



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

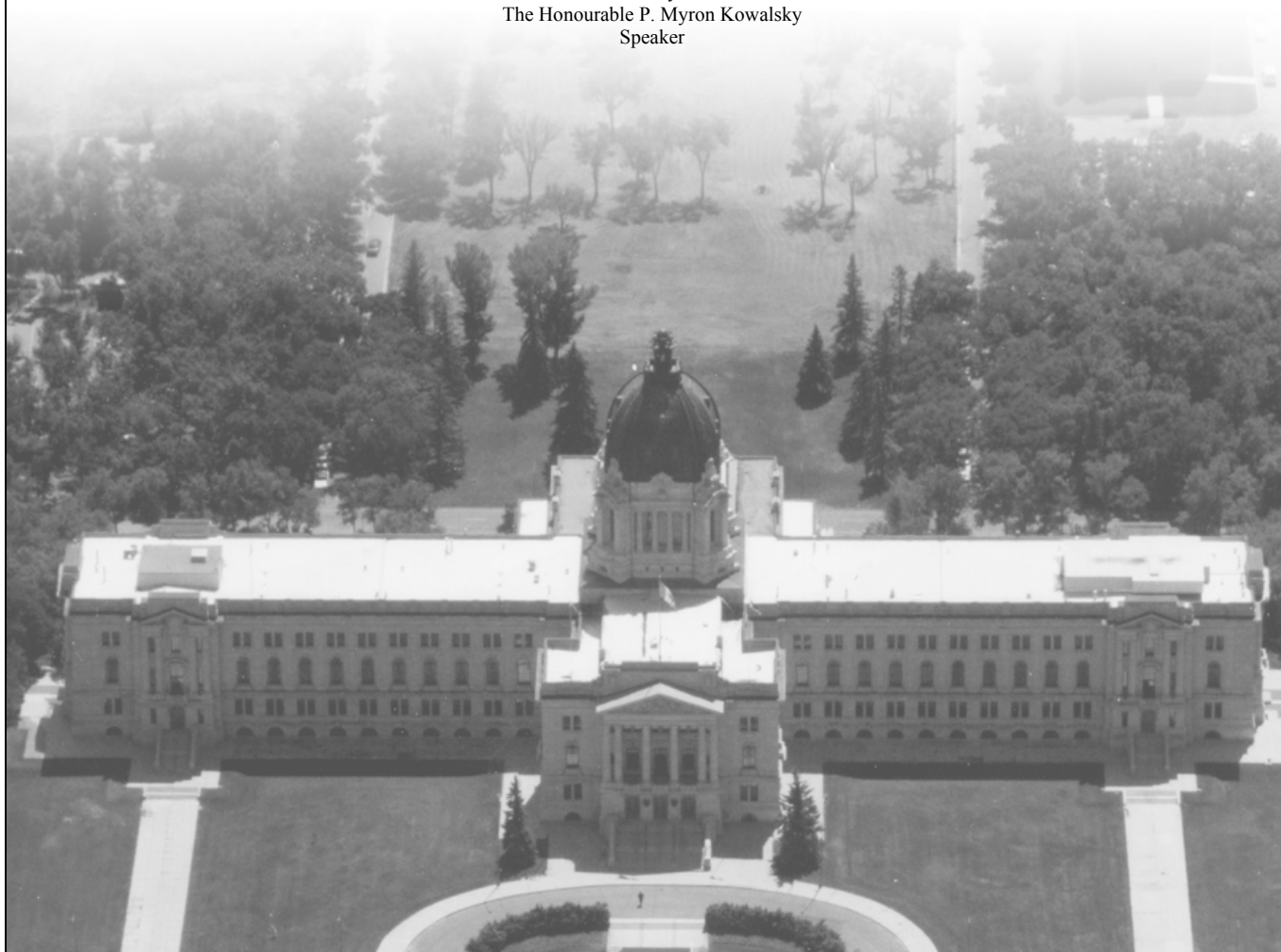
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky
 Premier — Hon. Lorne Calvert
 Leader of the Opposition — Brad Wall

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Addley, Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Bakken, Brenda	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Borgerson, Lon	NDP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Cline, Hon. Eric	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Crofford, Hon. Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantefoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Ben	SP	Martensville
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kerpan, Allan	SP	Carrot River Valley
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Kowalsky, Hon. P. Myron	NDP	Prince Albert Carlton
Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lautermilch, Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Ted	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Morgan, Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, Hon. John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Prebble, Hon. Peter	NDP	Saskatoon Greystone
Quennell, Hon. Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Serby, Hon. Clay	NDP	Yorkton
Sonntag, Hon. Maynard	NDP	Meadow Lake
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Hon. Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

The Assembly met at 10:00.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to stand and present this petition on behalf of constituents from the southern part of the riding of Cypress Hills. And the petition's prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that Highway 18 from Claydon to Robsart is repaved at the earliest possible time to ensure the safety of drivers in that area, and so that economic development opportunities are not lost.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by constituents from the communities of Frontier and Claydon.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed from members of the Elrose-Rosetown constituency regarding recent changes to the crop insurance program that result in a large premium increase for insured farmers while overall coverage is reduced. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all necessary actions to reverse the increase in crop insurance premiums and the reduction in coverage.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from the communities of Lucky Lake and Beechy, and I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise in the Assembly with a petition from residents of my constituency who are extremely concerned about the condition of Highway 43. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway 43 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth in rural Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Vanguard, Regina, Swift Current, and as far away as Sherwood Park, Alberta.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens opposed to the possible reduction of services at Davidson, Imperial 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 Imperial health centres be maintained at their current level of service at minimum, with 24-hour acute care, emergency, and doctor services available, as well as lab, public health, home care, long-term care services available to users from the Davidson and Imperial areas and beyond.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Hawarden, Davidson, and Bladworth.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition from citizens concerned about the poor cellphone service in their area.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide reliable cellular telephone service in the regions encompassed in the constituency of Biggar.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Biggar and district.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens from west central Saskatchewan concerned with the care for senior citizens. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that citizens of Unity and district remain in the community for this necessary service that will bridge the gap between independent living and long-term care.

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by the good folks from Unity, Dodsland, and Cut Knife.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper no. 63, 65, 69, 72, and no. 76.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on House Services

Clerk Assistant (Committees): — Mr. Speaker presents the second report of the Standing Committee on House Services which is hereby tabled.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Regina Douglas Park, that the second report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort and seconded by the member for Regina Douglas Park, that the second report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 21 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Justice: for the fiscal year of 2003, what was the fee paid by the coroner's office to Spectrum Transfer Company per transfer in the Regina area?

As well, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet I have another question that I shall give notice on day 21, as well, ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Justice: for the fiscal year of 2001 what was the total number of transfers done by Spectrum Transfer Company in the Regina area?

I also have for 2002 and 2003 the same questions.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 21 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Health: what will be the anticipated cost to change the names of all hospitals in the Heartland Health Region, and is it expected to occur in this fiscal year?

Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's an honour and a privilege to introduce 45 grade 6, 7, and 8 students from Bruno. They're seated in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker.

They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Neil Finch, Mr. Jeff Marshak, and Mr. Dave Willenborg, as well as two chaperones, Wendy Thiel, and Val Kirtzinger.

So I would like everyone in the Assembly to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the rest of the members I'd like to introduce a constituent of mine sitting in the west gallery, Linda Brogden.

Linda and I met up about five or six years ago I guess, in the '99 campaign, and really I have got to know Linda fairly well and I think her . . . me and really of . . . I really appreciate her advice and her help that she's given me over the last five or six years. It's solid advice. And her sons farm in the Indian Head-Milestone constituency, about 20 miles southeast. So I'd like everyone to welcome Linda here today with a hand of applause. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

Observance of Passover and Easter

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For two of the world's great religions, Christianity and Judaism, the most sacred time of the year comes with the spring.

Mr. Speaker, this past Monday was the beginning of Passover, the eight-day observance commemorating the exodus of the Jewish slaves from Egypt. It is a special time for people of the Jewish faith marking as it does of the liberation of the children

of Israel from bondage. This celebration emphasizes freedom and tolerance of other people and has themes of rebirth, deliverance, redemption, and forgiveness.

And, Mr. Speaker, for Christians, tomorrow is of course Good Friday followed by Easter Sunday, when many will celebrate the miracle of life out of death that is at the heart of the Christian faith. And Easter too has themes of rebirth, deliverance, redemption, and forgiveness.

Mr. Speaker, as we prepare for our traditional spring break, it would do us no harm to take with us the central messages of this season as it derives from the shared history of these two faiths. Out of suffering comes wisdom, out of sorrow comes joy, and out of death comes new life.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Easter Celebration

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again we find ourselves welcoming spring and all those warm and wonderful things that come with it.

But surely, Mr. Speaker, it's all in our best interest to remember that great prelude to spring, Easter. Mr. Speaker, while most of us can remember many of our Easters filled with memories of hunting for some carefully hidden chocolate eggs or finding that special Easter present so lovingly hidden by our parents or grandparents, most of us will also remember the feelings that accompanied those events. There was a promise of renewal and rebirth of hope. And what better time, Mr. Speaker, to talk about hope and the promise of better things to come than at this most joyous time of the year?

As millions of people around the world flock to see *The Passion of the Christ*, I would ask all members to recall that it is this exact time of year that was depicted in this film. And as millions of people are reminded about the last 12 hours of Christ's life, I'm also asking all members to recall the reasons for his suffering and the salvation that we are offered by his death, burial, and resurrection.

To everyone wherever you may be this Easter weekend, as you celebrate with family and friends through special Easter services, may you know joy, peace, renewal, and the beautiful light of God's love for all of us. To our Orthodox community celebrating Easter at this time as well, Chrystos Voskres.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Dewdney.

Invitation to Support the Budget

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The budget we are voting on today is a budget about priorities and values. It is about making conscious choices and taking action. It's a budget that places a high priority on the services that matter most to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province have told us they want quality health care to be our number one priority, and this budget has increased health care spending by 6.3 per cent to almost \$2.7 billion, Mr. Speaker.

The people of this province have placed a high priority on learning. This budget will provide a 3.8 per cent increase in funding for education for our young people, including more dollars for K to 12 (kindergarten to grade 12) schools and more funding for post-secondary education institutions.

Mr. Speaker, this is a budget that will provide an increase in funding for municipalities, create 200 new child care spaces, and provide more dollars for new and enhanced programs to prevent and diagnose fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, Mr. Speaker.

