoon Southeast.

I also would like to see us move on increasing the sufficiency of the Victim Services Fund. I'd like an expansion to the child tax credit, and I very definitely want a beefed-up immigration attraction program.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this Throne Speech and supporting this government in the coming election because, as I said, we have miles to go before we sleep. We've done an awful lot of work, but there still is work that's undone.

Mr. Speaker, I started out by talking about war and it is a truism that in war one of the first casualties is truth. Unfortunately it also appears to hold for provincial politics, at least on the opposition side. They go about doing vicious personal attacks, perpetuating falsehoods, and spreading doom and gloom. All so that they can convince people to vote for them. For what? For straight power? Do they have any kind of a plan to improve this province?

Mr. Speaker, they have been going out and deliberately creating

low self-esteem amongst Saskatchewan citizens on the basis that if they repeat some negativity often enough that people will believe it. Well it's working. Even the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce has had to develop a program to counteract their negativity.

They keep talking about the plan, but what is it? They change it almost weekly. As far as I can see they have two steps to their plan. One is to lower personal income taxes and two is to lower corporate taxes.

Mr. Speaker, I would remind the members opposite, and time does not permit me to outline all the things that we have done, but we have lowered taxes, Mr. Speaker. We have lowered personal income taxes and we have lowered corporate income taxes.

So they have a two-step plan, and what do we have? We have a 10-step plan. We know you have to build on your strengths, on your natural resources like oil and gas and minerals and forests. You have to encourage co-operation and team-building.

The third thing you have to do, Mr. Speaker, is you have to build economic development skills in local communities. Fourth, you have to have a plan to provide skills training and the ability to access opportunity.

Fifth part of our plan is a plan to fight poverty and to encourage inclusion of all citizens. The sixth part of our plan is to encourage venture capital. Number seven, we have . . . providing infrastructure, both the traditional infrastructure like roads and highways, and information technology.

Number eight is to support innovation and research like the synchrotron in Saskatoon. Number nine to provide quality of life and essentials like health care.

And the tenth part of our plan is to develop a positive attitude in Saskatchewan about Saskatchewan — the greatest province in the greatest country in which to live.

Mr. Speaker, that's our plan. It's a ten-point plan, unlike the members opposite who have a two-step slogan: lower taxes — lower personal taxes, lower corporate taxes. A two-step slogan contrasted with a ten-step plan.

Mr. Speaker, I have to remind the members opposite you need more than simplistic slogans. If that's all you have for a plan, you have nothing.

Saskatchewan has a lot going for it, Mr. Speaker. We have the third or fourth lowest personal taxes. We are the third largest producers of minerals. We are second when it comes to oil. And, Mr. Speaker, we are first in visionary and progressive government for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I support the Throne Speech. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in replying to the Throne Speech, I would like to first of all welcome and congratulate the two new members to this House,

the member from Battleford-Cut Knife, and the member from Saskatoon Fairview. It's always a singular honour to be chosen by your peers and constituents to represent them in this Legislative Assembly, and I remember well the first opportunity that I had to speak in this legislature and it was with a lot more nervousness seven or eight years ago than it is today.

However, I also recognize that it has been a singular honour over this past seven or eight years since 1995 to represent the constituency of Melfort-Tisdale. And whenever the next general provincial election is held, as everyone knows, the constituency boundaries are going to change. And I look forward to representing the new constituency but it is also a bit of a bittersweet change in that I'm going to miss representing many wonderful communities and people that it has been my great and singular honour to represent over these past seven years. And so in looking forward to the future I also would like to express my deep thanks to the communities that will no longer be part of the constituency that I seek to represent.

I also would like to say that the limitations of time preclude the opportunity to really speak a great deal about the constituency that I do represent, because I've had many opportunities in the past to speak specifically and encouragingly about the people in the Northeast from Melfort-Tisdale constituency. But suffice it to say that I continue to believe that all Saskatchewan people are incredibly endowed with the gifts of the fruits of their labour, of the ability to work and to find solutions to raise their families, to build a caring and compassionate society. And all of us now get to a stage where, when I was first elected, I couldn't singularly take the honour of grandfather; now I can. And it's a great pleasure that all of our grandchildren are in Saskatchewan as I speak and that the three grandchildren from Calgary have come home to visit for a week.

And that is always a bittersweet moment because it's delightful when they come home and invigorate you and tire you and challenge you for all of the attention that they deserve, but it is also a very nostalgic, poignant moment when you have to wave goodbye to them, as many other people in Saskatchewan wave goodbye to their grandchildren because their children have had to seek opportunities somewhere else in this province because of the lack of the opportunities here. And so while I am pleased that the grandchildren are home, I know I will have a tear in my eye on Sunday when they have to leave to go back to Calgary.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to take the time I'm allocated to do though is to speak more specifically about the health care system that I am responsible and honoured to be the critic of in this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people rightly and properly deserve to have the very best health care system in the world. We should never ever think that we cannot have the very best. We should never have to decide that we have to accept a level other than that level of excellence that should be envied around the world, not only in Canada but in North America and everywhere.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, while we have been looked to in the past for creating the publicly funded, publicly administered health care system going back to the days of Mr. Douglas, we can't look back on the last decade of NDP administration with quite the same optimistic kind of an approach. Because while the current government seems to think that they are the only

custodians of a health care system, the reality is, is that over the last decade our health care system has really deteriorated to a significant extent.

Some of it is because of the federal Liberal government's off-loading in the first and second and third Martin budgets when, in order to deal with the federal deficit problems, they decided that they were going to remove themselves from their responsibilities to the people of this country and unload the health care system solely and entirely, basically, on the provinces. And going from a shared funding system that initially was 50/50 dollars, 50-cent dollars, we went down to as low as 13 or 14 cents on the dollar of the federal contribution to health care.

And even now after all the hoopla that has come out of the accord about health care, we still, I don't believe, will reach 20 per cent as a federal contribution. Mr. Romanow in his report recommended a fixed, steady, stable, predictable 25 per cent and we're certainly not going to attain that.

And so there are a lot of problems that have been created in every province because of the federal Liberal government's decisions.

But we've also been the masters of our own destiny to a large measure and we've made some very, very poor decisions. We promised that we were going to cut waiting lists . . . the NDP government promised that they were going to cut waiting lists in the last election by 30 per cent. And the reality is in the intervening time they've doubled.

They promised that they would hire 500 new nurses in Saskatchewan, but the reality is we lost about 1,200 of them. We promised that . . . they promised that they were going to deal with the issue of educational training seats for health care professionals. And when you look back, it used to be a time when we'd graduate 500-odd nurses in this province a year. In the '90s they cut the seats available for education down to 80 from that level. Right now we're finally moving up slowly and almost grudgingly by this government to 260 seats right now, and there's going to be another 40 seats that have just been recently announced for the North program to get us to 300 seats. That's a far cry from the number of seats that we used to have.

We failed to address the workplace issues for nurses and in reality in 1999 we had to order them back to work in order to force the health care system not to be brought to its knees because nursing conditions were deteriorated to a large extent.

The current Learning minister, when she was the president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, would have rallied against the decisions that this government is making in regard to the nursing profession. But she sits strangely quiet when her colleagues are saying that the current situation is unacceptable and untenable.

Mr. Speaker, the shortage of medical personnel and nurses in particular are resulting in some very clear specific problems. We're seeing health centres like Foam Lake and Gull Lake who can no longer offer the services on the same basis as they used to because it's impossible to recruit and replace RNs (registered

nurse) who are retiring.

In Regina, operating rooms are closing and hospital beds remain closed because they're short of nurses. In April of 2002 there were over 600 vacant registered nurse and registered psychiatric nurse positions that were unfilled in the province of Saskatchewan.

The current president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, Rosalee Longmoore, is quoted as saying, "Saskatchewan is experiencing its worst nursing shortage in its history." And when you look at it, it is absolutely amazing to me that this government seems to be sleepwalking through its responsibility and its approach to this fundamental issue.

The SRNA (Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association) and SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses) released a document a short time ago that estimated that 38 per cent of the current nurse workforce is going to be retiring by 2007. That's only five years from now, Mr. Speaker. And that means that in five years we potentially are going to have people eligible for retirement of the magnitude of over 3,000 nurses — over five years — that's over 600 nurses a year.

(14:45)

And in response to that statistic we currently are at 260 educational seats, increased now with the 40 northern allowance to 300. If we retain every single one of those graduates, we'd only be meeting the challenge or replacement of these retirees at a level of 50 per cent — 50 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We're currently 600 short and we're going to replace nurses at a level of 50 per cent over the next five years.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't rocket science. It's going to create a huge problem. It's going to be difficult. It's going to be difficult in all of the rural outlying areas, but it's also going to be difficult in Saskatoon and Regina and Prince Albert and Moose Jaw and the major centres as increasing pressure and demands of that shortage reality is going to impact on the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, it's simply intolerable, and it speaks to the very fundamental problem that has not and is not being addressed in the health care system. Mr. Speaker, we can talk about the government's initiative to sort of quantify and codify and reorganize surgical waiting lists. There's nothing wrong with that. But if you have no one to do the job and provide the service, what's the point? It'll continue to get double or triple the length, but at least we'll know where we are. And so people are sitting here waiting for needed surgeries and hip replacements, in pain and agony, and getting prescribed morphine or whatever painkiller for two years and longer.

And if we think it's bad now with this government's lack of direction and commitment and action to replacing medical personnel, it's simply going to get worse.

And I use nurses as an example, but the same situation exists in technologists — laboratory and radiology technologists. We probably are only educating about a third of what we need. We educate 70 pharmacists a year and only half of them stay in the province. And the pharmacists of the province will tell you

there are over 100 positions unfilled.