This budget will invest \$295 million to fix the roads and build better highways. It's a budget that will invest in agriculture and affordable housing and in job training and creation.

Mr. Speaker, this budget reflects the priorities of the people of Saskatchewan. These are the priorities of the people on this side of the House and they should be the priorities of the members opposite as well.

Mr. Speaker, we invite all members to stand up today in support of this budget and in support of the priorities and values of the people of this province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

Opening of Provincial Parks

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, probably all of us in this Chamber at one point or another have seen the classic cartoon, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. We also remember that at the end of that program how the Grinch's heart grew and he gave everyone in Whoville back their Christmas.

Well, Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan for the past week we've been watching another cartoon play out, only one not quite so funny. Here in Saskatchewan we've been witness to the premier who stole summer.

In this cartoon, to save the equivalent of one-three-hundredth that the NDP lost in the SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company) fiasco, the Premier tried to steal part of summer by announcing that parks would remain closed for an extra month this year — ruining many people's vacations and jeopardizing the livelihoods of business people who depend on the provincial parks.

Well now we see the Premier may be backing down on this ludicrous notion. On this one issue alone the Premier seems to have been forced to grow some senses. While the Premier probably now expects Saskatchewan residents to fall to their knees in thanks of his benevolence, I think he'll be disappointed. I think every time Saskatchewan residents fork over their wiener roast tax and are forced to pay more for their

summer ale, they will be remembering this Premier and the time he tried to steal summer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(10:15)

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Recognition for Downtown Regina

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to share some great news with the Legislative Assembly. Regina downtown in the heart of my constituency, Regina Elphinstone-Centre, was recently recognized both locally and nationally for its great shops, dining, entertainment, and vibrant public spaces.

Mr. Speaker, the April issue of *Flare* magazine reported on a tour of great indoor shopping spots across the country. They paid homage to the Cornwall Centre and went on to say:

We also love Regina's two less-traditional approaches to the mall: Old City Hall Mall has shops in a historic building beneath the city's famous Clock Tower, and the pedestrian-only block along Scarth Street is home to the . . . Frederick W. Hill Mall . . .

Downtown was also named locally as the best area in town to shop by the *prairie dog* magazine readers in their best of Regina survey for 2004. In addition, multiple downtown businesses were named best in their own individual categories.

Mr. Speaker, downtown Regina with its cosmopolitan mix of retail shops, specialty boutiques, culture, entertainment, fine dining, great employers, casual cafes, pubs, coffee houses, and everything in between is truly one of Saskatchewan's premier destinations. Congratulations to all the people, businesses, and organizations that make downtown Regina the best place to work, shop, live, and play.

Special congratulations to Tracy Fahlman and the hard-working crew at the Regina improvement district, Regina Downtown, and to the *prairie dog* magazine on another excellent best of Regina survey and on their recent relocation to the F.W. Hill Mall.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville.

Conditions Facing Saskatchewan Seniors

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the first half of this last century in this province that is mostly an agrarian province and we had people that had settled throughout rural Saskatchewan, these families, Mr. Speaker, lived in very primitive conditions: no running water, no electricity, no telephones. They picked rocks, they broke the land, they grubbed the land. They built schools, they went to school — at

least uphill one way and sometimes both ways, Mr. Speaker. They worked, they saved, and they dreamed.

Today, Mr. Speaker, these people are retired. Many of their children have been chased out of this province by socialist regimes. Almost all their grandchildren, Mr. Speaker, are unfortunately elsewhere. These pioneers, Mr. Speaker, are coming to the end of their time — a time that should be spent in a caring, appreciative environment. This Premier and this NDP (New Democratic Party) government is now taking away one of their last locations — long-term care beds.

Mr. Speaker, what a shame. Mr. Speaker, what a tragedy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Meadow Lake.

Good News from the Meadow Lake Constituency

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After listening to that I want to cheer you up. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share with the Assembly this good news from the constituency of Meadow Lake.

Mr. Speaker, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council along with two other First Nation organizations, the Prince Albert Development Council and the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, has formed the Western First Nations Hospitality Limited Partnership.

The purpose of this partnership, Mr. Speaker, is the purchase of three Super 8 Motels located in Meadow Lake, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, this is an important partnership for the Meadow Lake Tribal Council. It will help build their asset base and provide benefits down the road.

Mr. Speaker, while looking for areas in which to diversify, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council saw this opportunity to become involved in the potentially very lucrative hospitality industry, and they helped create this partnership to take advantage of this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all members of the House will join me in congratulating the members of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council and in wishing them and their partners every success in this and all of their future business endeavours. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Commitments Made by Government

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, there were a number of people in this province, there are a number of people in this province who were betrayed by the Premier and his budget, who couldn't be here this morning, who couldn't set up any kind of a picket line or a protest.

Because the Premier promised to cut taxes in the last election,

and in this budget he's raising taxes. He promised property tax relief and there was none in the budget. He promised to help rural Saskatchewan and this budget launches a vicious attack on rural Saskatchewan. The Premier promised to look after seniors and his budget will kick them out of their long-term care beds and increase the costs of their hearing aids, Mr. Speaker.

There were a lot of people who were betrayed by the NDP in this budget. They weren't able to be here this morning. They weren't able to participate in a picket line or any kind of a protest.

Will the Premier listen to these people as well? Will he keep his promise to those who couldn't be here this morning?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, later this day we will conduct an important vote surrounding the budget that is now before the legislature. In that budget vote which I will stand and proudly vote for, in that vote we will provide 160 million new dollars for the provision of health care in this province. We will provide in the neighbourhood of 45 millions of dollars for the support of education in this province. We will provide in the neighbourhood of \$300 million for the rebuilding and new construction of our roadways and highways in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we will see increases in support for farm families through increasing support in agriculture. We will see graduate tax credits for those young people who are graduating in our province. We're going to see the formation of Green Teams. We're going to see, Mr. Speaker, as a result of this budget, the formation of the Young Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan foundation. We'll see as a result of this budget, Mr. Speaker, 10 million more dollars for our municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, that is providing for the priorities of Saskatchewan people, and I and this caucus will proudly support it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier is obviously feeling the heat. He has changed his government's position, changed his mind on three different issues in the last 24 hours alone.

He's changed his position on health care premiums; he was against them, he was for them, now he's against them again — we think. He's changed his position on shortening summer; we expect an announcement on that a little bit later. And this morning, faced with the prospect, faced with the prospect of crossing a picket line, he's appointed a mediator in the SaskPower dispute.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a good start. It's a good start. But this NDP budget is chock full of other broken promises. The question to the Premier is simple one: will he keep the promises he made to the Saskatchewan people in the election and since the election? Will he be true to his word, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, in the term of this government the campaign commitments that we made will be the guiding principles and will be fulfilled in this term of government, Mr. Speaker. You can make no mistake about that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The principal commitment, the principal commitment, Mr. Speaker, to build a green and prosperous economy; the commitment to provide the best quality public health care, publicly administered and delivered in this province; the commitment to open this province for its next generation, Mr. Speaker, are the commitments of this government. And those commitments will be fulfilled.

Now I ask the Leader of the Opposition, what about his commitments? What about his commitments? Where are they today? What about his commitment to cut the corporate capital tax in half? What about his commitment? What about his commitment to get rid of small business? Where are those commitments today, Mr. Speaker?

You know, they're so ashamed of that kind of commitment, they're so ashamed they have simply wiped them off their Web site. They've simply wiped them off their policy manual. They're a group of men and women with absolutely no policy, no idea, and no future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

Provincial Sales Tax

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker . . . Thank you for that standing ovation to my colleagues opposite. Mr. Speaker, let's talk about, let's talk about those guiding principles . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — I stand again, and I hope that you make that applause. Mr. Speaker, let's look at the guiding principles promised by this NDP government before this election.

They walked around this province and they knocked on doors in communities all over Saskatchewan and told voters to vote NDP because they would cut taxes; not raise taxes, Mr. Speaker, cut taxes. But once again the NDP snuck back into power and as soon as that occurred, the NDP broke his promise, and the Premier broke his promise and raised the PST (provincial sales tax) by \$135 million.

Mr. Speaker, in the last 24 hours this Premier has changed his mind about shortening summer, he's changed his mind about health care premiums, and he's changed his mind about SaskPower workers.

Will the Premier change his mind and scrap the NDP's plan to raise the PST?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — No.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Funding for Health Care

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, during last fall's election the NDP promised to protect health care, but now this Premier and his NDP government say hospital beds will close. This NDP budget says that whole hospitals will close, and as a result the longest surgical waiting lists in Canada will get even longer. Mr. Speaker, the NDP didn't campaign for that, and Saskatchewan families didn't vote for that.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier change his mind and support health care instead of gutting it? Will the Premier reverse his decision to close hospitals and hospital beds in this devastating provincial budget?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the budget that we're bringing forward here as a government reflects the priorities of the people of Saskatchewan, and that reflection shows that health care is the number one priority. And we are going to be using the dollars that we receive in that budget in a careful, efficient manner to make sure that we are getting the best value for all the dollars that we spend, because that's what Saskatchewan people want us to do. They want us to go and meet the needs that they have but they want us to do it in a careful way. That's what we do on this side of the House and that's what we're going to continue to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville.

Closure of Long-Term Care Beds

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. During last fall's election, the NDP tried to scare our senior citizens into voting NDP.

The Premier and his NDP candidates told senior citizens not to vote for the Saskatchewan Party because they would take away medicare. Mr. Speaker, that is one of the most despicable election scare tactics used by the NDP in that election, Mr. Speaker — despicable. Unfortunately, some seniors believed the NDP's campaign mistruths.

Now the Premier is presenting a budget that promises to close long-term care beds and kick seniors out of their beds in

communities across this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier change his mind about evicting senior citizens? Will the NDP reverse its budget decision to close long-term care beds in communities across this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the members on this side of the House have a great deal of respect for our elders. We also know that they have much wisdom and they think very carefully about who they would support for government. And we very much appreciate the support that they provided to this government in the last election and in many elections because we know that they have looked at and they understand where these people who are opposite to us come from. And they were burned badly during the '80s and they don't ever want to be part of that again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Fees for Hearing Aids

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. The NDP budget targeted a number of seniors by hiking a number of fees including those, Mr. Speaker, for hearing tests, hearing aids, and fittings.

It's not really a big surprise, Mr. Speaker. The NDP didn't want the senior citizens to even hear how bad their budget is.

Will the Minister of Health reverse the NDP's decision to target seniors by raising fees for hearing aids so that seniors can hear just how badly they were betrayed by this NDP budget?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have asked us to look at everything that we do, and examine how and where we can find resources to provide needed health care across the province. We looked at all of the kinds of fees that are there, we looked at other aspects of what's happening in health care, and we will continue to that because that's what people in Saskatchewan have asked us to do.

(10:30)

This is part clearly of a national trend and an international trend where people are concerned about how much health care costs. And we are going to make sure that we use all of the dollars that we receive in our health care budget to the best effect possible, and we will ask people to pay a little more here and there if necessary. But what we want to do is make sure that they have long-term health care on a sustainable basis.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Support for Rural Saskatchewan

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Today the NDP will stand in the legislature and vote in support of a budget that punishes and attacks rural Saskatchewan. It's a budget that closes rural hospitals and long-term care beds. It's a budget that shortchanges rural municipalities. It's a budget that closes rural service centres. And it's a budget that increases farm fuel taxes. Mr. Speaker, that is not what the NDP campaigned on in the last election.

Will the Premier stop his attack on rural Saskatchewan? Will he stand in his place today and scrap this devastating NDP budget?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, this government has stood firmly behind rural Saskatchewan's agriculture in this province. Mr. Speaker, for many years now the opposition has tried to drive a wedge between urban and rural Saskatchewan, and it's not going to work.

We have shown our commitment in rural Saskatchewan with \$130 million last year over budget to meet the needs for farmers in this province; \$55 million to meet the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) crisis, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are fixing the roads in rural Saskatchewan on a basis that will help build the economy in rural Saskatchewan. There is not a leg for them to stand on when they talk about this government not supporting rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Education Portion of Property Taxes

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier told delegates at the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention that the status quo was not on as far as property taxes were concerned. The Premier claimed he understood the burden the education portion of property taxes places on property owners, and he made a personal commitment to change the status quo.

But, Mr. Speaker, this budget is void of any relief for property taxpayers. Given that this NDP government appears to be reversing its decision on opening the provincial parks, will the Premier honour his commitment to property owners throughout the province and reduce the burden of education tax on property?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this budget contains \$28 million worth of new money to take pressure off the property

taxes — \$28 million. The members opposite should know today that when they stand in this House and vote against this budget, they are voting against that new money for property tax relief.

The members on that side should know that they are voting against new money for school capital in their communities. The members opposite should understand that they have come forward in this time period and provided nothing, absolutely nothing that deals with their commitments or how they can operationalize and move forward with a solution on property taxes. Not a single positive solution.

This government has solutions, this government has the money, this government has the support of Saskatchewan people, and we will move forward in that direction.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Provincial Income Tax Credits

Mr. Chisholm: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The NDP's election platform made it very clear that they were going to index provincial income tax credits to keep pace with inflation. Now we find out again that when the NDP says one thing, it really means the opposite.

This budget of betrayal de-indexed provincial income tax credits, which means provincial income tax is really going up. Will the Finance minister today take the lead from his counterpart in the Department of the Environment and take steps to reverse his decision to raise taxes?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, this budget is about supporting the priorities of Saskatchewan people. We understand when we listen to people that the priorities of Saskatchewan people are increased support for health care, for education, for important programs and services such as those that are being provided by the Department of Agriculture. That is what we are doing with this budget, Mr. Speaker.

We recognize that difficult decisions had to be made to provide for this support, but we remain committed to the priorities of Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

Fire Permit Fee

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, it looks like the NDP has listened to part of the message on its ridiculous parks policy. Mr. Speaker, the NDP wanted to shorten summer but they didn't get away with it. Thanks to the tremendous pressure from the public and the Saskatchewan Party opposition, it now appears the NDP is

going to back down and open the parks on time.

Mr. Speaker, now that the NDP has decided not to shorten summer, will the Premier stand in his place and do the right thing and cancel the foolish wiener roast tax?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Well, Mr. Speaker, our goal in Environment is to ensure that we have a sustainable park system for the people here in Saskatchewan. So we have heard the feedback from people this week about the park openings and we've heard them loud and clear. So this afternoon I will be making an announcement.

But what we've also heard is that people expect when you use a resource you should pay for it. That's a fair thing. And this is what happens over here; they say they want to get things for free and that it will be there — lots of stuff. But who will pay for these things?

And so this is a sustainable thing, a sustainable fire permit fee, and it will be there. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Increases in Fees in Vital Statistics

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. The latest budget hikes for fees for vital events in our life has happened in this budget. Saskatchewan people will have to pay more when they welcome a new baby into their homes, when they join in holy matrimony, or when they lose someone they love.

The NDP has chosen to hit Saskatchewan families with fee hikes for significant moments in their lives. Will the minister reverse his decision to raise fees and allow people to celebrate or mourn these events without having to pay more money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we've looked at the kinds of fees that are paid for various items that are provided in the Department of Health and the department of vital statistics, looked at the fees that are charged there, and said there are places where we can increase them slightly to cover the costs of providing certificates. And that is part of what we have done across government. We are going to continue doing that to make sure that we can afford all of the things that are priorities for Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Commitments Made by the Government

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it looks like the Premier is done listening. He listened just long enough to get his members into this Assembly to line up and vote, lock-step with him today on the budget.

He's not going to listen, Mr. Speaker, any more to taxpayers, even though he told them in the election that he would cut their taxes and now he's raising their taxes. He's not going to listen any more to seniors that he's betrayed, Mr. Speaker, with the measures in this budget. And he's not going to listen any more to rural Saskatchewan, to farm families that he made some specific commitments to in the campaign and has broken those commitments in this budget.

He's stopped listening, Mr. Speaker. And the question to the Premier then is this: why has he betrayed so many Saskatchewan people? Why should anybody in this province believe a word he has to say?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hear a high level of disappointment in the Leader of the Opposition's voice today — that same level of disappointment I heard when they did not win the November election, when in fact their popular vote slipped. Now I hear a huge cry of disappointment in his voice today that they're not going to win the vote and bring the government down.

He talks about listening, Mr. Speaker, but I would invite the leader, the new Leader of the Opposition, to listen to these words — rather sage words, if I may say — quote:

You learn a lot sitting in Opposition and I suppose, for a time, it's rewarding. There's less pressure on you in Opposition. You criticize the government, you throw out suggestions . . . (but) you don't have to actually implement or be accountable for them . . . there comes a point (quote) where that . . . (begins to wear) thin . . .

That's a quote from the member from Rosetown, the former leader of the Saskatchewan Party. And I would suggest that the leader, the new Leader of the Opposition, listen to the former leader because it's wearing pretty thin.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the Premier does . . . the Premier is hearing correctly if he hears disappointment today, if he hears disappointment from this side of the House and if he hears disappointment outside this legislature from the people of the province. People in this province, people in Saskatchewan are disappointed today because, at the very least, they thought they could take this Premier at his word.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — They are disappointed to realize that that Premier was prepared to go out on the hustings in a campaign and say anything to anybody just to get elected to cling to power. That's what they're disappointed about today, Mr. Speaker.

And if all of that is not the case, then all the Premier has to do today in this legislature is stand up and explain to people, why did he make those promises he had no intention of keeping. Why? Why, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Members, I just would like to advise that in their questioning and in their responses, that members should not do . . . cannot do indirectly what you cannot say indirectly and that is to impugn wrongdoing on the part of any member. And I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to keep that in mind in his questioning and would he please restate the question.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the question is this, the question is this: the people of this province are disappointed in a Premier that simply, that simply has not been straight with them. And they want to know this: why, why in the world should they ever trust anything he ever has to tell them again, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order. Once again I just . . . Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. I'm referring to the very last . . . Order, please. The very last several words of the Leader of the Opposition impugn a wrongdoing on the part of an individual, and I just bring that to his . . . Order, please . . . and that is the statement I was trying to . . . that was the issue that I was trying to get across, and I would ask him to pay attention to that.

I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the campaign during which the people of Saskatchewan chose their government we went to the people of Saskatchewan with a very, very clear message — a message which said, if elected, we would set priorities. Those priorities would be to build a green and a prosperous economy right across this province, urban and rural, north and south.

It was a priority which said we will use the resources available to us and our best creative thinking to provide the public health care, the publicly administered and financed and universally accessible health care — the concept that was born in Saskatchewan; that we would give rebirth to that concept. We would build the best we possibly could in Saskatchewan and for all Canadians.

And, Mr. Speaker, we said to the people of Saskatchewan, particularly the young people of Saskatchewan, this would be a province where they can see their futures and where they can build their careers, where they can raise their families. Those are the commitments we made, Mr. Speaker, and we, Mr. Speaker, will have on occasion to take some tough decisions to meet those priorities, but this is the government that has a vision . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed. I recognize

the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as regards to vote later today, admittedly, admittedly we are looking for a needle in a haystack, Mr. Speaker. Somewhere in that haystack of NDP betrayal and deception that is this provincial budget, we're looking for one — for one — NDP MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) with the integrity to stand up and say that this budget is wrong. We're looking for one NDP MLA to stand up and say it wasn't right to promise people lower taxes in the campaign and increase their taxes in the budget. We're looking for one NDP MLA to stand up and say, when we promise to help rural Saskatchewan, we ought to keep that promise. We're looking for one NDP MLA to stand up and say, when we promise better health care, we ought to keep that promise, Mr. Speaker.

(10:45)

And that is the question we have today for the Premier and for the members opposite: will any of them stand up for Saskatchewan? Will they stand up for the truth? Or has the Premier ordered them to vote for a budget and break the promises they made to the people of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, mark my words. Count the moment every member on this side of the House, every member of this New Democratic Party government caucus will stand up for the people of Saskatchewan . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — . . . and vote for this budget, mark my words about that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have a question. I have a question for the members opposite. Will one of them stand up in this House today, will one of them stand up in this House today and vote for 160 million more dollars for public health care in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Will one of them stand up for new support to education?