I mean you can go through the whole piece — our medical doctors. Our family physicians are worked, and long hours in many cases in single or dual practices where their on-call requirements are brutal, and yet there is no choice if we're going to provide these services.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I believe that what needs to be done, is a concrete plan has to be developed to provide a new direction for health care into the future that doesn't just simply deal with these sort of busywork exercises of reorganizing the lists, or studying this, or studying that. I heard on the radio today that the Department of Health has announced today that it's going to study how many nurses that they're short, and they hope to have a report by June.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I've been telling them this for the last three years — this is not new — and so here we go, announce another group of people to study an obvious problem.

Mr. Speaker, the fundamental problem that we have is to provide required medical personnel in this province. And to that end we have to make a commitment today to increase the educational seats where they're required. In nursing — in my opinion, and in the opinion of the College of Nursing, and in the opinion of the SUN and the SRNA — we need over 400 seats this next year. We need probably 450 to 500 permanent commitment seats to replace what we're doing just to get into the game.

And, Mr. Speaker, if we made that commitment today, it's going to take five or six years before we have someone graduating from that commitment because you have to hire faculty, you have to have a place to have these people educated, you need the infrastructure commitment, and it's not being made. So we are creating a problem for the future that is going to be very, very serious.

Mr. Speaker, if we're going to build a health care system that's looked on with envy and pride in this province, we've got to get the piece together. We've got to make sure we provide the necessary health care professionals.

In order to do that we need to attract people who will work in a faculty. And faculty members always look for sort of a threefold approach to their profession. They want to do the teaching of the profession, they want to do research, and they want to do clinical work. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we provide the atmosphere and build on the opportunity to do the research so we can get first class faculty members here who are attracted to providing health care in Saskatchewan.

To that end, the Saskatchewan Party committed three years ago to doing its part to build an integrated health sciences facility at the University of Saskatchewan to be that magnet, to bring all the medical professionals together, and provide adequate facilities so that we can provide the necessary education seats.

We also said it's important that they come together to study all of the medical disciplines under one facility, as much as possible, because if we believe in primary health care teams where professionals are going to work together, what better way

to start that culture of working together than learning and being educated together. So we think that that's important.

We've also said that we completely support the creation of a dedicated medical light beam at the Canadian Light Source to provide that opportunity for research excellence that will attract the very best people in the world.

Mr. Speaker, it isn't going to be enough if we only provide more education seats and we don't do everything we can to make sure that people working in the system now are willing to look at their futures and say, I think we will stay in the system maybe a little longer, a year or two longer. We have to have a good retention program that's built on quality workplaces. And the idea of having the people engaged in deciding what's problematic in their system is very important.

Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure that we not only retain people working in the system and that we educate people, we've got to tell people that have gone to Texas in the layoffs of the early '90s when they were cut dramatically . . . that have gone to Texas, have gone to Alberta, have gone to BC (British Columbia), have gone to other provinces, that there's a place for them here at home; come back to their roots and the province that will make a place for them and value their contribution to the medical system. So we need all of those things happening, not just for nurses but for doctors, physiotherapists, pharmacists, all of the medical professionals that we need to make this province grow.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we bring together a real strategy for the personnel that we're desperately short of so they can feel empowered and enthused about their job.

Mr. Speaker, the other area that . . . another couple of areas I want to touch on briefly is the area of how can we deliver services in this province? Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to state right upfront that if we're going to have service delivery in the face of increasing shortages of personnel, we're going to have to find new and enthusiastic ways to develop these kinds of relationships. And we support the concept of primary health care teams, and we have to work with the medical professionals to work out the operational relationships between all of the participants in the teams.

You know what we have to do, Mr. Speaker, is we have to challenge each of these medical professionals to operate at the top of their scope of practice rather than arguing about where these scopes of practice overlap; that we challenge them to be the best they can be and to feel good about the decisions they are making, and to feel as if their job and their profession and their opportunity to participate in it is valued and important and appreciated by the province of Saskatchewan. So we need to do that sort of work.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to do everything we can to try to enhance regional services so that everything isn't poured onto the tertiary centres, and the demands and the expectations are simply greater than they're able to meet and make commitments to.

And I think what we've got to look is how we can provide greater diagnostic and imaging services out in the regional

centres, perhaps with the support of the medical professionals operating with using new technologies of being able to transmit images over the Internet and in an enhanced electronic environment so that everybody doesn't have to physically be in these regional centres. But a lot of the work can be done there so everybody isn't transported into the tertiary centres.

Mr. Speaker, the other reality of life is going to be is we can deal with a lot of the predictable health care conditions with primary health care teams and regional centres, but we also got to understand that not everything in health care is predictable. Traumas happen, accidents happen, very acute incidents happen in an unpredictable way.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have to look at and invigorate and make very complete our emergency measure system and, working with them, we have to not only provide a better ground ambulance dispatch and co-ordination system, I absolutely believe that we have to have a helicopter-base response system similar to the STARS (Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society) program in Alberta that can provide that emergency blanket of protection for all of our citizens in Saskatchewan. And so that people not only living in rural or remote areas but those people travelling through them, going to the lake on the weekends or visiting family, will also be able to be protected.

Mr. Speaker, we also believe that there has to be an accountability segment to how we operate. Three years ago when I made the presentation to the Fyke Commission, I said I really believe that the time has come where the health care system and the Government of Saskatchewan has to build a relationship and build a commitment with the people of Saskatchewan as embodied in a health care bill of rights and responsibilities. We have to understand what each's responsibility is to the health care system and the system to the citizens.

I think we've got to build that image and vision for what the health care system is and should be in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that to give teeth and life to this in a non-partisan way, we need a health care commissioner, that can act in an independent way responsible to this Assembly, to oversee the commitments and the relationships we embodied in a health care bill of rights.

I also believe that the newly announced Quality Council that has been announced in this province could be dovetailed into this commitment under the health care bill of rights, and it would be possible to make this relationship work in a very good way. And it would provide the transparency and the accountability that's going to be required where our citizens understand and expect and respect what the health care system is expected to do.

Mr. Speaker, those are some of the brief overview directions that our health care system under a Sask Party government will take. They're pragmatic, they're principled, and they're going to provide fundamental change where it's fundamentally needed so that we can build a health care system addressing the issues that are so fundamentally important.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan deserves the best. We should never settle for less than that because we've missed an opportunity to

get it right. To get the health care system re-earning the respect of its citizens, we have to make these fundamental steps.

Mr. Speaker, my disappointment with the Speech from the Throne is, while it talks about some nice platitudes and initiatives — and they're well and good in themselves — but they don't deal with the core problem and the core deficiency that we have in health care.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I certainly cannot support the Speech from the Throne. I believe that it's time for the people of this province to make a clear choice about the vision of practical, principled pragmatism that the Sask Party's talking about, and addressing the real issues of health care, and the only way that I can express that is to support the amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise in my place to offer some comments with respect to the Speech from the Throne. And I want to start off by thanking the people of my constituency and home community in Saskatoon for allowing me the privilege of representing them in the legislature.

And I want to also congratulate the two newest members of the Legislative Assembly who are my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Fairview which is also a neighbouring constituency, and also the new member in the opposition from Battleford-Cut Knife who I have worked with before in his capacity as the . . . a local mayor in his community and I have met him in my former capacity as Minister of Health and Minister of Finance.

And I want to say that both of these gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, have been entrusted with the responsibility of representing their neighbours and I hope that they enjoy it as much as I do, and I hope that they find it to be as much of an honour and a privilege as I do and I know the rest of my colleagues do as well.

I want to say first of all, Mr. Speaker, you know I am quite an optimistic person actually and I must say that sometimes when I listen to the doom and gloom that comes from some of the members opposite about how everything is bad in this province, even I start to get a bit depressed.

(15:00)

But then I like to put things in perspective, Mr. Speaker. And one of the things that I do, and I think we should all do, is to consider what is going on in the world today. And we watch the television; we see some of the violence and terrorism and war going on in the world.

And I think all of us in this House and the people of our province realize that, as we look at our problems and the things we have to complain about, we also should count our blessings, Mr. Speaker, because we are very, very fortunate to live in this land of Canada and to live in our beautiful province of Saskatchewan. I feel privileged just to have been born here.

And with that in mind and putting things in that kind of

perspective, Mr. Speaker, that we're all very fortunate to be here and our differences are not nearly as great as they would be in parts of the world where people are shooting at each other, Mr. Speaker, I do however want to examine some of the comments made by some of my colleagues in the House on the opposition side and in particular some of the comments of the Leader of the Opposition.

And my first observation with respect to the Leader of the Opposition's comments the other day, Mr. Speaker, is I thought that it was unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition made the observation that he thought the Liberals and the NDP could not find good candidates in the by-elections.

I'm hoping that it was completely in jest because in fact I think that all of the parties — the opposition party, the New Democratic Party, which I represent, and the Liberal Party — all have very fine members and fine people that represent them in elections. And certainly the by-elections were no exception.

I think the candidates for both the New Democratic Party and the Liberals, to which the Leader of the Opposition referred, were very fine and accomplished citizens. And there can only be one winner, but I think we're all winners when we have people participating for the various political parties in our democracy, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — But I want to talk about what I see as a lack of a coherent plan from the Leader of the Opposition. And it is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that he tries to make the case that they have some kind of a blueprint for the future that consists of more than just slogans.

And I want to analyze what he has said because I think he has failed to make that case when you really examine what the Leader of the Opposition has said. Of course he says that he wants to increase the population of the province by 100,000 people. Well who would disagree with that? That's fine. But the question is: do you have a plan to achieve it, Mr. Speaker? And I say they do not have a plan and . . . or at least they do not have a plan that makes any sense.

And I start by looking at the promises of the Leader of the Opposition with respect to tax cuts. First he says that he is going to raise the personal credit level, and he implies that we're going to move to a personal income tax regime that will be similar to Alberta's. That's what they like to say because they'll never admit anything good happens in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker; everything good is always in Alberta. They never mention the young people that have to spend \$5,000 insuring their vehicles, they don't mention the health care premiums, but they mention the parts they disagree with in Saskatchewan.