Will one of them stand up for new support for the rural and urban municipalities of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, will they stand up and vote for these? No. They will stand up in a vote against new money for health. They will vote against new money for young people. Mr. Speaker, that's the difference. That's the difference. This is a government that is for something. That is a group of men and women that are only against everything.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill No. 19 — The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 19, The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Industry and Resources that Bill No. 19, The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

Bill No. 20 — The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 20, The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Industry and Resources that Bill No. 20, The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

Bill No. 21 — The Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 21, The Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Learning that Bill No. 21, The Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Next sitting.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY**WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased today to stand on behalf of the government today to convert for debates returnable, questions no. 73 through 154 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Questions 73 to 154 have been converted to orders for return (debatable).

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member would like to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all the members of this legislature, 18 students from Waldheim School, grade 7 students there in the east gallery. And their teacher is Kristi Nelson and their chaperones are Erna Siemens and Russ Quiring and Kelly Block. And I look forward to meeting with them a little later on.

They're here on an important day when they get to see who's going to vote on which side in this particular budget. So I hope they enjoy the vote, enjoy the day, and remember for a long time the results of what happens here today.

Would you join me?

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, to ask for leave to introduce a guest.

The Speaker: — Leave for introductions has been requested. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Member may proceed.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, seated behind the bar on this side of the House — metaphorically, because there is no bar — is a former member of the Legislative Assembly. This is Gordon MacMurchy, who was the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood, served for many years, and also served as Agriculture minister for the people of Saskatchewan during the 1970s. I would ask all members to join with me in extending a warm welcome to Gordon today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. Krawetz.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana, the Minister for Crown Management Board.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to join today in the last day of the debate on the budget. I am fortunate in that I've had the luxury and opportunity to listen to most members of the legislature's speeches before rising to address this year's budget. I may indeed even refer at times to some of the things that I have heard mentioned in this Chamber in the last few days.

Mr. Speaker, our budget is about setting priorities. Our budget is also about making difficult choices. That's what you do when you are elected to govern.

The people of this province, in the last election in November

2003, clearly indicated to the people of this province that they wanted to see health care and education as their number one and two priorities. They also indicated very clearly that they wanted to ensure that our Crown entities, our Crown utilities, remained in public hands.

In this budget we've increased our commitment to health care by \$160.4 million. Mr. Speaker, for the first time ever health spending in this province is \$2.7 billion in total. Mr. Speaker, that represents 44 per cent of every dollar that is spent in this province.

Our budget also contains a \$1.2 billion expenditure for education. And, Mr. Speaker, that is an increase of \$45 million from last year's budget, or 3.8 per cent.

Our budget also, Mr. Speaker, will help address many of the issues that people in our province are concerned about. This budget will help establish a new MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) unit in the city of Regina. Now I've heard members opposite say that we don't need the MRI because we can't staff it. And this is either a stubborn refusal to understand the issue or pessimism carried to an absurd degree.

Perhaps the members of the opposition simply wouldn't make this investment in the health of the people of our province. Perhaps they would abandon our ongoing efforts to recruit and retain health professionals. But to listen to them most days, you wouldn't think so.

Vocal members on the other side like to stand in their places and complain about socialism with one breath and then demand more funding for publicly funded and publicly delivered health care with the other. Where do you think medicare comes from? Their own political pedigree has no association with the mothers and fathers of medicare, but rather, Mr. Speaker, with the opponents of medicare in this province.

The medicare battle in this province was bitterly fought. The heirs of those who opposed medicare from the very beginning are in this House today and the bitterness of that defeat has not left them.

I'd like to speak for a moment about our budget's investment in education and youth. We are providing opportunities for young people through employment programs such as establishing the Green Team, Mr. Speaker. And we've also established the Saskatchewan youth entrepreneur program. We have a record budget this year for the Department of Learning, a little over \$1.2 billion. Our commitment, Mr. Speaker, to education and our young people in this province is clear in this investment and these practical and progressive initiatives.

I'd like to concentrate on one piece of this investment in particular. Part of the increase in the education budget for K to 12 will see the establishment of a new collegiate in the city of Saskatoon. Citizens were heard, priorities were set, decisions were made, and action is being taken.

Although the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs has already committed to voting against the budget that provides for this new school, the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs was very involved in making this new school a reality. And I want

to commend him for that, and those that worked closely with him, for their hard work. And I would like that member to join with us, the member from Saskatoon Sutherland, and support, follow through with the work that's been done to establish the new school and vote for the budget that will make that new school happen, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Now some members of the opposition have been up to their old tricks when it comes to pitting rural and urban people against each other, rural and urban communities against each other. They have argued during this debate that we have abandoned rural Saskatchewan.

But let's look at the budget. A \$13 million increase for the Department of Agriculture, \$6.2 million extra for the Department of Highways, and \$10 million or 13.3 per cent increase in the municipal revenue-sharing grants. The priorities of this budget, of this government as reflected in this budget, are clear. We are not, Mr. Speaker, pitting one group against another. Quite the contrary.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make this point. There are many, many members in the Legislative Assembly on this side of the House that come from rural Saskatchewan and I want to assure the public that when decisions are made regarding choices and priorities that rural Saskatchewan is there, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — One of the very positive measures in our budget is the housing strategy aimed at increasing independence and maintaining stable communities. There is little that gives people a bigger stake in our society and in our communities and in our economy than the opportunity to own your own home. This budget gives more people that opportunity and that incentive to strive for better things right here in our province — not packing up to move elsewhere but putting down roots right here in Saskatchewan. This budget helps people achieve that goal, Mr. Speaker.

Part of being a responsible government is being a responsive government. Petitions against the expansion of the PST base were presented in this House every day by members opposite. Mr. Speaker, I want to assure people that those concerns were heard and that is reflected in the provincial budget that we are going to vote upon later today. Now members opposite are demanding, they're demanding that we implement the Boughen report.

I suggest to members opposite that they can still get their cake without paying the PST, but they can't have it and eat it too, Mr. Speaker.

(11:00)

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite don't want any tax increases, they don't want any fee increases on any of our services, they don't want the government to gain any revenue through investments, but they sure want us to spend. It's spend, spend, spend, spend, Mr. Speaker. Don't tax, don't increase fees, but spend, spend, spend.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they accuse us of being the tax-and-spend socialists. Well I just have to say, listening to the members opposite each and every day in this Legislative Assembly, what do we hear? We hear more money for health care, more money for parks, more money for agriculture, more money for education — more money, more money, more money — but don't look at how you're going to pay for things that they want in this province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't suffice to say that they haven't learned anything since 1999. It would be more accurate to say they haven't learned anything new since 1989, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what's fascinating about members of the opposition is that there has been a good deal of accusatory language coming from the other side of this House. In short, Mr. Speaker, they are accusing us of being less than truthful during the election campaign about the state of the province.

They're saying that their message of pessimism was the truth and our message of optimism was not. And they're still wrong. Our message of optimism in the people of this province and in the province of this . . . of Saskatchewan is the truth. And their message of despair is pure political opportunism, Mr. Speaker, like we have not witnessed in many years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Even though they had their opportunity — they had their opportunity in November 2003 — they had their opportunity and their opportunity passed them by. And I say to the members opposite, get over it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — But they haven't learned. But they haven't learned. They're still fighting the 2003 election campaign. They have a new leader — a new leader who says he wants to move on. A new leader that wants to stretch the imaginations of the Saskatchewan Party people. A new leader that wants to stretch his caucus, to think outside of the box, Mr. Speaker.

But we spent the last four years listening to the members fight the 1999 election campaign over and over and over and over again. And presumably they had it right when they went to the people in 2003. Well, Mr. Speaker, the people have spoken and the people of Saskatchewan have elected the New Democratic Party to govern. And, Mr. Speaker, we will govern.

There are clearly, Mr. Speaker, there are clearly two messages in the province of Saskatchewan. One message is of hope and one message is of hope, Mr. Speaker. Now I have taken some time, Mr. Speaker, to focus on some of the concrete improvements in this budget which will make the lives of Saskatchewan people better. And these items, Mr. Speaker, will not be lost on the people of our province. Although, Mr. Speaker, I doubt if the members opposite will understand that.

They will continue to tell us our young . . . they will continue to tell young people to pack up and leave. And even one member in this Assembly indicated the other night in debate their own children pack up and leave. They will continue to denigrate our

province on the eve of this province's centenary. And they will attempt to convince anyone who will listen that they would be better off someplace else.

The good thing is that the people of this province will continue to ignore them. Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a line — a fine line admittedly, but a line nonetheless — between discharging the duties of an opposition member and standing in stark opposition to the province itself. The members opposite stepped a way, a way over the line a long time ago, and they haven't looked back. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, their popular vote dropped like a stone in the last election.

Now the new Leader of the Opposition says that he wants to change that. He says that his party needs to learn the lessons of the last election. The Leader of the Opposition wants to produce a new policy paper for his party, but if that document turns out to be anything like what we've heard during this debate, which is more of the same, members on this side of the House will be reminded of the last words of Oscar Wilde, "Either . . . (this) wallpaper goes, or I do," Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that I will be standing in the Legislative Assembly later today, voting against the amendment that is so typical of the members opposite, and voting for the budget which is typical of a government that was elected to govern.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into the budget debate today on the eve of the vote on the budget.

Mr. Speaker, it strikes me that there's three basic observations you could make about the budget. The first one is that in terms of our economy and in terms of the province's ability to be able to afford the quality of life issues that we want to be able to afford, whether it's health care or education, or help for producers when they face things like BSE, or even issues like FASD (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder) that's mentioned in the budget, when it comes to any kind of a plan that speaks to a long-term economic vision for Saskatchewan that'll help us afford those things, this budget's devastating.

It's devastating because it represents pages and pages worth of fee hikes; service fee increases which, Mr. Speaker, are like water torture on the economy; on our small business sector. It represents red tape. It represents the very, the very annoyances that turns away outside investment and investment from existing business.

And, Mr. Speaker, this budget represents an increase, of course, in the PST, an increase in the sales tax. And you don't only have to be on the west side of Saskatchewan to realize how devastating that can be for the economy. It's only one point, some will say. It's only one percentage point, a hundred or so million dollars.

Mr. Speaker, the psychological impact of that on the west side

and anywhere else is huge. It's big in industry and in the retail sector. It affects consumers, Mr. Speaker, as people on the west side and across the province are going to be even more incited to travel to Alberta to make their retail purchases. It affects the oil and gas industry.

One strength of our oil and gas industry isn't production, Mr. Speaker, not production. The NDP and the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) drove them to Calgary long ago. But one of the strengths is the service sector — the service sector in terms of oil and gas. And the PST, the PST hurts their ability to compete with those who would come in from Alberta and try to do work before heading back over the border.

Mr. Speaker, the budget is devastating from another standpoint. Not just what it does, not just what's in it, but what's not in it, Mr. Speaker. What's not in it is any indication at all that this Premier, and that Finance minister, and that NDP Party over there have any clue at all as to getting our province growing, Mr. Speaker.

Frankly there is reason to doubt whether they believe it need even happen. There's reason to doubt whether or not the NDP actually believe that Saskatchewan's economy could . . . should grow, that our long-term hope for the province is founded in a plan to get the province growing, to expand our tax base — not in higher taxes but in more taxpayers. And to that point, to that point, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out an amazing quote to members of the Assembly. I missed . . . Unfortunately, I wasn't here for this particular reference by the member, the new member for Saskatchewan Rivers on April 7 in the budget debate.

Here's what he had to say. He said he . . . well he's obviously not been paying attention because he says, and I quote:

. . . I have to say that I hear no ideas from the other side of the House.

Here's what he goes on to say, Mr. Speaker:

What I hear instead is grow, grow, grow. Grow this province; grow the population; grow industry; grow the economy.

That's what the member for Saskatchewan Rivers had to say, and if he would have stopped there we'd all be applauding him and cheering him, but then here's what he says. He says:

Mr. Speaker, this is a meaningless mantra.

That's what that member from Saskatchewan Rivers had to say about our need to get our province growing. And there you have it. There's the truth of the NDP. There you have it. They do not believe that this province needs to grow. People across this province wonder where is the vision in this budget for a growing economy so they could afford to provide the services they promised that they would provide to the people of the province in the election, or for that matter that any future government could be able to do that.

Where do they believe the resources for that will come from if not from a larger tax base, if not from more taxpayers in his

constituency and in mine. If not from more taxpayers and a broader tax base and more economic activity, where is the future of funding of these services? How will we reduce MRI waiting lists in Saskatchewan? How will we bring, bring about meaningful FASD policy? How will we lighten the burden of education tax on rural ratepayers in the province of Saskatchewan? How will we do that if there's no plan to grow, if there is just a willingness and a desire to manage the decline of the province? We find it unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, that that member would say these things, representing his party and his Premier.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — And I'll say this, I'll say this through you, Mr. Speaker, to those members opposite, that if they're getting tired of hearing about the Saskatchewan Party talk about a vision for this province, if they are getting a little sick and tired of hearing us say grow, grow, grow, grow this province, grow the population, grow the industry, grow the economy as the member said, I've got news for him and for them. They are going to be even more sick of it in the future because that is exactly what we will continue to talk about, Mr. Speaker, across the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — That is the long-term hope for the future of Saskatchewan. So the first thing, Mr. Speaker, is that this represents a budget of devastation in terms of our economy and in terms of the hopes that Saskatchewan families have that we can have a government in this province that can afford to bring the services that they deserve.

It's also, Mr. Speaker, a budget that I think that's marked by ridiculous measures, ill-planned measures, silly measures, Mr. Speaker. And we've talked about them in the legislature, the member for Wood River and others. And thousands of Saskatchewan people have talked about those measures to save \$100,000 on a six and a half billion dollar budget by a government that wasted \$75,000 on an advertising campaign whose market is two people. They were going to close the parks in the province of Saskatchewan for a month. They were going to take a third of the tourism season away from those businesses who have made an investment and who employ young people in those parks.

Somehow, somehow that made it past the cabinet meeting. Apparently the Minister of the Environment went into a cabinet meeting, if you could feature this, Mr. Speaker, and he said I've got a good idea, I can save us \$100,000, roughly the equivalent of your advertising campaign. He would have said to the Minister of Finance, I could save you \$100,000 and all we have to do, all we have to do is ruin the business here for those businesses in the parks and close parks for an extra month and delay summer in the province of Saskatchewan. That's all we have to do, and we can save \$100,000.

And that is not the most remarkable thing, Mr. Speaker. The most remarkable thing is that all the cabinet ministers must surely have said that is a great idea, what an excellent idea, which of course would have set the stage for his next idea. I'm sure the Minister of the Environment said well, if you like that

one, how about a wiener roast tax, Mr. Speaker? How about that?

And instead, instead of the cabinet member saying well how will this work exactly? Will we . . . As the member for Wood River has asked, if your fire goes out when you're starting it, will you have to repay for another \$3 permit? And who will enforce this? Will we have sort of wiener roast kind of police in the parks to do that? Is this a good idea? Or maybe if we think people should be charged for wood, that they should be charged one time when they come into the park. How about that idea?

They didn't have that discussion I don't think, Mr. Speaker, because the wiener roast tax is in the budget. So again the response from the Minister of Finance and the Premier of the province and the rest of cabinet was what another outstanding idea from the Minister of Environment. Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker.

And inasmuch as these represent \$300,000 and certainly not as important in terms of the economy as a PST increase, and they're not as important as the changes to health care or the fact that they're going to close long-term care beds for seniors, but they have raised the ire and gotten the attention of Saskatchewan people.

(11:15)

And we hope we've been able to help in that regard. We hope we've been able to highlight how ridiculous this policy is and we've encouraged people, through a campaign of our own, to get a hold of their NDP MLAs and tell them how ridiculous it is, this policy on the parks. And hopefully, Mr. Speaker, hopefully, hopefully later today they'll make the right decision — not just on keeping the parks closed but on the wiener roast tax.

Because I hate to disappoint the Minister of the Environment, but I don't agree with him when he says, when he says he was asked in a media scrum after he announced this wiener roast tax, well what do you think people are going to think of when they're sitting around their campfires having paid their \$3 wiener roast tax, what do you think they're going to think of? Well they're going to think of the quality of life in Saskatchewan, said the minister. And the minister also said, I'm sure they'll also be thinking about how unfair equalization is, Mr. Speaker. That's what the people of the province are going to be thinking about at their campgrounds around the campfire.

I think they're going to be thinking about this. I think they're going to be thinking about summer in Saskatchewan and how wonderful it is and how notwithstanding the NDP's mismanagement of this province and the ridiculous parks policy, that we do have beautiful parks. I think they're going to sit around that campfire enjoying it.

And I also think, Mr. Speaker, that they will think a little bit about government when they pay that \$3 wiener roast tax. But I don't think they'll be thinking about the federal government, Mr. Speaker, and equalization. I think they'll be thinking about the NDP, waiting, Mr. Speaker, waiting for the day when they can exact a little bit of revenge for something so ridiculous as a wiener roast tax, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I guess the . . . if the first theme of this budget is its devastation of the economy and the second one is it's just patently silly, I guess the third theme is trust — is trust.

We've asked a lot of questions on this issue, Mr. Speaker. We've shown the people of the province, and the Premier in case he's forgotten them, the promises that his government made in the campaign and since — not just the election of 2003, but comments that were made in January of this year, comments that were made weeks ago, comments that were made at SARM. We've shown him those, and then we've highlighted how this budget systematically breaks those promises.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the Premier enjoys this particular line of questioning. I don't think he enjoys having the trust issue raised. I don't think he enjoys having people wonder if they should have trusted him, or an opposition that asks that question: why, why would people trust him? He simply has to stand up and explain the question.

I don't think the Premier likes it, but you know what, Mr. Speaker? From about 140 years ago there's some advice from Abraham Lincoln to the Premier. If he doesn't like this line of questioning on trust, Mr. Lincoln said:

Truth is generally the best vindication against slander.

If the Premier doesn't like the questions, and if the Premier doesn't like the concern that's being expressed by the people of the province that he said one thing in the campaign and he's doing another thing, there is some vindication against slander as the quote said, and the vindication is the truth, Mr. Speaker. The vindication is simply to have told people the truth and to continue to do that.

When I was looking at that quote there was quote right next to it also from Mr. Lincoln and I'll just finish with this on this particular part of the speech. He said, Mr. Lincoln said:

We must not promise what we ought not, (we must not promise what we ought not to) lest we be called on to perform what we cannot.

That's also some pretty good advice, I think, for the Premier in the wake of his budget. The Premier who made some pretty clear commitments only months ago in a campaign, and whose budget that he just stood up and cheered loudly in question period, systematically breaks those promises.

Mr. Speaker, we have through our campaign — our own campaign on the budget — we have received many, many e-mails and they speak to the three issues that I've raised, Mr. Speaker. They speak to the fact that this was a budget of devastation in terms of our economy, in terms of the future of this province. They speak to the fact that this was a budget of ridiculousness, of silliness, Mr. Speaker. And these e-mails also speak to the fact that people feel betrayed, people feel betrayed by this Premier and by this government. Here's one to me, Mr. Speaker, that I received:

Dear Mr. Wall,

I am a young (30) (year-old) person who has spent almost his entire life in Saskatchewan, and I love this province. It makes me heartsick to see my friends constantly leaving for greener pastures, most to Alberta. It is time to change the way this province is run and hopefully you (he's talking to me, hopefully you) are someone that is willing to listen and if you get the opportunity, to make some changes.

The latest NDP budget, as you know, is terrible (says this young person). Not only do they continue to pretend they are balancing the budget but at the same time as (they are) running a deficit they are raising taxes. It seems they will not do what needs to be done for fear of being voted out. This province needs a premier with the courage to do what is right rather than caving in to special interest groups that are never satisfied anyway.

Here's another one, Mr. Speaker, from a gentleman:

I'm one of the . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I recognize the member from The Battlefords on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Far be it from me, a brand new member in the Legislative Assembly here, to question the veteran member opposite on the use of privilege here in the Chamber, Mr. Speaker. But I was reading Beauchesne's this morning and I just found a comment in here about unsigned letters should not be read in the House. Beauchesne's 498:

When quoting (from) a letter in the House, a Member must be willing either to give the name of the author or take full responsibility for . . . (its) contents.

Also, Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne's says in 499:

Telegrams should not be quoted in the House . . . (because) there is no way of ensuring the authenticity of the signature.

Mr. Speaker, this may not be a telegram but I would venture to say that in this new era of technology, e-mails and telegrams remain the same. Beauchesne's has required that . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Would the members just please allow the member to put his point of order.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. All I'm suggesting, Mr. Speaker, is that if we were to follow Beauchesne's in this issue, that any quotation from a letter must also contain the name of the author of that letter when the quotation is being read. And if the member would . . . any time he refers to an e-mail that he gets, indicate to the Chamber who has written that e-mail, I think it would benefit the debate, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the . . . Order. I recognize the member for Melfort on the point of order.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is been a long-standing practice of this House and other Houses in the British parliamentary system that information like letters can be tabled or not tabled at the discretion of the member who has them.