But I want to say that one promise alone that he's making — to change the income tax system — would cost \$400 million, Mr. Speaker. And the Leader of the Opposition should come clean about that and say it's \$400 million.

Then he says he's going to eliminate the small business income tax. We've already cut it by 40 per cent but he says: oh, that's not good enough, he's going to eliminate it. That would cost

\$60 million per year, Mr. Speaker.

But he's not quite satisfied with \$460 million, no. He says he's going to cut the corporate capital tax in half. A lot of tax cuts for big business in the Sask plan I think. But that's another \$180 million, Mr. Speaker.

So the plan so far that he's talking about, when he gets up and makes all his promises, so far, \$640 million a year, every year. But he doesn't stop there because he's going to decrease all the revenues by . . . That's about 10 per cent of the province's revenue, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition says he's going to cut.

But no, no, he doesn't stop there. Then he tells people he's going to raise all the spending. He's going to increase the provincial share of education funding for K to 12 (kindergarten to grade 12) education to 50 per cent — a very laudable goal, no question about it — but it's . . . it costs \$100 million in increased spending.

So somehow the member from Rosetown-Biggan, the Leader of the Opposition, is going to cut all the revenue to government but he's going to have the government spending more. It sounds familiar and somebody says it sounds like Grant Devine. I think there are parallels there, Mr. Speaker.

Now we're up to \$740 million that the Leader of the Opposition says he's going to commit every year. And then people ask him, well how are you going to do that? How are you going to get less money to government because you're going to cut all the taxes to your rich friends, but you say you're going to give more money to the schools and the farmers and the municipalities. How does that work?

And of course what he says is well, he's going to do something about the Crown corporations. Maybe he's going to sell them off and spend that money. That's a bit like selling the farm, to most people, Mr. Speaker. And I think most people don't want to sell SaskTel, which is our telephone company — one of the few, by the way, in North America that makes any money these days. They never hear that from the opposition.

He's going to sell the Crown corporations. Well I'm not sure that's such a good idea because actually if you analyze it, Mr. Speaker, they make a lot of money for the province and the people of the province, and we have among the lowest utility rates in the country. But never mind that because they are ideologically hidebound, right wing, and fairly extreme when it comes to some of this, Mr. Speaker. And they want to sell off the public assets. That's what they want to do.

Now it doesn't seem very logical to say you're going to promise \$740 million in goodies and then lead people to believe that you're going to fix the surgical waiting lists that the member from Melfort was just talking about, hire more health professionals that he was just talking about, and build a new health sciences facility that they've talked about, and give more money to the farmers and more money to the municipalities which they've talked about.

How are you going to do that when you have gutted the public treasury by giving tax breaks to the rich and large corporations

and selling off the Crown corporations? They haven't explained that, Mr. Speaker, because it doesn't make any sense.

And I think . . . I would say this to anyone in this province . . . And I admit there are some, Mr. Speaker, who believe that you can cut taxes massively and increase spending massively, and somehow this is all going to work. I would just repeat what I said in this House last year which is this, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the problem with what the Leader of the Opposition and the Saskatchewan Party say is it's too good to be true. It's too good to be true. Because what they're trying to say to people is, you're not going to have to pay any taxes under us, but we're going to fix everything and give you a bunch of money. Well life doesn't work that way, Mr. Speaker, and I think most people know that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I just want to comment on some of the other things that the Leader of the Opposition says.

You know they use a lot of buzz words and phrases, Mr. Speaker, like, we're always hearing that they're going to change the labour laws but they never quite explain what they mean by changing the labour laws. And I hope they don't think they're fooling anybody, Mr. Speaker. Just because they won't elaborate on what they mean, they shouldn't think that people don't know what they want to do because when parties of a right wing sort like the party opposite talks about changing the labour laws, Mr. Speaker, they are talking about stripping away the rights of working people. That is what they are talking about and nobody should be mistaken about it.

So let them tell us what it is they mean. Are they talking about making it harder to organize employees into unions? Is that what they're talking about? Are they talking about removing protection that employees have from unfair treatment? Are they talking about removing health and safety provisions, Mr. Speaker? Do they want to get rid of provisions for overtime pay? Are they talking about lowering the minimum wage?

Yes, I think they are, and I want to say on that one, Mr. Speaker, that every time this government has raised the minimum wage for the lowest paid people in this province, people who are not usually represented by unions, people who do not have a lot of benefits, all we ever hear — and I just heard another one from the members opposite, Mr. Speaker — are complaints. All you ever hear are complaints when you raise the minimum wage. Every time the minimum wage has been raised, which hasn't been that many times, I think it's been about three times in the last five years, every time we do that you'd think the world was going to come to an end.

But if it comes to something like a tax break for the very wealthy, Mr. Speaker, they will be right there supporting that. And I think there's something wrong with that picture, Mr. Speaker; I think that there is something wrong with that picture.

But I want to say, going back to their promises, Mr. Speaker, that what we have when we listen to them talk about all their

tax promises — on the one hand they're going to cut the taxes and all their spending increases — what we have is not a plan, it is a wish list.

It's a wish list and of course they're all good things, cut all the taxes and give everybody more money. And anybody in this House can sit down and come up with that kind of wish list, Mr. Speaker. It's a very easy thing to do if you don't live in the real world and money is no object. It's a lot like those people whose retirement planning consists of buying lottery tickets. That's what it's like, Mr. Speaker. It's not a plan; it's a wish that they have. And just how is this wish list supposed to add up? Well they tell us you can have 640-some million dollars in tax cuts, and hundreds of millions more in spending.

And the Leader of the Opposition, I must say, has said a few words about how he would achieve this. And the words he uses — and these should be noted carefully, Mr. Speaker — he uses the words, program review. But just like he doesn't say what the . . . changing the labour laws really means, he doesn't say what the review . . . program review really means, except once in a while he slips up. And when he was talking to a meeting in Saskatoon last year he said, well it means what the government in British Columbia is doing.

Now I want the people to note that, Mr. Speaker. He said: what we want to do is to do what Premier Campbell in British Columbia is doing. That's what he said, Mr. Speaker. And that's his idea of program review.

Well I want to give some advice to the members opposite, aside from the Leader of the Opposition. When their leader talks about program review, they should know that some of their cousins in British Columbia who are part of the right-wing government of Gordon Campbell are not really enjoying the program review, because what it means is real consequences for real people.

And when you support that kind of thing, you have to explain to your constituents why you're cutting their services. You have to talk to the parents of disabled children who are losing services in British Columbia. You have to talk to people who rely on ferries to get to work whose ferry service is being cut back. You have to talk to local school boards whose funding is being reduced. You have to talk to health workers. You have to talk to local governments. And then when you talk to them you'll understand the kind of program review that is being advocated by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker.

And that, Mr. Speaker, I believe, is not a plan that the people of Saskatchewan want. That is not a plan that the people of Saskatchewan want. And I say to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, he should come clean with the people of this province. And he should tell us what he really would like to do when he talks about cutting taxes for the rich, when he talks about changing the labour legislation, when he talks about program review like the Government of British Columbia. He should come clean with the people and explain what the consequences of those policies really are, Mr. Speaker, and he's not doing that.

(15:15)

Well I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that their so-called plan, which is not a plan, pretends that all of our problems have simple answers. It's a plan that uses code words to avoid discussion about what they really would like to do and where their proposals really would take this province.

And I want to say this, Mr. Speaker. We've heard a lot in the Throne Speech debate including from the members opposite, they have said — and I think this is important — they have said they don't like the Throne Speech, some have said, because it contains too much detail; it goes on and on with all kinds of detail.

And I guess I would say, Mr. Speaker, the problem is for some people, fantasy is more important than reality. That's the problem. We are talking about what we are actually doing as government; we're talking about actual results. We're talking about real plans; they're talking about a fantasy world, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to say that we have a plan. We have a plan that has brought in a new royalty structure for oil and gas that is resulting in record oil and gas drilling in this province, Mr. Speaker, and employing thousands of people.

We have a plan in forestry that in the last number of years has brought almost a billion dollars of private sector investment and is employing about 8,000 more people in forestry than a small number of years ago.

We have a plan for new royalties in mining that is leading to more exploration and exciting possibilities in things like diamond mining, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to be moving forward with that plan.

We have a plan for jobs that has resulted, Mr. Speaker, in 10,000 more people working in Saskatchewan today than were working in Saskatchewan a year ago.

We have a plan, Mr. Speaker, for tax reform that has brought our personal taxes from the second highest in Canada to the third or fourth lowest, Mr. Speaker. We've delivered on that.

We have a health plan to preserve private medicare. I'm not so sure that's what they want to do, Mr. Speaker.

We have an innovative plan to bring more research to our universities, the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) and the U of R (University of Regina), which have record amounts of research dollars coming into them today, Mr. Speaker.

We have a plan to reform the welfare system that has taken thousands of families off of social assistance and into the workforce. And I'm proud to say, Mr. Speaker, that the number of people on social assistance in this province has gone down each year for the last eight years, Mr. Speaker. That is what is happening. And there are more people working and there are fewer people on social assistance, Mr. Speaker. That is what is happening and that is the reality you will never hear from the members opposite because all they ever do is preach doom and gloom.

And I want to close, Mr. Speaker, by saying we have a plan.

They have an empty slogan, that's what they have.

And I want to say also in closing, Mr. Speaker, that I and the men and women that sit on this side of the House are proud of our province. We are proud of the hard-working men and women across this province that get up and make things happen every single day.

We're proud of the world-class things we have here such as Canada's only synchrotron, such as the third largest mining industry, such as the second largest oil industry, such as the third largest gas industry.

We're proud of the fact that more people are working. We're proud of the fact that our tax system has been reformed. We're proud of the fact that there are few people . . . fewer people on welfare, Mr. Speaker.