In the past government members have quoted from documents that they have not tabled as well as some that they have. So, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that it's fair to say that there's a compulsory demand for the tabling of information that may indeed include some sensitive material that is not for public consumption, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, I thank the member for raising the point of order and I thank the House Leader from the opposition for speaking to it.

We have a fairly long-standing practice here of what we have allowed and not allowed in terms of quotations. So I have to consider this in line also with what the member has raised in Beauchesne. I believe at this stage that this may require some clarification and I would just like to defer my ruling on this for a while and bring it back on a later date.

And the member may proceed.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll continue to read these. These are e-mails. Of course the member may know that it's difficult to sign e-mails. You can electronically sign them, but it's difficult generally to sign them. I've noticed when I myself have tried to sign my e-mails, my screen gets messed up.

Mr. Speaker, it's ironic though that it would be the member for North Battleford that would stand up and intervene in this debate. He who represents people on the west side of this province who will be devastated by an increase in the PST . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — . . . that he's going to stand up and vote for, Mr. Speaker.

He represents a community, Mr. Speaker, he represents a community that still waits, that still waits for word for infrastructure help in his community, a community that he was the mayor of. And he wants to stand up in this debate. He ought to stand up and defend his decision to support a PST increase on the people of North Battleford, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — In fact I was in North Battleford, I was in North Battleford last night. We met with some of the councillors in North Battleford and some other people. And I'll tell you what the people in North Battleford are wondering, how in the world that their MLA could vote for an increase in the PST when like Swift Current, when like Swift Current in those communities on the west side of the province, such an increase is particularly devastating. That's what his constituents are saying. He ought

to spend more time reading their letters instead of reading Beauchesne, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I'll also . . . I want to share with you another e-mail we got from a gentleman. He says, and I quote:

Mr. Wall, I'm one of . . . (those) . . . I'm one of . . . (those) that voted NDP last fall and last weeks budget . . .

And here, I'll try to . . . so the members can see that it's an email, said:

. . . that voted NDP last fall and last weeks budget proves to me that these jokers haven't got a . . . (unparliamentary word) clue how to get the province finances in order, (Mr. Speaker).

And you know, Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, we have another one from a lady who was concerned about a particular program.

Attention: Brad (it says), I was approved for the Family Farm Opportunities Program (in) January of this year. I just received a registered letter stating the program has been . . . terminated March 31.

What is wrong with this government? Why do they call their department Rural Revitalization? (They're) not revitalizing anything in the rural areas of our province, (Mr. Speaker).

Mr. Speaker, here's another one:

Hello Brad, I've been getting a handle on how the budget will ultimately affect a health care region.

The . . . (inaudible) . . . at my health care region, Mr. Speaker. It says:

It would appear that the NDP has made it abundantly clear that they felt health care was a priority. Sadly, their efforts will come far short.

Mr. Speaker, from a former health care professional.

And here's an amazing one. It's an exchange of e-mails from earlier this week between the member for — that I'm copied on, Mr. Speaker — between a constituent of the member for Sutherland, Saskatoon Sutherland, and one of his constituents. He says in his letter, Mr. Speaker, the constituent to his MLA and I quote:

Mr. Addley, I watched with great anticipation the budget that come down today. I have to say I'm gravely disappointed in the budget. The biggest area I have a serious problem with is an increase in the sales tax.

And, Mr. Speaker, he goes on to highlight his concerns for the budget, and then says:

Please give me some reason why I should consider staying in this province rather than moving back to my home province of Alberta. In today's budget, I do not see any reason for me to stay, but I am hoping someone somewhere can give me a good reason to not leave.

That's what this gentlemen said. He's a CGA (certified general accountant) and he wrote to his MLA, the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

First of all, he didn't get a response back right away and I was able to just send off a quick one thanking him for copying me on his note to the member and then inviting him to copy me on the member's response, which he did. And the member finally did respond.

And here's the member's . . . And this is the NDP answer to the question, "give me a reason why I should consider staying in the province." And here are . . . There is about seven points here, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to pick a few of them out. Here are the reasons why. Here's the NDP vision for the province and the reason why young people should stay in Saskatchewan.

Here's one reason:

Labour Standards in Saskatchewan guarantee workers that they receive at least 3 weeks of paid vacation.

That's one reason. Yes, that's one reason. And the member . . . And the member for Centre chirps, for Regina Centre chirps, but you see that's true. Three weeks vacation is good in the province of Saskatchewan. But generally speaking, you need a job first, Mr. Speaker. You need a job.

(11:30)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Talks about the minimum wage in Saskatchewan is 60 cents higher than in Alberta. Talks about how Saskatchewan workers are paid time and one-half for overtime hours. It talks about . . . there's no health care premiums, ironically enough, even though the Premier's now talking about health care premiums.

In Saskatchewan, our young people can afford to drive a vehicle. Maybe that's a fair point. But then it goes on to say many, many residents in Saskatchewan have access to the Internet. That's another reason, Mr. Speaker.

And in Saskatchewan, quote, "I can use a pay phone for a local call for 25 cents." Why in the world would you need an economic plan in your budget if you can make a local phone call at a telephone booth for 25 cents, Mr. Speaker?

There you have it, Mr. Speaker. There's the NDP plan. There's their answer to this young gentleman who wants a reason, who wants a reason to stay in Saskatchewan.

And let me just say this in closing, Mr. Speaker. The good news is this, the good news is this, is most young people — like the constituent of the member for Sutherland — most of them do want a reason to stay.

They want a government here in the Legislative Assembly that will give them a meaningful reason to stay. They want a government that'll be straight with them — a government that doesn't say one thing in an election campaign and do quite another when it gets . . . when it finally wins.

Mr. Speaker, they want a government and a political party that understands, for the first time in six decades, that we need to build an enterprising and entrepreneurial economy; that we need to, we need to set loose the powers that entrepreneurs currently in the province offer to our economy; that we need to reduce the barriers to growth.

And they're not all taxes, Mr. Speaker. Some of them are infrastructure issues. Some of them are red tape and the fee hikes we've talked about.

They want a government that understands and believes that our hope, the hope of this province, rests in a party and in a government that understands that this province must grow, Mr. Speaker. It must grow.

And so I would say this to the member for Saskatchewan Rivers who, on behalf of his colleagues, said that all we talk about in the Saskatchewan Party is grow, grow, grow — grow this province, grow this population, grow industry, grow the economy. I want to tell members opposite that it's because of our belief in that principle that, in order to afford the health care we need, social services we'd like to provide, an education, and support for producers when they need it — in order to afford those things for Saskatchewan families, we must grow.

And to the extent that this budget doesn't even breathe a word of a plan for growth in Saskatchewan, I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker. Members on this side of the House are looking forward to, in moments, taking their feet and voting against this budget, taking to their feet and standing up for Saskatchewan, standing up for a basic principle of telling the truth to Saskatchewan people.

We will not be supporting the budget, and we invite members opposite to honour their conscience and stand up for Saskatchewan as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, with leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member for Last Mountain-Touchwood has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery are four gentlemen, some of whom got up very early this morning to be with us here today. They are Morris

Prescesky, from Mayfair; Grant Berger, from Central Butte; David Strain, from North Battleford; and Morris Tokaryk, from Richard.

Some of the gentlemen from the North Battleford area tell me that they left at 4 o'clock this morning to be here out on the steps of the legislature to participate in the APAS (Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan) media event, and I would ask all members of the Assembly to welcome them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Once again the member for Walsh Acres has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed.

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, through you, and to all members of the Legislative Assembly, two very good friends of mine, Lily Olsen from the Grain Services Union, and Frank Menten with the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

They are both very hard-working people in the labour movement and very dedicated and have contributed a lot to my campaign and my deliberations over many years of questions. And I thank them for their guidance and thank them for being here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. Krawetz.

The Speaker: — The question is before the Assembly. I would like to advise the members of the Assembly that the Minister of Finance is rising to close debate on the budget speech. And if there are any members that wish to speak, they should stand. Other members that wish to speak to the budget debate, they should stand at this time.

There being none, I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to begin by thanking my family, friends,

constituents, my colleagues — indeed people from across Saskatchewan — for supporting me in my new role of Finance minister and for their support for this budget, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — I felt honoured to stand in the House last week and deliver the budget on behalf of the government. Although it was a very difficult budget to prepare, we met the challenges head-on, producing a balanced, responsible budget, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, although the opposition chooses to disagree, this was the 11th consecutive General Revenue Fund balanced budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — A budget with a new four-year plan to build on this province's success. A budget that will generate a \$42 million surplus at the end of the four years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — A budget, Mr. Speaker, that preserves our vital public services, including health and education — the top priorities of Saskatchewan people — while improving our summary financial results.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members opposite: how could they not invest more in these public priorities? The people of Saskatchewan have clearly told us what their priorities are. And we are striking a delicate balance between responsible spending on our central programs and services with reducing the gap between expenditures and revenue.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite denounce the PST increase. Well, Mr. Speaker, tough decisions were necessary to protect health care in Saskatchewan. Yes, there were increases to taxes, fees, and charges, but again I say we are striking a balance. These essential services which are growing more costly by the year must be paid for, Mr. Speaker. And it would be irresponsible of this government to invest in these programs and services without being able to pay for them.

Consider, Mr. Speaker, that the additional revenues — \$136 million from the increase in the PST — will not, will not cover the estimated \$160 million increase in health care funding, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, this was a difficult budget to prepare. Ordinarily the Department of Finance staff has months and months to prepare. This year they had far less time, and as a consequence they logged a tremendous amount of hours, many long days and nights to prepare for the budget. I would like to take this opportunity to say how much I appreciate their dedication and expertise, and to thank these public servants — indeed all public servants — for the valuable service they provide to Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to work with this department. I am proud of their work, and I am honoured to be the Minister of Finance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, over the past few days, criticism of this budget has flown freely — particularly on the other side of the House. But as I said in the budget address, the role of government is not always to do what is popular but to do what is right, to do what is needed to meet the needs of the people of Saskatchewan. And that is what we have done with this budget. We are meeting their needs while being fiscally responsible and building on the strong Saskatchewan economy.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that Saskatchewan led Western Canada in gross domestic product, GDP growth last year. That's a sign of growth in the economy, Mr. Speaker. We led all of Western Canada.

Government forecasters are predicting Saskatchewan's real GDP growth will reach 2.6 per cent this year, and this forecast reaffirms the strength of our economy, Mr. Speaker.

Now private sector forecasters are even more optimistic about Saskatchewan's economic performance this year. They are projecting between 2.8 and 4 per cent growth rates for GDP. No matter who's providing the forecast, Mr. Speaker, the optimism is there for our future. We look forward to a strong economy in 2004, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I might say that we're coming off a remarkable year in the oil and gas industry. Although the price of oil is expected to decline this year, Saskatchewan's oil production is expected to increase. The same is true for natural gas. The price is projected to decrease but sales volumes are expected to increase, Mr. Speaker.

And potash sales are expected to surpass last year's record sales.

Last year's crop harvest was below the 10-year average but it is expected to increase this year. We will continue, Mr. Speaker, to support farmers throughout the trying times. You can count on us, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, another excellent indicator of the strength of our economy is debt as a percentage of GDP. This is what credit rating agencies use to gauge our economy and our fiscal performance. Debt as a percentage of GDP, Mr. Speaker, is forecast to decrease to 33.2 per cent this year and to continue to drop to 31.5 per cent in four years time.

Now what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? To put that into context, and by way of contrast, I would like to point out that debt as a percentage of GDP was nearly 62 — 62 per cent in 1991. And, Mr. Speaker, by any measure — by any measure, with the exception of the opposition of course, Mr. Speaker — this is a remarkable turnaround, especially considering the shambles of an economy that we inherited from the government

that was supported by the members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that the opposition can and do use all kinds of figures to talk about debt. And I give them credit for their energetic, heavy-duty ciphering, Mr. Speaker. However, the people of Saskatchewan are far less interested in their grand theories.

The people of Saskatchewan are far more interested in the assessment of the credit rating agencies. These agencies make it their business to know about our debt. They have to know what they are doing — their livelihood depends on it. And, Mr. Speaker, these credit rating agencies support the fact that Saskatchewan has experienced a remarkable turnaround, Mr. Speaker — nothing less. And it's time for the opposition to deal with the reality in Saskatchewan as opposed to denying that reality, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, we are committed to prudent fiscal management. This budget is a beginning of a new four-year plan that invests wisely to strengthen fiscal stability, sustainability, and the future of this province.

As I mentioned, at the end of the four-year plan we will have generated a \$42 million surplus. We are progressively improving. For example, we are improving our summary financial results by over \$380 million from two years ago. We are weaning ourselves from relying on the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, our rainy day account.

Yes, we are using the Fiscal Stabilization Fund to balance the budget this year. We say that. And the Fiscal Stabilization Fund is a popular topic with the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. But I would also like to point out that we put money back into the Fiscal Stabilization Fund two years ago. We have not drawn from it every year. And the practice of having such a rainy day fund is employed by most other provinces, Mr. Speaker.

(11:45)

Mr. Speaker, this budget also introduces a summary financial plan. This is a consolidated look at all government departments, Crowns, agencies, and boards. And it is yet another step in a long line of changes this government — not that opposition, Mr. Speaker — has made to improve accountability, transparency, and financial reporting. We have also introduced interim reports, summary financial statements with the public accounts, and department performance plans.

Delivering a balanced budget this year was not an easy task, Mr. Speaker. We had to balance our fiscal management with the needs of Saskatchewan people. And Saskatchewan people have clearly told us they value the traditional, high-quality social programs for which this province is known. And they expect, for example — in fact, they demand — comprehensive health care and comprehensive education services. And so after careful consideration we introduced new revenue measures — changes to taxes, fees, and charges — to help pay for these vital services, health care in particular, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this budget includes \$223 million in new operating spending. The majority of that, \$160 million, 72 per cent, is supporting health care. A record \$2.7 billion investment — health care is Saskatchewan's number one priority, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Health care now accounts for 44 per cent of all of our government spending. And among other things, Mr. Speaker, the money this year will be spent to enhance programs and services, to reduce waiting lists for surgeries and MRIs, to purchase a new MRI for Regina, and to help attract and retain qualified health professionals in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is the birthplace of medicare and this government remains firm in its commitment to public health care.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — This budget, Mr. Speaker, contains funding for programs to help our farmers. This government is providing \$1 billion over five years in provincial support for the agriculture policy framework and income support programs. This year we are fully funding crop insurance and providing \$99 million to the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization or CAIS program.

Mr. Speaker, we are also committed to our social agenda. This budget contains help for working families by adding 200 new daycare spaces. It supports families with low incomes. And to further protect low-income families, we are enhancing the Saskatchewan sales tax credit to help offset the increased sales tax.

Mr. Speaker, we continue providing opportunities for children and youth, the future of this province. This budget includes a 3.8 per cent increase in education funding, totalling just over \$1.2 billion. There is funding for new participants to enter the Kids First program.

We are investing \$2.2 million into youth employment through the centennial student employment program. We are continuing to help students find jobs, Mr. Speaker. This year its investment will create nearly 600 employment opportunities for students in Saskatchewan. And this budget also announces and launches a new summer student employment program called the Green Team. It is for young people interested in environmental management and energy conservation. To help keep our talented graduates in the province, we are increasing the post-graduate tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, we had to make sacrifices in this budget, but not at the expense of our vital public services.

Mr. Speaker, we have a vision for this province, a vision that involves continued economic growth and success for individuals and communities across Saskatchewan. That is why for the third consecutive year we are providing an additional \$10 million in revenue-sharing grants for municipalities. This is a 13 per cent increase over last year.

That is why we are investing almost \$300 million to fix the roads and build better highways. And that is why we are spending \$211 million on job creation and job training, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, this budget reflects our commitment to sound financial management. This budget reflects our commitment to the priorities of Saskatchewan people.

This budget also reaffirms our commitment to the promises made in the Throne Speech, including education and opportunities for our young people, building a green and prosperous economy, providing the best public health care in Canada, and making Saskatchewan the most affordable place to live and raise a family in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We know where we are going. We can see the road in front of us. We are securing our financial future. We are committed to the long-term prosperity of this great province. We are committed to responding to the needs of all of our people, Mr. Speaker — a clear plan, a clear commitment, not to be confused, Mr. Speaker, with the backward-looking and confused picture presented by the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, the people who are watching the Legislative Assembly will know from a great deal of experience that the opposition is only there to criticize in the Legislative Assembly. And it doesn't matter what you do; they criticize. It's darned if you do, darned if you don't.

We saw again another example today. At one time we on this side of the House, this government decreased the PST. And the Leader of the Opposition said the impact of that was, I quote, "pathetic." Pathetic, Mr. Speaker. Today he says the increase in the PST, the Leader of the Opposition says it's devastating. Darned if you do, darned if you don't, Mr. Speaker. That's the nature of opposition.

But with this budget, with this budget, I fear that the opposition has reached a new low. How can they stand there, how can they stand there with straight faces and on a daily basis say, spend more. Spend more on this. Spend more on that. Spend more on everything, Mr. Speaker. And at the same time say, tax less. Don't tax this. Tax less. And at the same time say, balance the budget. Well, Mr. Speaker, how they can do that is beyond me, and it's beyond anyone in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's the reality. And it's not credible.

And, Mr. Speaker, frankly we had expected more, and I think the people of Saskatchewan expected more. I believe that the people of Saskatchewan, they elected in their wisdom a legislature with almost equal representation. And I believe that the people of Saskatchewan did that because they believe in turn that this will promise better government. And they are right, under the circumstances that we have here with the tight legislature, to expect responsible, constructive opposition, Mr. Speaker.

But that's not what they see. Just more of the same: a group of

angry, bitter politicians given to mean-spirited attacks; a group consumed with their election loss. And as I listen to their speeches, Mr. Speaker, it is clear, and that is the theme that emerges — looking back, fighting the last election, not looking forward. No, looking straight back.

Mr. Speaker, I am reminded, I am reminded — and I'm not as versed in popular culture as the Leader of the Opposition — but I'm reminded of watching this American television show, *The David Letterman Show*, and a character called Larry "Bud" Melman. And on this one episode, it seemed to me that Larry "Bud" Melman was reporting to this David Letterman about something called the Larry "Bud" Melman bus line. And he said, you know Dave, in reporting to this Mr. Letterman, that this is a bus line where the seats are nailed in backwards. And the motto of the bus line is: the bus line where you can watch where you've been but you can't see where you're going.

Well, Mr. Speaker, isn't that the opposition? But unlike Mr. Larry "Bud" Melman, Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that opposition is not yet ready for prime time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, we believe in Saskatchewan. We believe in this province. We want to build on our successes and help Saskatchewan people turn their dreams and plans into reality. Our vision for this province includes a future of opportunity, continued growth, and success. This budget moves us forward to that future.

Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment. I will be supporting the motion. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The questions before the Assembly or the motions ... is the motion moved by member for Regina Douglas Park, and seconded by the member from Moose Jaw North:

That this Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

And the amendment moved by the member for Canora-Pelly, seconded by the member for Rosetown-Elrose:

That all the words after "that" be deleted and the following substituted:

the current Premier and cabinet have betrayed Saskatchewan voters with the 2004-2005 provincial budget and therefore this provincial government does not enjoy the confidence of the Assembly.

I will put first the vote on the amendment. That is the amendment moved by the member from Canora-Pelly, and seconded by the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the amendment? Those members who favour the amendment say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those who oppose the amendment say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — I believe the nos have it. Call in the members for a standing vote.

The division bells rang from 11:57 until 12:03.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the amendment to the main motion, the amendment moved by the member for Canora-Pelly, seconded by the member for Rosetown-Elrose:

That all the words after "that" be deleted and the following substituted:

the current Premier and cabinet have betrayed Saskatchewan voters with the 2004-2005 provincial budget and therefore this provincial government does not enjoy the confidence of the Assembly.

Those who favour the motion please rise.

Yeas — 28

Wall	Toth	Elhard
Heppner	D'Autremont	Krawetz
Draude	Hermanson	Bjornerud
Stewart	Wakefield	Morgan
McMorris	Eagles	Gantefer
Harpauer	Bakken	Cheveldayoff
Huyghebaert	Allchurch	Brkich
Weekes	Kerpan	Merriman
Chisholm	Dearborn	Hart
Kirsch		

The Speaker: — Those who oppose the motion please rise.