We're proud of the world-class OSB (oriented strand board) plant being built at Meadow Lake. We're proud of the OSB plant at Hudson Bay. We're proud of the 8,000 new people working in forestry. We're proud of the oil and gas workers. We're proud of the prospects in mining. We're proud of the fact that we're the world leaders in potash and uranium.

And they can get up, Mr. Speaker, and they can preach their doom and gloom day in and day out, but we're not going to be pessimistic. We are going to be proud of our province and what is happening in our province. We love Saskatchewan. We love living in Saskatchewan. We don't want to leave Saskatchewan. That's the vision that we have of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, not a vision of constantly complaining about everything going on in this province.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, when the people of this province have a choice between substance — which I say this government is delivering to people — and empty slogans and non-existent plans, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day when the people have the opportunity to judge and choose between those two options, I predict, Mr. Speaker, that they will resoundingly choose to re-elect this government.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support the Speech from the Throne. I am going to vote against the amendment put forward by the opposition, and thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I make my comments on the Speech from the Throne, I think it is appropriate that we acknowledge the fact that as we gather in this democratic institution, once more the world finds itself at war, a war that nobody wanted but which is now inflicting death and destruction on the soldiers of our allies and upon the innocent people of Iraq.

It is sad to acknowledge that in the 21st century we still have not found a way to resolve our conflicts in a peaceful manner and in a manner that does not result in the senseless slaughter of innocent civilians.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that as Canadians we all have a certain sense of unease that we are not with our traditional allies on this

war, the soldiers of the United Kingdom and the United States.

I think we must all acknowledge that Saddam Hussein is a criminal thug whose removal from office should be a cause for celebration by us all. But I think we also must acknowledge that this invasion of Iraq is a response to the events of 9/11, but that the connection between Iraq and Saddam Hussein with the attack on the World Trade towers is at best tenuous.

It also has to be acknowledged that this attack has not been sanctioned by the United Nations and if we are to move into a new world order that resolves human conflict without slaughter, it must be through a world body such as the United Nations and it must be through institutions such as the International Court of Justice which, for the record, the American government opposed. But I wish to state that if Saddam Hussein is brought before the International Court of Justice, I for one will be very pleased. And I think the United States should review its opposition to that important body for international law.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I think it has to be acknowledged that the doctrine of pre-emptive strike — that is the doctrine that we have to attack first because they might wish to attack at some time later — that is a very dangerous doctrine because it is one that if we can use that as a justification, there will no doubt be dictators and tyrants around the globe who will seize on that justification to do whatever they want. And so I think the doctrine of pre-emptive strike is a very dangerous one and one that we should avoid.

On balance, I commend Prime Minister Chrétien for his decision to keep Canada out of this conflict. This is a decision that represents the overwhelming desire of Canadians to resolve international disputes under the auspices of the United Nations. Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate that we as Canadians offer thanks for the peace and liberty we enjoy, and that our prayers go out both to the soldiers of the United States and United Kingdom, and also to the civilians of Iraq that the peace which we enjoy they will also enjoy in the very near future — that Iraq will be rebuilt and that the troops will come home. I hope for a mercifully short war with as few casualties as possible.

I now wish, first of all, on behalf of myself and the entire Liberal caucus, to welcome our two new members to the legislature. I'm sorry they're not sitting with me, but I'm sure after the general election I am going to be swamped with colleagues, Mr. Speaker. But I want to welcome the new member for Battleford-Cut Knife, the member for Saskatoon Fairview, and I wish them a happy and productive term of service to their constituents. And I congratulate them on their by-election wins.

I also want to congratulate the member from Cumberland who moved the motion on the Speech from the Throne. This is probably one of the last times we will have the pleasure of listening to the member for Cumberland, and I think he has graced this Assembly very well for the past 17 years. And I want to say publicly that I think that his commitment as well to the Cree language has been important in making the message, sending out the message, that this Assembly is a forum representing all of the people of Saskatchewan, and that Aboriginal peoples and Cree speakers as well should look to this Assembly as representing them and that they also have a

role here and a place here. And the member for Cumberland has done that eloquently, and I salute him in what may be his last intervention in debate in this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, I also want to speak for just a moment on the purpose of the Speech from the Throne. My understanding is that historically, centuries ago in England, the Throne Speech was the time for the king to address parliament and tell the members why he had called them into assembly. Then over the years that was transformed. The Speech from the Throne was still delivered by the Crown but it was now written by the government. But it continued, Mr. Speaker, to be a document which would set out the legislative agenda of the government. It still served the purpose of telling the members why they had been called into session.

In more recent years the Speech from the Throne has been the vision statement, the mission statement of the government, to explain its dream for the country, its program, its mission, what it wishes to accomplish in the next session. Well, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately we heard no vision, we received no road map outlining in broad terms the government's proposed direction for this session. We heard a lot of words strung together.

A Throne Speech should enable the citizens of the province to understand the philosophy and rationale of the government for what it is proposing and why. A Throne Speech should clearly outline a government's priorities and the reasons for their selection. Instead, Mr. Speaker, we heard a rambling laundry list. I believe we were 30 minutes into the speech before I heard the first concrete suggestion, and that was that the government was going to revamp the standing committees of this legislature.

Another 30 minutes into the morass and we were told that the Department of Social Services is going to change its name to the department of community resources and employment, resulting in unnecessary expenditures in changing stationery, logos, business cards, etc. Is this why we have been called into session? Is this the most the government can come up with as an agenda? Is this all they can say about their vision, their dreams for Saskatchewan?

If it is, it's a pretty thin agenda we've got before us, Mr. Speaker, and the catcalls of my colleagues in the Saskatchewan Party may be all we'll have to listen to this session, unless the government can find its own purpose and reason for calling this session, its purpose for governing, and set out before us something more than we heard in the Speech from the Throne.

Well, Mr. Speaker, one thing that we all agree on is the need to give more hope and more opportunities to our young people.

(15:30)

The government says that things are booming. I have to tell them that my constituents . . . that's not what they are experiencing, that's not what they're telling me, that's not what the people of Saskatchewan are saying. And I think the government should be just a little less satisfied with just how this province is booming and how marvellous things are going,

because that's not how the people out there feel.

And I also think the government should be slow to call people traitors because they don't think the province is booming. You know I don't know why love of Saskatchewan is bound up in their minds with deluding ourselves into thinking things are good when they're not.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said that there are two great tragedies in our province. The first is when we educate young people who leave; and the second is when we fail to educate young people who stay.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that too many of our young people have been trained and educated and have had to leave. We also know that with the aging of the baby boomers, we are facing the threat of serious labour shortage in this province. In some sectors we already are. We also know that we also have high unemployment in some sectors of our population, especially the Aboriginal sector.

Mr. Speaker, it is crucial that Aboriginal young people be trained, educated, and ready to enter the workforce. This is not merely justice for Aboriginal people, it is a question of economic survival for us all.

We have all heard the figure that 35 per cent of our population is expected to be Aboriginal by the middle of this century. If Aboriginal people, by the middle of this century, are participating in the economy and the workforce to the fullest extent that they deserve, then that is a good thing. And that answers the labour deficit in our province. If Aboriginal people continue to be marginalized and outside of this economy, then this province, which is already unable to keep up with its neighbours, is facing even greater crises in the future. We need to bring Aboriginal young people into the economic mainstream.

You know, a couple of years ago I debated Jim Pankiw at the University of Saskatchewan. And at that time it was pointed out that virtually none of the workforce at the University of Saskatchewan was Aboriginal, and Mr. Pankiw said, I don't have a problem with that. Well I do; I have a serious problem with that.

And it came out that Mr. Pankiw does not want to support Aboriginal people on welfare. The next point is he doesn't want them to be working. What does he want? And I think we, as citizens of this province, all have to answer that question. If they're not to be on welfare, and they're not to be working, well then where are they supposed to be?

Well Mr. Pankiw gave us some small glimpse of that when he published a pamphlet entitled *Stop Indian Crime*. And my question for Mr. Pankiw, when he says he wants to stop Indian crime, is what kind of crime does he support? What kind of crime does he advocate?

Mr. Speaker, we do not want Aboriginal people in our prison systems and they should not be to any greater extent than the general population. I salute the people of this province, especially in the Battlefords, who are working with young people so that they will be educated, so they'll have recreation

opportunities, so that they will be . . . so that they will have role models, and so that they will not be falling into crime.

I say with regret that the Battlefords does have a significant crime problem. We need to keep our young people out of jail. And the way we do that is not by an increasingly punitive prison system, but by making sure that those young people are involved in some of the recreation, at-school activities that give them positive experiences, and make sure that they will be on the right path to become responsible and contributing members of our society. Nothing can be more important for us and for our future. And again I say, this isn't merely fairness to them, this is about our survival as a society as well. And I congratulate the teachers and the leaders who are working with our young people in this very, very important step, in this very important mission.

Well I understand that Mr. Pankiw's constituency assistant now aspires to be in this Assembly. He has said he does not believe in the same things that his former boss believes, and I accept that. And if he does arrive in this Assembly, if he does become a member of this Assembly, I hope that he will reject the racial bad feeling that has been engendered by his former boss and that he will work with us to build a better future for all the people of Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I've said that I want Aboriginal people to take their rightful place. But that is something which I have to admit cuts both ways. As you know, urban reserves are being established throughout the province and this includes the Battlefords. These urban reserves offer cut-rate cigarettes and gasoline. And we have convenience store and gas bar owners, service station owners in the Battlefords who say that this is unfair. They say that it is not fair competition when urban reserve gas bars are able to offer cigarettes and gasoline at half their wholesale price.

They say it is not fair when people are able to drive on our roads with not contributing to their upkeep. They say that if 35 per cent of our population is going to be using public services without contributing to their maintenance, that it is very difficult to see how the math will come out and how we as a province will be able to support the infrastructure and the services we've all come to rely on.

I think these are issues that we will need to sit down with First Nations leaders and discuss in a respectful and responsible manner, but I think these are issues that indeed are going to have to be addressed if we can move forward. But there's one aspect of them I want to specifically mention today in my remarks, Mr. Speaker, and that is the question of cheap cigarettes to Aboriginal young people.

Mr. Speaker, in the guise of assisting Aboriginal people we have made some ghastly mistakes in times past. The residential schools, for example, were motivated by a desire to integrate First Nations people into the mainstream. I think there were some very well-intentioned people who came up with the idea of residential schools, however, as we all know, that policy was a failed policy and had ghastly and tragic consequences.

Well I submit, Mr. Speaker, that providing cheap cigarettes to Aboriginal young people is in the same category. In the guise of

respecting treaty rights, in the guise of respecting Aboriginal rights, we are pushing at Aboriginal young people cigarettes that we know are harmful to their health. They are taking them. Aboriginal young people are smoking at twice the rate of young people in general. So we say we are so open, we are so respectful, that we are encouraging Aboriginal young people to smoke at twice the rate of the general population when we know perfectly good and well that that is . . . that's a disastrous policy which can only lead to tragedy and bad health and sickness down the road.

So here is another case of where in the guise of helping Aboriginal people, we are in fact harming them, and we embark on a policy that is very, very damaging to Aboriginal people and their health. I say we have to re-examine this. This is not a policy that is respectful for Aboriginal people. It is in fact a very, very harmful and damaging policy that we have.

Mr. Speaker, we have the provincial government's publicity policy now saying our future is wide open. Well the doors are wide open and many of our young people are walking through them. The government says that the opposition Saskatchewan Party is a collection of slogans, and yet tragically the government has chose to counteract those slogans by its own slogan campaign.

We need to grow our economy. We need to grow opportunities. However, I would remind, I would remind you, Mr. Speaker, that this government was initially elected to clean up the scandals and the mess and the loss of public confidence in government left over by the Devine administration.

Now what is left of the moral authority of that government to continue in office when it stands up and says, we misled the people of this province for six years. I want to talk about that this afternoon. The Premier told us that for six years the government said that with the SPUDCO investment, it was a public-private partnership, when the truth was there was no private partner, there was no shared risk.

Now the Premier says that this misleading of the people of Saskatchewan was on a narrow issue. And it seemed as if he was arguing that because the people of Saskatchewan were misled on a narrow issue, it really wasn't that important.

Well my question for the Premier is: if misleading the people of Saskatchewan into saying that there's a private investor when there is no private investor — this is a phony investor who doesn't exist — if that is a narrow issue, if that's a narrow issue, would the Premier please tell us what he would consider a major issue on which to deceive the people of Saskatchewan?

Well the minister in charge of that communications strategy remains in cabinet, again signalling that this misleading of the people of Saskatchewan was not a big issue, was not a biggie. So the minister can remain in cabinet because it wasn't a big thing in which to mislead the people, and in any event it only went on for six years.

Well my question again for the Premier is: if misleading the people of Saskatchewan for six years is not grounds for dismissing a minister, then how long would he have to mislead the people of Saskatchewan before he would have to ask for his

resignation? Would it be 8 years? Would it be 10 years? Would it be 20 years? What would the Premier consider to be a serious misleading of the people of Saskatchewan? How long — if six years isn't long enough — how long of misleading the people of Saskatchewan would he think disqualifies a cabinet minister to continue in his cabinet?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Well so . . . and if speaking about a phony partner who doesn't exist is not grounds for dismissing a minister, then what is?

Well we also have found recently that the former minister, the former minister Carol Teichrob had warned against this investment she had said was getting in trouble. And we also of course found out last year that the other former minister Janice MacKinnon was warning against the Information Services Corporation. That's the one that's gone from 20 million to over 100 million. So Janice MacKinnon, she thought things were not right in Information Services as the budget was going out of sight 500 per cent. Well of course Janice MacKinnon is gone from cabinet.

(15:45)

Carol Teichrob, who said this potato thing doesn't smell good; she had a fight, she says, with the other minister in charge and of course what's the end result? The end result is that Carol Teichrob is out of cabinet and the minister who insisted on barging ahead, he's still in cabinet.

So my suggestion, my suggestion to the Premier is: why don't you bring back Carol, why don't you bring back Janice, and why don't you punt some of the people who have been responsible for these enormous losses and for you having to suffer the embarrassment and humiliation of admitting that your government has misled the people for six years?

Well as I said, the moral authority of the government has been seriously compromised by what has happened this spring. I severely am sorry about it; I think it's unfortunate.

I have been proud for the last seven years to represent a constituency including some rural area with the villages of Cochin and Meota. I am proud to call them constituents. However in the new Assembly, North Battleford and Battleford will again be joined; the people of the Battlefords are proud and happy to be one constituency again.

I hear someone calling, am I going to retire? I thought of that but I knew if I did you'd all be bored to tears in here so I'm going to be running again. And I'm sorry that I will not be representing the good people of Cochin and Meota, but I'd like to say that the people of the Battlefords are very, very pleased that we will again be one constituency, the best part of the province. I'm proud to call it home and I will be proud to be putting my name forward in the general election for the people of the Battlefords and to be back in this Assembly next session as the MLA for the Battlefords.

I will . . . With that, I don't know why the Saskatchewan Party is heckling me because I was about to announce that I'm going

to vote for their amendment but, you know, now I'll have to re-think that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment. I will not be supporting the motion on the Speech from the Throne. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure and enthusiasm about the future of our province that I enter into debate on the Speech from the Throne. And let me make it very clear right up front, Mr. Speaker, that I will be voting clearly in favour of the Speech from the Throne.

Well first of all, Mr. Speaker, let me extend congratulations to the hon. member for Cumberland, the mover of the speech, and the hon. member for Regina Wascana Plains, the seconder, for having the honour of being the mover and the seconder of this important speech.

If I could just acknowledge the hon. member from Cumberland who, when I first entered the legislature, Mr. Speaker, and sat at a desk on that side, with whom I served as the bench mate. And I would say, Mr. Speaker, one of my proudest and clearest memories of serving that first term as a bench mate with the hon. member of Cumberland was being there I think for every one of his speeches in which he spoke with great enthusiasm and pride in the native Cree tongue, Mr. Speaker, and did that so as to be able to include the people from his constituency in the proceedings of the Assembly. And it was there that I very proudly learned that encouraging support for the speaker in the Cree language in this Assembly . . . (Cree) . . . which is one of my happy memories. And so I say to the member from Cumberland for your speech as you addressed, as you led off the debate . . . (Cree) . . . to you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say welcome to the Assembly to the hon. member from Saskatoon Fairview as well as the hon. member for Battleford-Cut Knife and to wish them satisfying political careers, and to wish them the satisfaction of being able to go home and say that they served their constituents well.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, before proceeding to the substance of my remarks on the debate, I want to say thanks to the good people of Moose Jaw North who it has been my pleasure to serve for the past, some 16, 17 years. And I'm very proud, Mr. Speaker, that my party has nominated me to run again in the next provincial election with the prospects of serving my constituents yet again and I look forward to that.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we'll come back . . . One of the hon. member's comments about the democratic process of the nomination, and I would say, Mr. Speaker, that I am very proud that in the nomination that I had, in fact most votes did win. And we'll come back to that subject just a tad bit later in my remarks.

I'd like to very briefly, Mr. Speaker, in the time that I have

available to me express my support for the big picture. This is a speech, Mr. Speaker, which covers a comprehensive plan for building the future of our great province. I want to touch on some of the highlights and then I want to focus particularly on the social agenda, Mr. Speaker, and make some comments particularly as they relate to the department of community resources and employment and things related to that matter.

But I do want to come back to the important subject of democracy before I take my place. Mr. Speaker, first of all, the title of the speech, "A Vision. A Plan. A Future . . ." is obviously one, Mr. Speaker, which is a source of not only inspiration but a great deal of information as to how we will build for the future.

The vision, in a nutshell, Mr. Speaker, that it says in the speech, a province of opportunity in which people who are prepared to dream big, plan well, and work hard, can build their futures. A vision of an expanding economy. A vision where all children will have the opportunity to grow up healthy in safe, secure communities, receive the best of education and training, then build their families here in our province. And a vision as well, Mr. Speaker, of a green Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as we look at the plans that are outlined in the Speech from the Throne, there are five key areas, and let me just touch on, very, very briefly, on the first four, and a little more detail on the fifth.

First of all, the expansion of our economy. I point out with a great deal of pride that in our province here for the last 10 straight months, Mr. Speaker, 10 consecutive months, we have had significant job growth, year . . . month over month, year over year. And in fact, of those past 10 months, several of them have been record job growth years, record job numbers.

Included in the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, a 10-year beef production strategy plan, and also a notation of the high-speed Internet which is now available to some 74 per cent of the people of Saskatchewan.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, it's worth noting here in our Saskatchewan, our rural Saskatchewan in which CommunityNet has brought high-speed Internet to, very soon, Mr. Speaker, 366 communities, that the fact of the matter is that in many parts of small town, rural Saskatchewan there is high-speed Internet when in fact, when in fact, Mr. Speaker, there are many parts of the city of Toronto that do not have high-speed Internet, many parts of the city of New York that do not have high-speed Internet.

And why is it, Mr. Speaker, that the province of Saskatchewan can have high-speed Internet in small town Saskatchewan when you can't have it in all of Toronto, Ontario, or in New York, New York? And, Mr. Speaker, the answer is very simple. Because here in Saskatchewan we have SaskTel. We have Sask . . . There is no SaskTel in Toronto and there is no SaskTel in New York. Mr. Speaker, let us remember that there is an instrument of Crown corporation which is a very, very important part of bringing high-speed Internet to the people of Saskatchewan.

I hear the hon. member mumbling from his seat on the other

side, Mr. Speaker, and I know he finds it rather troubling that there should be acknowledgement of the good work that Crown corporations do in this province to build our economy to support the quality of life of people of Saskatchewan. It's a defining difference between this side of the House and that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, and I predict for decades to come Crown corporations will be a part of building the future of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in addition to building the economy, we're going to work in protecting medicare. And we all recognize that in this great Canadian nation of ours, medicare was born in this province under the direction of a CCF-NDP (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation-New Democratic Party) government, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to continue to build and protect medicare and the people of Saskatchewan and the people of Canada would expect no less.

Mr. Speaker, hot on the heels of the Romanow report for health care and building on the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care, the health care agenda will move forward. We've also said in the Speech from the Throne that there will be some 300 first year nursing training positions. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, another exciting element — and I know this is just a smattering of a wide range — 24-hour health phone advice will be available this year.

We're going to be touching in the world of education, building on our commitments to K to 12 education, Mr. Speaker. It's worth noting that over the last five years, over the last five years, on a per student basis, on a per student basis, funding for K to 12 education has increased by 42 per cent — 42 per cent per student — over the last five years.

Mr. Speaker, this is also the province where we have Campus Saskatchewan — using the Internet and modern technology to bring post-secondary education, accessible post-secondary education, to students across the province including many parts of rural Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne touches on the sustainable future of the environment, the ethanol industry, the green power, the wind power, and all those important matters.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to now turn to the social agenda, Mr. Speaker, and included in the speech is reference that the Department of Social Services is changing its name to the department of community resources and employment. And, Mr. Speaker, this is a change that's taking place after having had the same name for the department for 31 years. It's been a long time.

And, Mr. Speaker, the change in name — from my point of view — is simply the name catching up to the department because the department has changed significantly in the way that it brings support to Saskatchewan people to build their greatest amount of independence, and the confidence and the enthusiasm with which they can build their own futures here in our province. The department is much more than its traditional role of income security or welfare and the child protection or child welfare roles that were originally part of the department.

It's also true, Mr. Speaker, that within the umbrella of the department as it has grown and become shaped, that services are delivered by over 900 community-based organizations which are a very, very important part of the delivery of our services to the people of Saskatchewan in order to build their futures.

And, Mr. Speaker, I also note for many . . . of interest to volunteers and board members of those community-based organizations, the Speech from the Throne refers to legislation regarding liability that will be of particular interest to CBO (community-based organization) volunteers and boards.

Mr. Speaker, in the department of community resources and employment, we are going to continue our strategy of building on our very successful Building Independence program. And I remind the House, Mr. Speaker, that this is a program introduced back in 1997-98 which has had significant results supporting low-income parents to be attached to the best form of income security possible, and that's the world of work, Mr. Speaker, and to support them being able to successfully build their own independence and to build their own futures.

Mr. Speaker, it was because in this province we said we're going to get serious. We're going to take focus. We're going to take aim at a very important social issues called child poverty and we recognize that in the real world children don't grow up in poverty in isolation. In the real world poor kids grow up in homes in which their parent or parents are poor. And if you want to do something to change that picture — and we do and we've done that — then you introduce programs which will support that attachment to the labour market for low-income families.

And so we introduced the Saskatchewan employment supplement, the Saskatchewan Child Benefit, the family health benefit, the provincial training allowance — all of which are assisting and, Mr. Speaker, the results have been dramatic.

Because of a number of changes being made since the introduction of the Building Independence program, today in the province of Saskatchewan there are more than 6,000 fewer families who are living on social assistance. And what's most exciting of all, Mr. Speaker, is that in Saskatchewan today there are more than 13,000 fewer kids growing up on welfare than just five years ago.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that's success and most importantly it's success measured through the eyes of those people — low-income families — who have attached themselves to the world of work and are getting on with building their futures.

Mr. Speaker, in the world of child and family services, which is also part of the department, in the Speech from the Throne there's a reference to the fact that we're introducing legislation to support kinship care. I introduced that legislation just a couple of days ago, or it was just yesterday and we'll say more about that in much more detail later on, Mr. Speaker, but I think the thing that's important to note is that again it's supporting vulnerable kids as close to home as we possibly can.

Mr. Speaker, also within the department then, when we look at what is covered in the community resource and employment

department is child care is part of the responsibility of the department. And in the Speech from the Throne it's noted that there are going to be announced some increases, not only in spaces — child care spaces here in the province of Saskatchewan — but also subsidies to support the families, Mr. Speaker, so that the parents of Saskatchewan can count on having good, reliable, quality child care while they're involved in the world of work or training as part of building their futures for their families and their communities in our Saskatchewan.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, in addition to that the Kids First program, which was introduced in the province here a couple of years ago, is expanding by 120, services to 120 children, the most vulnerable of kids in our province, Mr. Speaker, to give the support that's necessary, to give hopes to kids who have started out with disadvantage and as they engage in the early childhood development that is so critical to them shaping their futures as individuals and growing up to be strong adults and strong citizens in our province.

(16:00)

Mr. Speaker, the department of community resources and employment, we've brought the whole career and employment services delivery system into the department to support all Saskatchewan people, all Saskatchewan people, in their desire to find employment, to shape their careers, to connect the world of work and the needs of employers with the world of employees and the need to work, and as well as to provide the counselling advice and access to supports. That entire system, Mr. Speaker, is part of the department of community resources and employment.

Mr. Speaker, in the department there's also our social housing programs supporting already, Mr. Speaker, some 31,000 households in the province of Saskatchewan today in some way, shape, or form in terms of access to good quality, decent housing in which to live and to raise families and to . . . in which to retire.

Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne it is also announced that we will be carrying on with our program to introduce, over the course of the next four years, some 1,400 additional affordable housing units here in the province of Saskatchewan to help moderate- and low-income families and individuals again find the security in which they can build their future in our great province as part of this vision for the future of the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, also within the department are supports for people with disabilities. And I want to take just a moment to concentrate on that because as we've looked at our supports for families with young children and made the successes we had in the Building Independence program, I'd say that the next focus that we must have in the world of policy is to support those with disabilities. The fact of the matter is, because as numbers of people requiring social assistance income security have decreased, the percentage of those who require income security, Mr. Speaker, who have disabilities, has been increasing.

And we're going to take advantage, we're going to take advantage of the dynamics of the labour market, the tightening of the labour market, to assist those who have lived outside the

mainstream of employment for too long, to become a part of the mainstream of employment, to become full citizens, full participating citizens in our Saskatchewan. And that's a part of the challenges of the department of community resources and employment. Mr. Speaker, I know it's an industrious initiative, a combination of initiatives that we're taking, but it's one that I'm confident will contribute to the quality of life of citizens in our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before I take my place, I cannot sit down without commenting on the state of democracy in our province, without a comment about the state of democracy in our province. Because if there is anything that unites us in this room, it has to be a respect for the principles of democracy. Surely there is nothing more sacred to the men and women who serve in this room than the honouring of the principles of democracy, Mr. Speaker.

What are those basic principles? It comes down to two things. There are two basic principles to the . . . to democracy, Mr. Speaker — that the minority will have their say and the majority will have their way. You get to say what you think and most votes wins — most votes wins.

Mr. Speaker, this is not . . . This is not a new concept. My hon. colleague says new concept. There will be some in this House who think this is a new concept, who think that this is a non-negotiable concept, who think that democracy is . . . it's democracy when convenient — it's democracy when convenient.

Mr. Speaker, there are nations in this world . . . There are nations in this world, and far too many of them developing nations, at which decisions of the electorate are made on the basis of democracy when convenient. And when the result is not the wish of those who have the greatest amount of power, that the election is cancelled. And we will cry out with indignation, Mr. Speaker, but there are nations in the world that'll treat their citizens that way.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when we look at how political parties in this province will treat their own . . . will treat their own in respect of the principles of democracy, we should be very, very nervous about how they would treat those who are not their own. And I point specifically to the Leader of the Opposition who, in explaining how his party is getting rid of Grant Schmidt — Grant Schmidt, poor old Grant Schmidt, poor old Grant Schmidt, that right-wing . . . I mean, I was critic of Grant Schmidt; he's a right winger, boy, in anybody's definition. Poor old Grant Schmidt. He worked for five years as constituency president, Mr. Speaker, for the Sask Party, won a nomination fair and square, most votes, and then the Leader of the Sask Party gets up and what does he say? He says, we can't have Mr. Schmidt in our caucus any more; we can't have him. Why? He says . . . In the *Leader-Post* of March 10, he says:

Hermanson said he heard concerns that Schmidt doesn't support the Sask Party's position on government investment in the economy. In interviews, he has said the party shouldn't rule out government investment entirely.

That's Grant Schmidt's sin.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what you just heard? You just heard the Leader of the Sask Party say they can't have Grant Schmidt because he's too far a left-winger. That's what they said. Grant Schmidt's a left-winger. Only the Sask Party would say, Grant Schmidt's a left-winger; he doesn't fit in our caucus. The rest of the world thinks Grant Schmidt's one rabid right-wing fellow, Mr. Speaker, but in the Sask Party, he's a left-winger and they can't have him.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if it's democracy when convenient, if they're willing to eat their own in the pursuit of power, then I say to the people of Saskatchewan: beware, beware, beware. If you can't trust them on the principles of democracy, what can you trust them on?

So, Mr. Speaker, as we go through the session, Mr. Speaker, the great debate will be about the vision for the future of Saskatchewan. On this side is a vision of hope and optimism building on our strengths and confidence. And we'll move into our second century proud of our first century, building on our systems of co-operation and community, Mr. Speaker, and building futures that will be strong for our people.

On that side is doom and gloom and people who do not understand, or if they do understand, will not support the principles of democracy. Mr. Speaker, it's a pretty clear question.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it is in support of this plan with a vision for the future of Saskatchewan, and in opposition to the principles that will be betrayed so easily, those principles of democracy, that I will stand proudly in support of this Speech from the Throne. And I'll be voting in favour of the motion.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dearborn: — It's with pride today that I stand to address the Speech from the Throne.

As no longer the newest member of the House, I'd like to first take the opportunity to welcome our new members from Saskatoon Fairview and from Battleford-Cut Knife. The former — the member rather from Saskatoon Idylwyld, who was the rookie before myself — said some very kind words to me when I got started. And he said he found it a very fulfilling occupation to be in, and that we'd have many good experiences, and I hope that the same can be said for the two new members today.

It is with great pride that I represent the constituency of Kindersley. Although I've only been at it for about six months, I've really grown to enjoy the company of many of the constituents in all our communities. I'm sad to be losing some of the communities such as Eston, and Dodsland, and Plato — Dodsland and Plenty, rather — but under the new boundaries I will be running again and look forward to holding the support that the member from Battleford-Cut Knife, in the Unity, Macklin communities.

Today with regards to addressing the Speech from the Throne, I want to talk about the very different outlook that we have for

the province. I thought that this Speech from the Throne was possibly visionary in the 1930s but nothing's really changed since that point. And the reason . . . maybe it's been the two successive years of drought that the members opposite feel that history's repeating itself.

But it essentially gets down to this: we have a problem. We believe in free enterprise on this side of the House. The other side of the House believes in having a centrally planned economy. And this is not going to work. It was thought in the 1930s that this could work and there was great disasters in the social experiments around the world with what we saw in Germany and what we saw in the Soviet Union. But since the 1990s, the early 1990s when the Wall came down, we see that centrally planned economies don't work anywhere else in the world and they certainly don't work here.

There's been a real problem with the beginning of our province seeing massive growth in population through the teens and the twenties up to a million people, but then when we hit the dirty thirties we had real problems with retention of population. We haven't really grown since.

And the correlation that happened there was there was a premier came along, a very charismatic young preacher who talked about the need for redistribution of wealth. At the time I think many people bought into it and they felt it was a good idea. I, myself, came from a family of strong socialists.

One of the big things I think that rooted those ideas was a mentality of scarcity. When it hadn't rained for years and years, it's maybe easy to point the finger and say someone else has a bigger piece of the pie due to the fact that they must have taken it from me. But this mentality has cramped our province from having any real growth over the years.

What we really need is an abundance mentality. And when we have a province like Saskatchewan — the leader in uranium, in 47 per cent of the agricultural land in this country, we have an abundance of natural resources — we need an abundance mentality that says if everybody wants a bigger piece of pie, let's make the pie bigger. Let's not say whoever has a bigger piece of pie, we're going to redistribute that.

The real problem over the last 60 years in our province has been that abundance mentality has not existed. Socialism has said we can redistribute wealth but there's nothing, there's nothing in the plan on how to build that wealth in the first place. And this is a fundamental problem that has to change.

In the global environment that we live in today, we see that Crown investing, competing against private enterprise, doesn't work. It drives business out of the province.

And what we can ask ourselves is what other jurisdictions in the world are taking government funds and investing abroad? Is New Zealand investing into Saskatchewan? Is South Africa investing into Saskatchewan? Is Japan, the Government of Japan, investing into Saskatchewan?

There may be companies, private industries that invest globally . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That would be a private company — Hitachi, as the member opposite said — and that's

fine. We'd invest . . . we'd welcome all private investment to come into our province.

But this hasn't happened. Governments won't put money into Saskatchewan because across the world it's not a good idea to do so. Further to that, the problem over the last 60 years is private enterprise won't put money into Saskatchewan as well because it is afraid that taxpayers are going to have to prop up Crown corporations to compete directly against them. And this won't work.

It doesn't work . . . Private enterprise does work for one very good reason. It's those citizens' money; it's their money. Small business works very well because the people that are working with that, it's their money; it means a lot to them. I believe that small enterprise is the backbone of our economy in Saskatchewan and always will be. It's never going . . . Crown corporations are never going to be able to compete with private enterprise when you have individuals that don't have a stake in it, when they work 9 to 5 and at the end of the day they go home. The public sector, unfortunately it's not performance based, where free enterprise — the bottom dollar — absolutely is.

A further problem in having a centrally planned economy is that the venture capital pool is always involuntary. When we see SPUDCO or Information Services Corporation losing money, they can always just go back to the government and ask for more and this is very problematic.

In free enterprise when a business fails, Mr. Speaker, that's it. It's dead; you cut your losses and it starts over again. That certainly has not been the case with this present government. We've seen them invest in SPUDCO. They told us that this was a private-public venture; clearly over six years it was not. The minister still has not been fired; and although he has offered his resignation which — and apologized to this Assembly and I personally have accepted that — the Premier has refused to act on this. And the people of Saskatchewan do not feel that this is good enough.

The people of Kindersley have been asking time and again, when is the election? This is the first question that I am asked every day that I'm in the constituency doing work. And just under short . . . under six months ago, Mr. Speaker, we had the by-election there, 83 per cent of the voting population voted against this government. They do not feel that the NDP is putting out a vision to grow our province in any meaningful way.

(16:15)

One of the things that was very telling about this was that the voting list from 1999 to 2002 had 1,000 fewer names on it. This is very problematic because this is leaving 150 empty houses in Kindersley. It means our small towns are abandoned. And many of these things . . . many of these people have left and they've gone right across the, right across the road to Alberta. And it's hard on our local businesses.

One of the things that the member from Mount Royal said today, he said that there's a record increase in oil and gas drilling. And well, this may be true. It really does beg the

question relative to the socialist philosophy, is why is this happening now instead of 40 or 50 years ago? Why does Alberta have a Heritage Fund and my constituents are forced out of bids for servicing these oil and gas wells because the companies have set up across the line in Alberta?

So even though we may have a small oil boom, the fact is that this mentality hasn't been there for some time. It has failed to produce the corporations being based in this province; it's chased them out, everything comes across the line. It has been very damaging to the people that live specifically in the west central area.

It's funny that the thing that the government is claiming that precipitated the growth in the oil and gas industry recently was the cut in royalty rates. Well what a novel concept — that perhaps government allowing free enterprise to capitalize on their investment actually grows the economy.

And if there is a success here — which I believe that there is; there's been a measured success in new oil and gas in our area — how much better would that be for the province as a whole when the socialist aspect of that government is removed completely after a general election and those principles can be applied across the economy, in agriculture, in high tech, in any opportunity that's available to the people of Saskatchewan, that we can go forward and actually have our economy grow.

Members opposite also said, they said the Saskatchewan Party has really one plan and that's about tax cuts.

Well the thing that we find very, very problematic on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is that for 16 consecutive quarters we have had population loss, and this is not acceptable. It's further . . . it's completely unacceptable that our population has been stagnant at a million people since the 19 . . . late 1920s, and the correlation between population and socialism is exactly there.

If we want to increase the number of people that live in this province, that work in this province, that pay taxes in this province, to provide services for the services which we all want, we're going to have to lower taxes. Because this is the only proven formula, globally, anywhere in the world, that's worked.

When you lower taxes in a free enterprise economy, you generate growth. And it's only going to be economic growth that stimulates population growth. Nothing else is going to do this. Investment in Crown corporations as the engine of the economy will not do this. Sixteen consecutive quarters have proven this without a doubt. It's also been proven the world over in many other jurisdictions. Successful economies are not run from centrally planned governments. The role of the government in the economy should be to provide the environment, Mr. Speaker, for business to flourish, for money to be made, and then for taxes to be collected so that we can all enjoy the level of services which many of us want.

The member from Greystone said yesterday that there hadn't been an increase in the amount paid out to people receiving social assistance. There was about . . . at about \$195. And, Mr. Speaker, I concur with the member. The real question here is: how are we going to pay for this? There is no doubt that we

should have more money for our hospitals. We should have more money for education. We should have more money for social assistance. But the real question is first and foremost: how do we grow the economy?

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

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, with leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the hon. member for allowing me the opportunity. I'm very encouraged to see young people have an interest in our democratic process, and visiting our legislature this afternoon, three young people in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. And it's Maiken Mortenson from Denmark and Shane Schiele from Meadow Lake and Joe Vidal from Vermillion, Alberta.

And it's just a great pleasure to see these young people come here to watch our parliamentary process in action. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Goulet, seconded by Ms. Hamilton, and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. Hermanson.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, one of the big problems that we've been having in the province, and in the constituency of Kindersley, is we have had a loss of population which has continued year after year. We've had, year after year, Mr. Speaker, a forcing of people off the land which is causing the farms to get larger and larger.

You know there is a problem with farms getting larger and larger. I actually come from a fairly good-sized farming operation myself. And we're very worried about family farms expanding and expanding to the point that there is no infrastructure left, Mr. Speaker.

It's gotten to the point, Mr. Speaker, that the New Democratic Party, under their tenure, we've seen hundreds of elevators close; we've seen our highways destroyed; seen the hospitals closed. Right now I have, Mr. Speaker, I have two small schools in my riding that are possibly slated for closure next year. These destroy communities outright.

Our farming communities, our farming communities have produced for almost a hundred years, Mr. Speaker. The wealth is there; the land can make money. But, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, our province, our provincial government has systemically not been in support of small rural towns and it's

really hurting us. It's hurting the big farmers, it's hurting the small farmers.

One of the things that's happening as you grow and expand your farm and hopefully invest in your capital assets — and for the dryland farming that's predominant in our area, that would be expanding your land base — as you expand your land base, you would hope that over time the value of an acre upon purchasing it would increase over the next 20 or 25 years. And I can tell you without a doubt, Mr. Speaker, that the farmers in my area have increased their per acre production over the 25 years sometimes to the point of fourfold with the movement into higher tech and continuous cropping and whatnot. However the land prices have not followed suit.

And part of the reason, I believe that that exists, Mr. Speaker, is because the infrastructure that the Government of Saskatchewan had provided formerly has been stripped right to the bone to the point that young farm families really have to question whether they want to come back or not.

You can work your whole life and at the end of the day it may be that the school's closed, the hospital's closed, there's nothing for your family anymore. You have 50 miles one way to get into town on a highway that's totally decrepit. There's no place to take your grain close, and long story short, after all that time and money invested, your capital asset hasn't gained value. And this is a tragedy. This is a tragedy, Mr. Speaker.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, what has the NDP done to address this? For three years we've had drought in my area, Mr. Speaker, and on my farm. In the year 2000, the pulse crops were a failure on our stubble. In the year 2001, it was a complete disaster and only the summerfallow crops were harvested, at about 30 per cent their average capacity and in 2002, that decreased.

An average usually in our farm for a summerfallow crop would be, you know, in the 30-bushel to 40-bushel to the acre range and last year it was down to 10 bushels to the acre. The NDP's response to this, Mr. Speaker, was to raise the premiums on crop insurance up to 52 per cent.

This is devastating, Mr. Speaker. This is going to put young farm families out of the province once and for all. They'll be gone. My neighbour, Mr. Brent Henry, who I went to school with from kindergarten up, has his farm for sale in the paper last week because of policies from this government. It's a shame.

We had 20 members in the RM (rural municipality) of Chesterfield, farming individuals, under the age, under the age of 40, and now we're only going to have 19. This is a huge area, Mr. Speaker, and it is a shame what this government has done. It is a shame that they have not stood up for the farmer at our time of need.

When it gets right down to it, Mr. Speaker, we have vast differences in ideology between that side of the House and this side of the House. Mr. Speaker, my primary reason for being here is to see pragmatism practiced in our government, that we have good government, that we have accountable government.

This hasn't been the case for a number of years. We have a

cabinet minister sitting opposite, Mr. Speaker, that for six years covered up lies and deceit and the Premier has not removed him.

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. It has been the long-standing tradition of this Assembly that there is certain language that we do not use, and I would ask the member to withdraw the statement that he used and then proceed with his remarks.

Mr. Dearborn: — Mr. Speaker, I withdraw and apologize to the member opposite.

I do believe that the member did mislead this House for six years, saying that there would be a 50 per cent contribution from the private sector when in fact it was something like \$56.

Mr. Speaker, with all the problems that are in the world today, I think it . . . Having spoken to my constituents, I would like to touch on some of the things that are happening across the world with the war in Iraq. I heard from the member from Saskatoon Greystone, and the member from Saskatoon Southeast speak. And their position in favour of the Prime Minister of Canada, his stance, and also of what our Premier said. I've talked to people in the Kindersley constituency and I have some strong feelings on this issue as well.

I think that there's a folly in the logic when essentially what seems to be said here is that the nature of the actions are just or unjust relative to how many people say they are. In logic, I believe this is called the straw man theory. Supposedly this war will become a just war when we get into . . . if France says it's okay or if Germany says it's okay, but when the UN (United Nations)says it's okay, suddenly it becomes morally tenable. I don't believe this, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that changed my mind and absolutely set in my mind that this war is the right thing is on a report from Amnesty International on one of the horrors that are being committed by the regime in Iraq. I'd like to predicate that by saying I was fortunate as a young man to meet my grandmother's cousin . . . (inaudible) . . . from Poland, who was a survivor of the Auschwitz internment camp. I saw the tattoo on her arm. And I'm glad that I live in a country that participated in that liberation.

Amnesty International has reported — they've been kicked out of Iraq for a number of years now — that one of the methodologies employed by that regime with their dissidents is to round up the dissident family, and this would be mother, father, and children. And they would take the dissidents to one of their torture chambers and torture the children in front of the parents.

I'm a parent; I have two young boys. This is obviously . . . no one in this room would find those actions anything but deplorable. But what crossed my mind is what has to be going through those poor parents' minds. They're sitting there in utter hopelessness and I suspect that the only thing they can be doing is praying, Mr. Speaker — praying that something, somewhere will alleviate this situation.

And I'm very thankful that we have men like Mr. Blair and Mr.

Bush that realize this, that realize that the world is not always a nice place, that realize that going through the United Nations is not always the final answer, and that this can be stopped.

It's horrible that the war is having to go on. After three days of war, the electricity in Iraq is supposedly going to be out. After a week there'll be hundreds of thousands of people who will have dysentery. It's horrible, but it's needed, Mr. Speaker, so that these atrocities stop. And it comes down to countries such as Canada that have these freedoms to be able to participate in that.

(16:30)

I'm going to leave that right now, Mr. Speaker, and go on to say our feelings, my feelings usually don't see eye to eye with the government. The Speech from the Throne I don't think really outlines anything new. It did not outline a vision; it did not outline a plan for growth. What I see from this Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, is more failed farms, more poor highways, a longer and longer waiting list for hospitals. I don't see things turning around, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against the Speech from the Throne. I will be voting in favour of the amendment. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that I'll be seeing everyone after the next election. I look forward again to serving the good people of Kindersley and I look forward to us serving after the next election in the government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very happy to join in this debate. I'm delighted that my first official declaration as the member of Saskatoon Fairview is to say that I will be supporting the motion in support of the Throne Speech and opposing the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, as all rookies before me, and I suspect for most of you veterans, it is both a thrill and a humbling experience to stand in this Chamber that has echoed with the voices of Scott, Gardiner, Douglas, Lloyd, Blakeney, Steuart, and Romanow, and has endured the yips and bleats of Devine and his children across the way.

I am aware that we are part of a legislative tradition that goes back at least as far as Magna Carta, and I give you my assurance, Mr. Speaker, that I will conduct myself in the knowledge of that tradition. I look forward to working with all hon. members as we go about the business of the people who sent us here, all of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I particularly want to acknowledge you. As a newcomer I know that it is your heady responsibility to see that the business of this legislature is conducted according to the rules and customs of that tradition. From what I have seen so far, you're a wise choice and I look forward to your guidance.

As I said in a member's statement, I am proud and grateful to the people of Saskatoon Fairview for their support in the recent by-election and I repeat my promise to represent them to the

best of my ability.

Fairview is a constituency close to the heart of Saskatoon, an integral part of the most attractive city in Western Canada. Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon Fairview is made up of the diverse multicultural group of voters and children who take pride in their families and work, and they do not hesitate to participate in the affairs of their city and their province.

One more comment, Mr. Speaker, before I address the Throne Speech. Before my election, I was a staff representative of CUPE, the Canadian Union of Public Employees. I'm proud of my union affiliation and I am also proud that my party openly and proudly supports the rights and privileges of working people to freely form associations for their mutual protection and advancement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Iwanchuk: — The New Democratic Party does not speak in code when it speaks of working people, Mr. Speaker, and we do not call people with jobs, job killers, as do the members opposite. Time and time again this party, this New Democratic Party, has taken the lead in passing legislation benefiting the lives of workers in this province.

I was heartened, Mr. Speaker, on my first full day in the Assembly to hear the member from Regina Wascana Plains describe the value of workers and workers' organizations in this province and to hear her mention the first Trade Union Act in Canada, our occupational health and safety legislation, and so on. I'm particularly pleased that she mentioned the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union), our provincial public service union which is much like my own.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech describes the government's five point plan for the province: (1) expansion of the economy; (2) provision of quality education and training; (3) ensuring protection of our environment; (4) securing medicare into the future; and (5) providing support to ensure a province of secure families and vibrant communities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, this government has a plan to successfully open the doors of Saskatchewan to a wide open future and the government's plan is working. It is a balanced and sustainable plan to create new opportunities and assist Saskatchewan people to take advantage of the resulting business and job possibilities.

Mr. Speaker, we'll support economic expansion and diversification in agriculture, oil and gas development, mining, forestry, and small and medium business. And further expansion of the economy will result from the provincial government investment in infrastructure programs, including a multi-year building for the future capital plan to be included in the 2003-2004 provincial budget.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition says the government should get out of the economy. We do not agree. Nor do we agree with those who call for the sale of Saskatchewan Crown corporations like SaskTel or SaskPower.

This government remains committed to responsive and evolving Crown corporations. The Crowns will invest \$650 million in Saskatchewan this year to extend and renew telecommunications, power, and natural gas utilities.

In the last eight years the Crown corporations have returned \$1.6 billion to the people of Saskatchewan to support government services and programs and yet there are those who oppose government investment in the economy.

Mr. Speaker, there are several factors that have made Saskatchewan attractive for private sector investment in business development — high quality infrastructure, no payroll taxes or health care premiums, reduced personal and business income taxes, lower operating costs than elsewhere in Western Canada, and a well-trained, stable workforce.

Saskatchewan's expanding economy, Mr. Speaker, together with baby boomer retirements will create many new employment opportunities over the next 15 years, making post-secondary education and training increasingly important.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to training and education. For example, provincial grants for students, kindergarten through grade 12, have increased 42 per cent over the last five years.

There are more than 4,700 training spaces in Saskatchewan for training home care and health care professionals. More than 150 credit courses are now available on-line via Campus Saskatchewan.

The province provides scholarships, bursaries, and grants to more than 11,000 post-secondary students, and apprenticeship allowances to 5,500 others. The province's universities, SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) campuses, and regional colleges support 90,000 enrolments each year.

Other government initiatives includes plans for a 10-year beef production strategy to significantly expand the industry, supported in part by new ethanol plants and associated feedlot growth.

A rural development strategy and participation in national agricultural policy framework to strengthen the rural economy.

Increased support will be provided for child care subsidies and licensed child care spaces.

A new green power portfolio includes a ninefold increase in wind power generation and the encouragement of small-scale, environmentally friendly, renewable energy products.

We are developing northern health strategy and increased resources are planned for police services.

These and other initiatives include . . . included in the Throne Speech are all elements in the New Democratic vision for Saskatchewan — our plan to keep the future of Saskatchewan wide open.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support the member for

Cumberland's motion and I would move that we adjourn debate. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:41.

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