Nays — 28

Calvert	Addley	Lautermilch
Hagel	Van Mulligen	Atkinson
Cline	Sonntag	Crofford
Prebble	Forbes	Wartman
Belanger	Higgins	Thomson
Nilson	Beatty	Hamilton
Junor	Harper	Iwanchuk
McCall	Quennell	Trew
Yates	Taylor	Morin
Borgerson		

The Speaker: — Order.

Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the amendment, 28. Those opposed, 28.

The Speaker: — The Clerk has announced that there's an equality of votes for and against the amendment. In these circumstances it is my duty, pursuant to rule 26(2), to give a casting vote to break the tie.

According to parliamentary practice the Speaker votes

according to certain procedural principles, and not for or against the substance of the matter, in order to avoid any imputation on the impartiality of the Chair.

An amendment to the budget motion is traditionally viewed as a question of confidence and in this case is worded as an explicit motion of non-confidence. In general, the principle applied to amendments is that decisions should not be taken except by a majority and that where there is no majority, the main motion should be left in its existing form. In a vote that is a test of the Assembly's confidence in the government, the decision of non-confidence should be clearly stated by a majority. It would not be appropriate for the vote of the Speaker alone to overturn the status quo as determined at the last election.

I therefore vote against the amendment and declare the amendment defeated.

Amendment negatived.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The motion before the Assembly then is the original motion moved by the member for Regina Douglas Park, the member for . . . and seconded by the member for Moose Jaw North:

That the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Those in favour of the motion say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — I believe the ayes have it. Call in the members for a standing vote.

The division bells rang from 12:07 until 12:08.

The Speaker: — Order. The motion before the Assembly is the motion moved by the member for Regina Douglas Park, seconded by the member for Moose Jaw North:

That the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Those in favour of the motion please rise.

Yeas — 28

Calvert	Addley	Lautermilch
Hagel	Van Mulligen	Atkinson
Cline	Sonntag	Crofford

Prebble	Forbes	Wartman
Belanger	Higgins	Thomson
Nilson	Beatty	Hamilton
Junor	Harper	Iwanchuk
McCall	Quennell	Trew
Yates	Taylor	Morin
Borgerson		

The Speaker: — Those who oppose the motion please rise.

Nays — 28

Wall	Toth	Elhard
Heppner	D'Autremont	Krawetz
Draude	Hermanson	Bjornerud
Stewart	Wakefield	Morgan
McMorris	Eagles	Gantefoer
Harpauer	Bakken	Cheveldayoff
Huyghebaert	Allchurch	Brkich
Weekes	Kerpan	Merriman
Chisholm	Dearborn	Hart
Kirsch		

Clerk Assistant (Committees): — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 28; those opposed, 28.

The Speaker: — Order. The Clerk has announced that there is an equality of votes for and against the motion. In these circumstances it is my duty pursuant to rule 26(2) to give a casting vote to break the tie. According to parliamentary practice, the Speaker votes according to certain procedural principles in order to avoid any imputation on the impartiality of the Chair.

The vote on the budget motion is traditionally viewed as a question of confidence. The principle that applies in this instance is that important decisions should be taken only by a majority. Matters of confidence are of such importance that a decision of non-confidence should be clearly made by a majority. It would not be appropriate for the vote of the Speaker alone to overturn the status quo as determined in the last election.

I therefore vote in favour of the budget motion, and the motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of the Assembly to move several procedural motions to refer estimates and supplementary estimates to the various standing committees.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave of the Assembly to make several motions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Granted. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Regina Douglas Park, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Nutana:

MOTIONS

Referral of Estimates to Committee

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the following estimates and supplementary estimates, being:

vote 74, Information Technology Office;
vote 33, Public Service Commission;
vote 53, Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation;
vote 165, Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan;
vote 159, Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan;
vote 154, Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation;
vote 152, Saskatchewan Power Corporation;
vote 153, Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation;
vote 150, SaskEnergy Incorporated
be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

And that's seconded, Mr. Speaker, by the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

The Speaker: — On the motion moved by the member for Saskatoon Douglas Park and seconded by the member . . . or pardon, Regina Douglas Park and seconded by the member for Saskatoon Nutana, will members take it as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Those in favour of the motion please say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those who are opposed to the motion say nay.

Some Hon. Members: — Nay.

The Speaker: — I believe the ayes have it. Call in the members for a standing vote.

The division bells rang from 12:14 until 12:17.

(12:15)

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. The motion before the Assembly is the motion moved by the member for

That the following estimates and supplementary estimates, being:

vote 74, Information Technology Office;
vote 33, Public Service Commission;
vote 53, Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation;
vote 165, Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan;
vote 159, Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan;
vote 154, Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation;
vote 152, Saskatchewan Power Corporation;
vote 153, Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation;
vote 150, SaskEnergy Incorporated
be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Would those members who favour the motion please rise.

Yeas — 28

Calvert	Addley	Lautermilch
Hagel	Van Mulligen	Atkinson
Cline	Sonntag	Crofford
Prebble	Forbes	Wartman
Belanger	Higgins	Thomson
Nilson	Beatty	Hamilton
Junor	Harper	Iwanchuk
McCall	Quennell	Trew
Yates	Taylor	Morin
Borgerson		

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion please rise.

Nays — 28

Wall	Toth	Elhard
Heppner	D'Autremont	Krawetz
Draude	Hermanson	Bjornerud
Stewart		

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please, during the vote. I would ask for all members to maintain silence except for those that are voting.

Wakefield	Morgan	McMorris
Eagles	Gantefoer	Harpauer
Bakken	Cheveldayoff	Huyghebaert
Allchurch	Brkich	Weekes
Kerpan	Merriman	Chisholm
Dearborn	Hart	Kirsch

The Speaker: — The Clerk has announced that there is an equality of votes for and against the motion.

In these circumstance it is my duty pursuant to rule 26 to give a casting vote and break the tie. According to parliamentary practice, the Speaker votes according to certain procedural

principles in order to avoid any imputation on the impartiality of the Chair.

In general the principle applied to motions is that when no further discussion is possible, decisions should not be taken except by a majority. The Speaker alone should not change the status quo, which is to leave the estimates in Committee of Finance.

I therefore vote against the motion and declare the motion defeated.

Motion negatived.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that this House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This House will stand adjourned until Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:21.

CORRIGENDA

On page 414 of *Hansard* No. 14A Tuesday, April 6, 2004, reference to “Yen” Martel in the ninth paragraph of Mr. Addley’s speech should read “Yann” Martel.

We apologize for this error.

On page 424 of *Hansard* No. 14A Tuesday, April 6, 2004, the line reading:

And there’s a powerful Cree word, in Cree . . . (Cree) . . . which means a good life.

should read:

And there’s a powerful Cree word, in Cree, mītho pimacīsiwin, which means a good life.

We apologize for this error.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Elhard	465
Hermanson	465
Huyghebaert	465
Brkich	465
Weekes	465
Dearborn	465

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk	466
--------------------	-----

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on House Services

Gantefoer	466
-----------------	-----

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

McMorris	466
Weekes	466

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Harpauer	466
McMorris	466
Hart	481
Morin	482
Heppner	474
Van Mulligen	475

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Observance of Passover and Easter

Hamilton	466
----------------	-----

Easter Celebration

Toth	467
------------	-----

Invitation to Support the Budget

Yates	467
-------------	-----

Opening of Provincial Parks

Huyghebaert	467
-------------------	-----

Recognition for Downtown Regina

McCall	468
--------------	-----

Conditions Facing Saskatchewan Seniors

Heppner	468
---------------	-----

Good News from the Meadow Lake Constituency

Sonntag	468
---------------	-----

ORAL QUESTIONS

Commitments Made by Government

Wall	468
------------	-----

Calvert	469
---------------	-----

Provincial Sales Tax

Krawetz	469
---------------	-----

Van Mulligen	470
--------------------	-----

Funding for Health Care

Gantefoer	470
-----------------	-----

Nilson	470
--------------	-----

Closure of Long-Term Care Beds

Heppner	470
---------------	-----

Nilson	470
--------------	-----

Fees for Hearing Aids

Harpauer	470
----------------	-----

Nilson	470
--------------	-----

Support for Rural Saskatchewan

Bakken	471
--------------	-----

Wartman	471
---------------	-----

Education Portion of Property Taxes

Bjornerud	471
-----------------	-----

Thomson	471
---------------	-----

Provincial Income Tax Credits

Chisholm	471
----------------	-----

Van Mulligen	471
--------------------	-----

Fire Permit Fee	
Huyghebaert	471
Forbes	472
Increases in Fees in Vital Statistics	
Draude	472
Nilson	472
Commitments Made by the Government	
Wall	472
Calvert	472
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS	
Bill No. 19 — The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004	
Cline	474
Bill No. 20 — The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2004	
Cline	474
Bill No. 21 — The Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials Act, 2004	
Thomson	474
ORDERS OF THE DAY	
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	
Yates	474
The Speaker	474
SPECIAL ORDER	
ADJOURNED DEBATES	
MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY	
(BUDGET DEBATE)	
Atkinson	475
Wall	477
Taylor (point of order)	479
Gantefer (point of order)	480
The Speaker (point of order)	480
Van Mulligen	482
Recorded Division (Amendment)	485
Recorded Division (Motion)	486
MOTIONS	
Referral of Estimates to Committee	
Van Mulligen	487
Recorded Division	487
CORRIGENDA	489

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. L. Calvert
Premier

Hon. P. Atkinson
Minister of Crown Management Board
Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

Hon. J. Beatty
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation
Provincial Secretary

Hon. B. Belanger
Minister of Northern Affairs

Hon. E. Cline
Minister of Industry and Resources

Hon. J. Crofford
Minister of Community Resources and Employment
Minister Responsible for Disability Issues
Minister Responsible for Gaming

Hon. D. Forbes
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for the Office of Energy Conservation

Hon. D. Higgins
Minister of Labour
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. J. Nilson
Minister of Health
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. P. Prebble
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety

Hon. F. Quennell
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Hon. C. Serby
Deputy Premier

Hon. M. Sonntag
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs
Minister of Highways and Transportation

Hon. L. Taylor
Minister of Government Relations

Hon. A. Thomson
Minister of Learning
Minister Responsible for Information Technology

Hon. H. Van Mulligen
Minister of Finance

Hon. M. Wartman
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization