



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Lorne Calvert

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Beatty, Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotin, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Calvert, Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantefoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to members of this Assembly, there's a number of guests that I'd like to introduce that are seated in your gallery, in the Speaker's gallery. In no particular order though, they together represent well the millions of dollars that have been invested by companies in the potash industry in the province and most importantly literally thousands of people affected directly through employment, through business work by the potash industry of our province.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to introduce the senior vice-president of operations of Mosaic — and maybe as I introduce them, I'll ask them to stand — and chairman of the Saskatchewan Potash Producers Association, Norm Beug. As well joining us is Steve Dyer who's the vice-president of manufacturing for Agrium and the vice-chair of the Potash Producers Association of this province. Garth Moore is joining us as well, the president for PCS [Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan] potash and the past chair of the Saskatchewan Potash Producers Association; Darrell Zvarych, the vice-president of finance for Mosaic Potash; as well as Gay Patrick who's the executive director of the Saskatchewan Potash Producers Association.

They're here to see the introduction of an important little bit of business in this Legislative Assembly later today, important to the industry and an important signal about the economy of the province. And so I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And on behalf of the official opposition, I too would like to welcome the representatives from the potash industries here to our legislature. Mr. Speaker, I think those present on the government side and in the galleries, Mr. Speaker, will know that the relationship between the government and the potash industry over the last years has been a very positive and productive one. Mr. Speaker, we welcome the industry reps to the gallery this afternoon, and we look forward to continuing to work with them over the coming years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, while I was on my feet I should have also taken the opportunity to introduce a number of

members of CEP [Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada] who have joined us in the Legislative Assembly today. I had the privilege of meeting with the president of the union to discuss the Domtar situation in Prince Albert on Friday. And we also want to welcome them through you to their Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Premier in welcoming those citizens of Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan who are joining us today in the legislature seated in the west gallery. Many of these visitors are or were employees at the P.A. [Prince Albert] mill and part of CEP, although not exclusively. Mr. Speaker, they have come to Regina today seeking answers from government about the future of the mill, about the future of their own livelihood, about the future of their community. And I, and we, welcome them here to legislature and invite all members to again welcome them heartily to their legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce to you and through you to the members two constituents from Regina Douglas Park who are with us today. They're seated in the east gallery. They're no strangers to this Chamber. They've visited here before. I look forward to their visits in the future as well. Would you please join with me in welcoming Bob Ivanochko and Maureen Eckstein. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, I too would like to introduce a couple of guests in your gallery that are from my constituency, Ron and Karen Saal — if you can just give a bit of a wave. Ron and Karen are from Rouleau, Saskatchewan — better known as Dog River — and they've made the journey into Regina today to see the proceedings.

I do want to . . . I mentioned if Ron Saal's name is familiar, it's because I mention him briefly on Thursday, I guess, when I did my reply to the Speech from the Throne. Ron was my fundraiser in this past campaign plus the campaign in 2003. He did such a great job in 2003; we wanted him back in 2007. He did a great job again. So I'd like all members to welcome Ron and Karen to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well to you and through you to the members of our Assembly here today, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce Maria Lynn Freeland in your gallery, sir. She's a senior Crown prosecutor from Meadow Lake. She's part-time in my constituency, when she's home on the weekends, and she's setting up a residence in Meadow Lake. And today she's come down with a friend of hers as he's busy with the Speaker's office, actually, doing some work this afternoon. So if everyone could give a rousing welcome to Maria Lynn Freeland please, and welcome to your Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Hon. members, I'd like to bring to your attention as well, joining us in the Speaker's gallery is the Provincial Ombudsman, Mr. Kevin Fenwick, and I would invite members to welcome the Ombudsman, Mr. Fenwick, to his Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — I wish to present a petition of the Legislative Assembly on behalf of the citizens of the province of Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to commit to reopening negotiations with Domtar based on an already negotiated MOU so as to see a viable pulp mill continue in Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by good folks of the city of Prince Albert. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

We Are Many: A Festival

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the past days, weeks, and months a small group of very thoughtful and committed young people have been planning and organizing an event to be held in Saskatoon in August 2008.

The "We are Many: A Festival," or WAM for short, is an extremely ambitious and creative undertaking aimed at promoting environmental sustainability. Mr. Speaker, WAM organizers believe that the greatest barrier to changing the way that we as individuals impact our environment is the sentiment, I'm only one person — that if we knew our actions do have an effect on the world, we would be much more willing to make change.

In order to overcome individual feelings of powerlessness, the

festival is aiming at engaging 50,000 participants and — through music, theatre, visual arts, and dance — will cement those festival goers and artists' personal commitment to environmental sustainability. Central, Mr. Speaker, is a pact that each will be invited to sign, agreeing commitment, proposing 40 personal actions that are all attainable and will result in positive change. Each signatory is also asked to sign up five more people to the WAM pact.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be working with this group of young people. I look forward to working with them over the months ahead. Tonight they are approaching the Saskatoon City Council for their support, and they will be seeking the support of this provincial government. I would encourage all members to lend their support to this creative, ambitious, and important event.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Borden's Terrible Loss

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise in this Assembly today to express our government's condolences and sympathies to all the people of Borden, Saskatchewan and area, who are mourning the tragic and untimely loss of two young basketball players.

Mr. Speaker, Greg Sargent, 16, and Sandon Sutherland, 15, both members of the Borden High School boys' basketball team lost their lives in a car accident while on their way to a game in Osler, Saskatchewan last week. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of these two young boys, the coaches and team, the staff and students at the Borden High School, and everyone in the community of Borden as they work to come to terms with this terrible loss. Our thoughts and prayers are also with the four other young men injured in the accident, as well as the mother of one of the boys who perished, as they begin the recovery process.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan small, and villages are known for coming together in times of tragedy, and Borden is no different. I want to thank the counsellors with the Prairie Spirit School Division who have been at the school supporting staff and students. I also want to thank everyone else in the community who has come together to support the families and their fellow community members. Whether it's through their visits to Royal University Hospital or through their prayers, I know these and other gestures will help with the grieving process. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Dedicated Volunteer Honoured in Moose Jaw

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week a dedicated and valuable volunteer in Moose Jaw was honoured for his long service to our community. Retired Judge Gerald King was formally recognized last Thursday by the John Howard Society for more than 40 years of

volunteering. Twenty-five of those years have been in association with the John Howard Society in one way or another.

Gerry's donation of time and energy has not been limited to the John Howard Society. He's also been active with the Kinsmen, the United Way, minor sports, and also as a strong advocate for people of differing abilities in our society through groups like the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living and many others.

Mr. Speaker, Gerry has long believed in public education and raising public awareness of issues and has believed strongly in the groups who support these issues. He's a man who has walked the talk and gotten involved on many levels. After a stint in the broadcasting field, Gerry entered the legal profession. He practised law in Swift Current and Maple Creek before being appointed a judge in Wynyard. Gerry then moved to Moose Jaw where he completed his legal career.

Mr. Speaker, Gerry decided that, at 70 years of age, that was a good time to step away from board positions and committee work, and that time has come. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in wishing retired Judge Gerry King a happy retirement and thanking him for his many years of dedicated service.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw North.

[13:45]

Congratulations and Tribute in Moose Jaw

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you're all very aware of the Saskatchewan Roughriders' triumph in the 95th Grey Cup. Mr. Speaker, the Grey Cup was publicly displayed at the Moose Jaw Civic Centre during the hockey game on Saturday night between the Moose Jaw Warriors and the Regina Pats, and I'm happy to report that the Moose Jaw Warriors convincingly won the game 6 to 1.

What made this evening so special was watching the representatives from the Saskatchewan Roughriders display this prestigious award at the Moose Jaw Civic Centre and seeing the standing ovation that they received from the fans.

Among those champions was hometown hero Scott Schultz. Scott grew up in Moose Jaw where his family runs a progressive family furniture business. He attended Riverview Collegiate and is placed on that school's wall of fame. Mr. Speaker, Scott is a role model both on and off the field. He is dedicated to giving back to the community by working with many charities, running a football camp for young people, and working full-time in the off-season. Moose Jaw Mayor Dale McBain paid special tribute to Scott by making him an honorary citizen of the city of Moose Jaw. I have personally suggested to city council that a sign of recognition for Scott Schultz and the 2007 Saskatchewan Roughriders be erected in the Moose Jaw area. Join me in congratulating Scott Schultz for his dedication to the province and being an honorary citizen of the city of Moose Jaw. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Circle of Voices

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday evening, December 13, the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company held its seventh annual farewell celebration for its Circle of Voices participants. This year six young people were recognized for their commitment and determination in completing this unique program.

Circle of Voices or known as COV is a full-time, eight-month program for youth ages 16 to 26. COV provides valuable skills and knowledge in the areas of culture, life skills, and careers to help young people reach their own goals. Specifically through COV, participants gain confidence, pride, self-esteem, and a foundation for future growth and skill development. Participants receive drama 30 and 20 credits from Saskatchewan Learning.

Now COV youth work with mentors to present live dramatic performances based on issues that are relevant and important to youth and communities. Universal themes are cultural identity and intergenerational impact of residential schools. Past programs have addressed issues of gangs, homelessness, families, and relationships. This year the students focused on the timely issue of residential school settlements.

This year's graduates were Diedre Badger, Jaired Henderson, Daniel Knight, Demetrius Knight, Aaron Shingoose, and Cory Standing. Over the past seven years, over 120 young people have successfully completed this amazing program.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the SNTC [Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company] family and wish the very best to these young people. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Batoche.

Grand Opening of Ranch Ehrlo Corman Park Campus

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday the Minister of Social Services, the member for Humboldt, announced the grand opening of Ranch Ehrlo Corman Park Campus. The campus includes two group homes, an education centre, and an administrative centre. The opening of this new campus represents an increased capability for Ranch Ehrlo to meet the needs of vulnerable youth, and it will increase their ability to build a secure future for Saskatchewan.

This is a nationally recognized community organization with 40 years of history toward helping vulnerable youth. Ranch Ehrlo is dedicated to improving the opportunities for individuals with addictions, mental illness, and conduct disability. Through partnerships with the Minister of Social Services, Ranch Ehrlo is committed to ensuring our youth live healthy and productive lives. This organization is an asset to the community because

the youth of Saskatchewan are an asset to this province. Ranch Ehrlo's continued success will ensure our youth are supported in overcoming adversity.

It is with pride, Mr. Speaker, that this government recognizes the contribution made by Ranch Ehrlo Society. There are four people who have contributed a great amount of time and energy to this organization. These individuals are Donna Welke, Tim Young, Frank May, and Justice Ellen Gunn. They will have campus buildings named in their honour. Mr. Speaker, the government shares the value of Ranch Ehrlo as they also are committed to securing the future of Saskatchewan and our youth. The government is sure the Corman Park Campus will be a success and will help many young people realize their full potential. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Martin Collegiate's Bricks and Mortar Program

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, educators and programs throughout the province have the challenge of meeting the needs of the economy and the whole child needs of students. High quality educational opportunities are key not only in providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully participate in the province's booming economy, but also in helping them develop into healthy and strong citizens. In short, Mr. Speaker, quality education programs benefit everyone — students, their families, the economy, the community as a whole.

I want to commend two educators at Martin Collegiate in my Regina Rosemont constituency. Ian McKillop and Peter Flasko who, with the support of Bruce Pearce, have developed the program Bricks and Mortar, an innovative and progressive trades and skills program to complement the school's more traditional course offerings. Mr. Speaker, the Bricks and Mortar program has served in part as a model to a much larger scale project — the development of a regional skills and trades centre right here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all the members to join me in commending Mr. Ian McKillop, Mr. Peter Flasko for developing Bricks and Mortar, a program that not only benefits students and their families but the community and the economy as well. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from P.A. Northcote.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Prince Albert Pulp Mill

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party's handling of the Prince Albert pulp mill file is a betrayal to the city of Prince Albert and a betrayal to the province. For two

years we worked on a deal along with our union partners, First Nations, people of the city of Prince Albert. Perhaps the most egregious betrayal of all, Mr. Speaker, was the member of Prince Albert Carlton who speaks from his chair, that a vote for him was a vote for the mill open and people working.

Mr. Speaker, some of the people who read that ad are in the gallery today — his constituents — and they want answers. Will that member apologize to his constituents for providing them with wrong information during the campaign?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier has spoke to the Domtar representatives. I have spoke to Domtar representatives. The Premier has indeed spoken to union representatives as well. We feel that that's consulting, obviously. The Premier as late as Friday has spoke to union representative folks. We also spoke to the chamber of commerce, spoke to the city council, spoke to the mayor about it, spoke to First Nations groups, which indeed the members opposite did not do in the consultation leading up to the deal — the MOU [memorandum of understanding]. We have consulted with the people of Saskatchewan with respect to it. We will continue to consult with the people of Saskatchewan and we're going to do what's necessary to keep the mill open.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from P.A. Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Prince Albert Carlton is a minister in this cabinet. He can answer questions in this Assembly. He's just as responsible as any other member of that cabinet for the decisions made by cabinet. His constituents are in the gallery today, Mr. Speaker, and his constituents want an answer. I'm asking the member from Prince Albert Carlton: will he stand in his place in the Assembly today and apologize to the people that sent him here?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — As I said, Mr. Speaker, the government has widely consulted with people prior to the election, during the election campaign, and after the election campaign, and will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker. And when it comes to the betrayal of the people of Saskatchewan, we will take no lessons from the members opposite about that. What we will do, Mr. Speaker, is we will never engage in the eleventh hour activity that the members opposite did in trying to buy the votes of Saskatchewan people with the taxpayers' monies of this province, Mr. Speaker. That may be the policies of the members opposite, but that will never be the policies of this government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member from Prince Albert Carlton promised during the election campaign that reopening the mill would be a top priority. He even ran an ad proposing that a vote for him was, quote, “a vote for the mill open and people working.” Well the people of Prince Albert voted for the member opposite — a whopping 47 per cent of them did. They believed his ad. They took him at his word.

They’re not getting what they bargained for, Mr. Speaker. We’re joined today in the Assembly by constituents who are here to say that their MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] broke the public trust, betrayed his solemn promise, and lost the confidence of his constituents.

Will the member of Prince Albert Carlton respect the wishes of the constituents, do the honourable thing, and resign today?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member opposite that in a recent poll in his own backyard, in the P.A. *Herald*, 60 per cent of the people of Prince Albert agreed with the decision taken by this government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Sixty per cent, 60 per cent of the people looked at that deal, Mr. Member opposite, 60 per cent of the people of Prince Albert, right in your own backyard, looked at this deal . . .

The Speaker: — I would ask the members to give the minister the same opportunity to respond as the member was given to ask the question.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so the members opposite would know that right in Prince Albert, in an online poll conducted by the Prince Albert *Herald*, that 60 per cent of the people agreed with what actions have been taken. And as a result of that we will be doing everything we can to work with Domtar in the future to deal with this important issue for the people of Prince Albert.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Well I guess now online opinion polls count as consultation. I’ll repeat myself because I don’t think the member heard me.

He ran an ad saying a vote for him was, quote, “a vote for the mill open and people working.” People voted for him because they thought they would get the mill open and people working.

They took him at his word. They made the mistake of taking him at his word.

Here’s a letter to the editor from December 17, Mr. . . .

The Speaker: — Members, I ask the members to come to order. I invite the member from Prince Albert Northcote to place his question.

Mr. Furber: — I quote: “Although Darryl Hickie was loose with the lip, (he should and will be made to pay at the polls) . . .”

The Speaker: — Just to remind the members to refer to members not by first name but by their seat. Thank you.

Mr. Furber: — He should and will be made to pay at the polls. Will he finally start listening to his own constituents, to the men and women of Prince Albert, and step down immediately?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for energy and mines.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is an excellent member representing the people of Prince Albert. But what is important here is . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — The most important consultation that could possibly take place in Saskatchewan did take place in Saskatchewan. On November 7 the people of Saskatchewan said in a resounding fashion that the policies opposite are not going to be the policies that govern this province any longer.

What they represent, Mr. Speaker, the policies of that former administration, they represent very clearly to the people of Saskatchewan the failed policies of a failed philosophy, the failed policies of a failed government, the failed policies of that failed former premier. That’s what the policies of the members opposite represent.

Well I’ll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan have voted in an overwhelming fashion and they agree with us in an overwhelming fashion that that deal was not in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan, and that is precisely the reason why this administration will not be carrying that forward.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty’s Loyal Opposition.

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, we’ve learned a couple of things in this question period. One, the member from Prince Albert Carlton won’t stand in this House and answer for his own commitments. And two, the minister in charge of forestry now is good on an online poll, I guess.

Mr. Speaker, this Saskatchewan Party government is making a science out of saying one thing before an election and doing something quite different. Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker, the member from Prince Albert Carlton said that a vote for him and a vote for the Sask Party was a vote to open the mill. He didn't say, I'd work towards it. No, it was a promise. And even after the election all that he would say is, well we're going to put the Sask Party's stamp on the deal.

Well they put the stamp on the deal all right — DOA, dead on arrival.

Mr. Speaker, if the member from Prince Albert Carlton won't do the right thing, I'm going to put a question to the Premier. Will the Premier today ask the member from Prince Albert Carlton to resign his seat? And, Mr. Speaker, if he will not, if he will not, is that an indication that he believes that saying one thing in front of an election is okay and doing something after an election is just fine?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I was just in Prince Albert on Friday. We met there with the mayor and the council of Prince Albert. We met with the president of the union. We met as well with the chamber of commerce. Mr. Speaker, we met with First Nations, whom that member, when he was in this chair, failed to consult on this deal.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

Hon. Mr. Wall: — He did not consult with the First Nations that are a partner to this project. They just made the announcement. The reason that that happened, Mr. Speaker, is because there was no deal to announce, except for the desperation on the part of that government to try to win a government, to try to win re-election.

Since that day we've been very consistent, Mr. Speaker, that this party — if elected to government, which happened on November 7 — would not put at risk \$100 million on a pulp fiction deal, a deal that simply didn't exist; that we would work towards the reopening of that mill with a proper arrangement, Mr. Speaker, that didn't risk taxpayers' money and actually was grounded in some truth. And, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what will happen.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Premier got to his feet. He wouldn't answer my question, so I'll try another one.

Now finally, finally, the Premier decides to go to Prince Albert at the end of last week, on Friday. And I read in the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, when he's asked about why he did not consult with the task force or with anyone before axing and

ripping up the MOU, he said about the task force work, quote, "[Well] We're looking at it now." We're looking at it now. I tear up the deal first and then I go and speak to the people that are intimately involved with this deal and say, "[Well] We're looking at it now."

My question to the Premier is, why didn't he talk to the task force members? Why didn't he review their work before he ripped up the deal?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the work of the task force that was done, other work around the forestry piece, was the subject of review by this party when we sat over on the opposition benches, Mr. Speaker. That's the bottom line here.

What was also very consistent from the very, very beginning was the position of this party. When that deal was announced on September 12, when this MOU was announced on September 12, this party said we would not proceed with this kind of risking of taxpayers' money.

I would point out, by the way, that next day, on September 13, in the *P.A. Daily Herald* the chief of the Montreal Lake First Nation, Lionel Bird, said he was not consulted on the MOU. The next day Domtar had to clarify their message. On September 15 they said, we're not going to see people back to work next summer as that member had promised, trying to get elected. Then the next day after that, that member, when he was the premier, issues another press release to try to clarify that, no, it's going to be in the summer. And then a few days after that the president of Domtar holds a webcast to say no, it may never open.

Mr. Speaker, that was cruel to the people of Prince Albert. They saw through the charade. This government will work to real opportunity at that facility in Prince Albert.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — The bottom line is, that party was invited to be part of the task force and they never showed up once. Not once, Mr. Speaker. And would the leader of the opposition care to explain to this legislature — in fact to the investment community of North America — how it is that he can go about, how it is he can go about insulting a major investor on this continent, Mr. Speaker, by calling their signatures pulp fiction. Pulp fiction — that's what he calls the signatures of Domtar.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is: he says one thing before an election, he does something quite different after an election. Before the election he was demanding of government a timeline — a timeline for the reopening of the Prince Albert pulp mill. Now we have in this legislature today people — workers and families — who have come all the way from Prince Albert to hear a question to this.

I ask the Premier of the province: what is your timeline for the

reopening of the P.A. mill? What is the timeline? No ifs, ands, or buts. What's your timeline?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we have said on numerous occasions, the Premier has spoken to Domtar representatives, I have spoken to Domtar representatives. The Premier has spoken to representatives of the union. The Premier has spoken to the mayor of Prince Albert. The Premier has spoken to city council. The Premier has spoken to the chamber of commerce. The Premier has spoken to First Nations groups in Saskatchewan as well about it.

The timeline is really quite simple, Mr. Speaker. We are going to do what we possibly can to put a deal in place for the people of Prince Albert. What we're not going to do, Mr. Speaker, is we're not going to risk \$100 million of taxpayers' money on a deal that even the representatives of Domtar said may not ever happen . . . [inaudible] . . . to keep the mill open in Prince Albert. That's the one thing that members opposite may be prepared to put this cruel hoax before the people of Saskatchewan, but the Government of Saskatchewan, the Premier of Saskatchewan, will never do that to the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, what we've just heard from the minister and the Premier is all of this consultation takes place on one Friday after the deal has been ripped up. Eighteen minutes they spent with the working people — 18 minutes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, they say one thing before an election; they do something entirely different after the election. And we're seeing it over and over again.

You know, they talked about wasting money in government. Well I've seen the land speed record today — the land speed record in backtracking. We've forced them off this foolish notion of getting rid of the wheat sheaf and spending millions of dollars. The land speed record in backtracking.

Why don't they just backtrack one more time and do the right thing? Do the right thing. Honour your commitment; honour your promise. Do what you said you would do before the election and let's get the mill reopened.

I'm asking the Premier again. Why don't you sit down with Domtar? Why don't you sit down with the memorandum of understanding that was worked out with the community, the First Nations, the working people, the people of Prince Albert? Sit down with the executives of Domtar. Sure, if you want to put your stamp on it, go ahead. Get a deal. Give us a timeline. Reopen the mill for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you would think, given the track record of the members opposite when it comes to investing on behalf of Saskatchewan people, you would think, given the record of the losses of \$35 million in SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], the losses of 72 million in Navigata — and the list goes on and on and on — you would think, given the record of the members opposite, that they would be running away from a deal like that as fast as they possibly could. But what did they do, Mr. Speaker? What did they do? In the heat of an election campaign, in the eleventh hour of the campaign, Mr. Speaker, they brought forward a deal on the back of a napkin that they dreamed up hoping that the people of this province would buy into this dream that they had to create opportunity in Prince Albert.

Well the good news is, Mr. Speaker, is the people of this province of Saskatchewan looked at the deal, looked at the MOU, and said, no, we're not prepared to be a part of this. And, Mr. Speaker, the Premier of this province has said on a number of occasions leading up to the election campaign, during the election campaign, and after the election campaign, we are not going to put taxpayers' money at risk, and we will not.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Comparisons of Financial Policies

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, last week the government introduced the much touted growth and financial security Act. The Act . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — The Act includes the creation of a Growth and Financial Security Fund — a big name, Mr. Speaker, which might explain why the Minister of Finance kept referring to it in his scrum as a Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

In that scrum, the minister was asked by reporters what was the difference between what he was planning to do with the Growth and Financial Security Fund and what the Fiscal Stabilization Fund had been used for by the previous government. The minister replied, quote, "fundamentally, there is very little difference."

My question is to the Minister of Finance: can he put on the record today if his new fund can be used to balance the budget in a year where expenditures exceed revenue? Yes or no.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Ganterhofer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased after 12 years to have the opportunity on behalf of government to answer these questions. Mr. Speaker, there is

some fundamental differences between what that member, when he was a Finance minister, had in his Fiscal Stabilization Fund, and what we're committing to in the Growth and Financial Security Fund.

Mr. Speaker, there's some fundamental things. And that member if anyone should know that up until January of this year, there was no money, zero balance in real terms in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. It was indeed a phony-baloney fund that was just taking, increasing the debt of the province, and it was a book entry, and it was . . . been perpetrating a falsehood on the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it's really, really important to indicate that there are concrete steps in this new fund, the Growth and Financial Security Fund, that are going to be markedly different than what the government used to do with its phony-baloney fund. And I hope there's a subsequent question so I can fill it in.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Speaking of the last 12 years, Mr. Speaker, it was more than a phony-baloney fund as referred to by members opposite. Here is some of the language, some of the words used by members opposite as they criticized the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. They called it, yes, a phony-baloney fund, voodoo economics, a fancy slush fund. They said it was a fudge-it budget, worn out, old accounting tricks, a false bookkeeping procedure, and a shell game. Pretty harsh criticism, Mr. Speaker. And now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance says there's basically no difference between the NDP [New Democratic Party] plan and their plan.

My question again is for the Minister of Finance: will he admit that the Fiscal Stabilization Fund set up by the NDP government was sound public policy, or will he admit that the new Financial Growth and Security Fund too is a phony-baloney, voodoo, slush fund?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I realize that that member does not quite understand the differences of the fund in this fundamental way: their fund had no money in it; ours is fully funded.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, until January of this current year, 2007, there was no money in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. It was a book entry against long-term debt. It was the equivalent of using your credit card to balance your family's budget. Mr. Speaker, that might be a subtle difference to the member opposite, but it's a fundamental difference to this government to actually talk about a way of balancing the extremes of budget income by using a savings account that has money in it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to point out to the member opposite that there are features that have impacted discipline on government in terms of how surpluses are accounted for, where these monies have to go, how they have to be used to pay down debt, how they can go to infrastructure and things of this nature. Mr. Speaker, this is a fundamental difference, but mostly because there's money in it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, some things haven't changed. Rhetorical excesses haven't changed. Mr. Speaker, that Sask Party member for Cannington, on May 26, 2000, said, quote:

The government likes to call this the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Actually probably a better name for it is the fancy slush fund because the government claims it's going to use this money to maintain its balances in the budget.

And then the Sask Party government brings in essentially the same fund, Mr. Speaker. And what does the member for Cannington have to say in his reply to the Speech from the Throne? Last week, the very day his government introduces the same fund, quote:

Mr. Speaker, it was like their balanced budget statements. They would set up one little fund and say, yes, that fund was balanced, while they're paying debt, Mr. Speaker, to support that program.

To the Minister of Government Services, Mr. Speaker: have his cabinet colleagues bothered to explain to them their new Fiscal Stabilization Fund and will he be referring to it as a fancy slush fund in the future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, that former Treasury Board chairman should have the responsibility to stand up in the House and explain to this House why in the last budget there were no go-forward year forecasts in that budget. How in the world, how in the world . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — How in the world could that member sit and be a part of government that in essence was keeping from the public of Saskatchewan that, at the spending rates that were being incurred, that there was going to be potentially a \$4.1 billion deficit in the next four years? How in the world could that former Finance minister sit and support that kind of actions on behalf of his government?

How in the world can that minister and that member, when he was part of the Department of Finance, how could he have possibly continued to perpetuate the illusion that there was money in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund? I find it ludicrous that he would have the audacity to even get up and ask these

questions.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, this new Act was part of the Saskatchewan Party's platform which stated a Sask Party government would pass the Saskatchewan growth and financial security Act to require that, and I quote, "... the budget [is] to be balanced every year instead of over four years as is now the case."

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance: does the minister believe his new legislation matches the commitment outlined in the Saskatchewan Party platform? Does he believe the government kept their word to the voters of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Thank you. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, clearly in the platform of the Saskatchewan Party in the last election we made commitments of transparency and accountability to the people of this province. This legislation is going to ensure that that happens.

With this legislation we're reducing a lot of the risk that was created by that government when they were in this side of the House. We're mandating balanced budgets. We're ensuring the surpluses go towards reducing deficits and investment in economic growth initiatives. We're tabling four-year financial plans with every budget. And we're making sure that the Government of Saskatchewan doesn't grow any faster than the population and the people of Saskatchewan do. That, Mr. Speaker, is a responsible way to look after the finances of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members, I just want to make one comment. We're all aware of the fact that use of proper names is not appropriate unless coming from a quote. And I understand that earlier this afternoon a quote was being used, which I unfortunately didn't hear, and I apologize for that.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 2 — The Enterprise Saskatchewan Act

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Enterprise and Innovation.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 2, The Enterprise Saskatchewan Act be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Enterprise and Innovation that first reading of Bill No. 2, The Enterprise Saskatchewan Act be now read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 3 — The Potash Development Repeal Act

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 3, The Potash Development Repeal Act be introduced and now read a first time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Energy and Resources that first reading of Bill No. 3, The Potash Development Repeal Act be now read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Hon. members, before orders of the day, I lay before the Assembly, pursuant to section 30 of The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act, a special report of the Provincial Ombudsman.

I also wish to lay on the Table, in accordance with the Board of Internal Economy directive #22, the members' accountability and disclosure statements for the year ended March 31, 2007.

And in accordance with directive # 23, I also table the audited financial statements for the New Democratic caucus and for the Saskatchewan Party caucus for the year ended March 31, 2007.

I wish to table a letter from His Honour dated December 19,

2007, advising of the membership of the Board of Internal Economy.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The Passing of Two Former Officers of the Legislative Assembly

The Speaker: — Members, I wish to advise the Assembly as well of the passing of two former officers of this Assembly.

Kenneth Bradshaw was a senior Clerk at Westminster when he was invited to serve as Clerk of this Assembly for the 1966 legislative session.

Mr. Bradshaw was born September 1, 1922, and spent his early years in Kenya where his father was employed. His studies in history at the University of Cambridge were interrupted by his service with the 2nd Battalion, Royal Ulster Rifles during the Second World War. In 1947 Mr. Bradshaw entered the Department of the Clerk of the House of Commons, eventually serving as Clerk of the House from 1983 to 1987.

Throughout his career, Mr. Bradshaw retained an interest in fostering interparliamentary relationships within the Commonwealth. He was an active participant and leader in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments.

Mr. Bradshaw died on October 31 of this year in London, England at the age of 85.

Derril McLeod, who passed away on December 12, 2007, served as the province's first freedom of information and privacy commissioner and later as the first conflict of interest commissioner.

Mr. McLeod was born on March 3, 1924, at Marcellin, Saskatchewan. He graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1944 and a Bachelor of Law degree in 1946. Mr. McLeod had a distinguished legal career and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1962. Mr. McLeod was an active participant in numerous community organizations. He served in senior positions on the board of governors with both the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina. Several businesses benefit from Mr. McLeod's enterprise, as did many charitable and cultural associations.

I ask all members to join me in conveying the Assembly's condolences to the bereaved families.

I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to say a few words about . . . I'd like to ask for permission to say a few words with respect to Mr. Derril McLeod.

The Speaker: — Leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed.

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, almost 30 years ago I started practising law in Regina, and I met Mr. McLeod at that time when he was one of the senior members of the Regina Bar. He worked at the firm that was then known as Pedersen, Norman, McLeod & Todd, and he was one of the employers who had been practising for a long time in Regina who was very welcoming to new lawyers no matter what decade they started practising in. And as you indicated, he practised in many, many decades here in Regina.

When I was elected in 1995 and became the Minister of Justice, I then had the privilege to work with him as an officer of the legislature. And I just want to say to his wife and to the family that I very much appreciated working with him.

I know that he provided very capable, wise, patient counsel as we all worked through the initial issues of privacy in Saskatchewan. And he served in that role for many years and then eventually passed that on, but continued with the conflict of interest work where he worked with all members of the legislature.

And I just want to say on my behalf, but I think on behalf of all of us here, thank you very much for the service that was provided by this man. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize . . .

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

The Speaker: — The member from Canora has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the members for allowing me this opportunity to introduce a couple of guests that are seated in the west gallery. Two gentlemen have entered the gallery since the time for introduction of guests, and I appreciate the members allowing me to do this.

On behalf of the member from Kelvington-Wadena and on behalf of a member in Regina — because I know one of the gentlemen up there lives in Regina — but I'd like to introduce Edmund Genoway Sr. and Edmund Genoway Jr.

These two gentlemen have long been involved in the affairs of the small community of Rama. The Genoway family is a long-standing name that you will find in many areas around Rama. Edmund Sr. and his family still operate a large dairy farm and serve the needs of many people in the Yorkton area in terms of supplying them with milk. And Edmund Genoway Jr. and I have been seen on the ball fields occasionally, but we

won't go into that. So on behalf of all the members in the House, I want to welcome you to your Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. Eagles, seconded by Mr. Ottenbreit, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Calvert.]

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to enter into the Throne Speech debate, Mr. Speaker, but first off I'd like to congratulate you on your appointment to the Chair. I think, as everybody else has stated so far, that you're well-suited for the job, and you will do an excellent job as Speaker of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take this time to thank the residents of Wood River. It was a little bit different campaign this time around because I didn't know who I had for an opposition for a period of time, and when it came down to the final analysis I still didn't know who I had for an opposition.

I would sure like to thank my campaign managers, Mr. Bud Romansky and Mr. Don Peterson, who were co-campaign managers for me, and all the rest of the committee in Wood River that worked hard in obtaining the results that we did. And I'd just like to talk just a minute about the election in Wood River, Mr. Speaker.

I just received this morning the final summary of the polls from the returning office. And it was close in a couple, but I never lost a poll in the constituency. I didn't quite hit 70 per cent as some of my colleagues have, but I think I'm .041 away from the 70 per cent. So I'm relatively pleased with that. The plurality of the vote was in excess of 4,000, Mr. Speaker, so I'm very, very pleased and satisfied and happy to represent the people of Wood River.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think there's some reasons that the plurality probably ended up the way that it did. When I started looking at the campaign and how the campaign was unfolding on a provincial basis, it was very, very easy to see that there was a campaign of fear and a campaign of hope. Now we know, we know in the past the campaign of fear from the socialist government tended to work. And that's all they campaign on.

I've asked people in my constituency in the 2003 election what the NDP policy was, and the answer is zero. They didn't know. It was fear only. I asked the same question in this campaign. I talked to people, and I'd say, can anybody tell me any part of the NDP policy? And the answer was, well I think the only thing I ever heard out of the NDP was something about

universal drugs that was going to cost so many multi-millions of dollars that it wasn't worthwhile. Other than that, they didn't know anything else about their campaign except fear.

Now it's interesting when you talk about a fear campaign and how it's portrayed and how it comes out. And I'd like to address a couple of those issues because I think a lot of it fits in with the whole socialist policy.

Hidden agenda — they talked about that. That wasn't much of a campaign policy on their part. It was about somebody else. The privatization of Crowns, well they had to go back to that because they figured it worked in 2003, so they had to go back and talk about privatization of Crowns.

Mr. Speaker, there was an air of mendacity throughout their whole campaign, and all you have to do is look at what the actions were in their campaign. Now they even addressed lowering minimum wage. Where did they get that from? They talked about for-profit health care. Where did they come up with that? They just made that up. That's been kind of their whole campaign . . . was just making things up on the fly.

Again privatization of Crowns, they've hit that a few times in their campaign. The scare tactics that they used . . . We even had word that there was phone calls to seniors in senior housing, phone calls before the election, that they would be removed if the NDP didn't get elected. Now where would they come up, where would they come up with that?

[14:30]

And we look at other incidents that happened in the campaign. I think we all are familiar with the Jeff Potts incident in Swift Current. Now if you look at what his wording was, where would they come up with that? Was this a unilateral decision by one Mr. Jeff Potts? Or was he given that from the central campaign? It's hard to say, Mr. Speaker, but they were just not being forthright with the people of the province and trying to use a scare tactic.

Mr. Speaker, when all of this fear is put forward to people, there are some that subscribe to it. And I don't know the individual, but I heard a bit of a story — embellished or not, I don't know — but he was an NDP supporter that subscribed to the theory of the fear campaign. And on November 7 when he went to bed in the evening, he was quite distressed. He was very, very disturbed. But when he woke up in the morning, Mr. Speaker, the furnace was still working, so SaskEnergy wasn't shut down. Gosh, he flicked the light on and right away the room lit up, and SaskPower had not been shut down. He immediately phoned his son and — lo and behold — the phone worked. So he went running outside quickly, and the sky had not fallen, Mr. Speaker. Well just to make sure he drove into town at noon, and the liquor store was open. He is no longer an NDPer, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we also like to talk or I would like to talk about the wolf in sheep's clothing. Where did that come from? Where did it come from? Well there's an indication of the tired, worn out NDP coming up with some fictitious, little gimmick. They figured a wolf in sheep's clothing. Well, Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP tried to pull the wool over the people's eyes

of Saskatchewan, but in fact he got bit. They did not subscribe to that one little bit, Mr. Speaker.

I'd also like to talk about some of the business. We get talking about Domtar . . . I'll touch on that a little bit more, but we hear that the members opposite now start talking about business. Well you just have to look in the *Regina Manifesto*, and you can really understand their position on business, when they want to eradicate capitalism. Well what is business if it isn't capitalism?

So I want to just touch base on a little bit of the business acumen of the members opposite. And we'll look at some of the real business dealings that they've had. And I want to touch on quite a number of these, Mr. Speaker, because I think it's worthwhile for the people of Saskatchewan to know the business acumen of those people on the other side.

SaskTel, some of their great ones: tappedinto.com, a mere loss of 6.7 million; Persona, 9.4 million. Navigata's up to something like \$72 million loss now. Retx.com — heck, some of these people don't even remember the names — but that was just a \$26 million loss. Craig Wireless, \$10 million loss; NST, 16 million; Clickabid, \$1.9 million; Soft Tracks, 2.2 million; Ag Dealer, 8.9 — that's just from SaskTel. These are losses from these business geniuses from the other side of the room.

Now we look at SPUDCO, the infamous SPUDCO. And we could talk for an awful long time on SPUDCO because there was a case where the then-government was not forthright with the people of Saskatchewan. And we could look at the headlines of the papers and see how they weren't being truthful with the people of Saskatchewan. A public-private partnership that was not public-private partnership — it was all taxpayers' money. Well it ended up at about a \$35 million loss.

What went along with that, Mr. Speaker, is Broe Industries. Now what happened to Broe? All of a sudden the Belle Plaine ethanol plant kind of went by the wayside. I don't think it passed the smell test. I think what happened there, they had the same kind of a deal cooked up with Broe that they had with SPUDCO, where, okay we'll give you the money and then you give it back to us for being a partner with us. Well that one slipped the surly bonds I'll tell you, once SPUDCO was highlighted.

Let's go to a couple more: SaskPower Channel Lake, a \$15 million loss; Guyana, \$2 million loss. Now Channel Lake, the loss there was because somebody . . . part of the loss was somebody didn't read the bottom line of a contract. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that that one doesn't pass the smell testing either.

Now we go to SGI: Coachman Insurance, a mere \$16.1 million loss. How about trying to take over the bingo industry of this province? Mega bingo — only the NDP could want to get involved in bingo — \$8 million loss. Pangaea, \$3.5 million loss.

Mr. Speaker, now talk about the Meadow Lake pulp mill. That is an \$800 million loss. If you add those up — just the ones that I've mentioned, Mr. Speaker — we're over \$1 billion in a loss from this government that wants to eradicate capitalism. I didn't think they'd choose this method to eradicate it though.

When you look at, when you look at what Domtar . . . And there's questions in question period about Domtar, and \$100 million is going into Domtar. How much more would have gone into Domtar, gosh, had've they been re-elected?

When I talk about Meadow Lake pulp mill \$800 million loss . . . And the minister of Industry at the time got up in this House and says, yes, but we didn't start it; it was started by the then Devine government. So that absolved them from blame in according to their own mental capacity.

But it kind of, it kind of brought to light to me the . . . A person that buys a racehorse and another person goes and bets on the racehorse at the race. And the horse keeps losing, but the person keeps betting on it. So every time he bets and the horse loses, he blames the person that bought the horse. But he still, still bets on it. That's exactly what the Meadow Lake pulp mill has done. These people kept betting on it and putting more and more taxpayers' dollars into the Meadow Lake venture.

That's some of the business ones, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to talk about another one that really didn't pass the smell test . . . is third party leasing. Now we know that the third party leasing has happened. And now just prior to the election, I think, they've eliminated it; they got out of the third party leasing. And I think one of the reasons is it didn't pass the smell test.

And that's, that's kind of a deal where if money could be borrowed from a growth fund and then a company that buys something — let's say, an airplane or some vehicles — and then leases that back to SPM [Saskatchewan Property Management] who then in turn leases it back to other government agencies, there's something just a little fishy there.

Anyway I think the proof in the pudding is that they made sure that was scrapped before the election. And I think that's something that's going to have to be looked into.

Mr. Speaker, after the Throne Speech — by the way, which was an excellent Throne Speech — when the Leader of the NDP made a comment on the Throne Speech to the media, and what was reported in the paper was the Leader of the Opposition "... said the throne speech has no clear plans to deal with issues such as the crisis in the livestock industry . . ."

Well, Mr. Speaker, how can that group over there have the audacity to talk about the livestock industry or anything in rural Saskatchewan? They gutted programs in rural Saskatchewan. They've devastated the crop insurance. People don't even get into crop insurance now because of what those men and women on the other side now have done. Gosh there's a whole list. There's a whole list of their attacks on rural Saskatchewan. You know closing rural service centres is one, farm fuel rebates . . . There's just a whole list of items that they have attacked on rural Saskatchewan. But when it comes to the livestock industry, Mr. Speaker, this is one that I've talked about since I was elected.

Every year since I was elected, I talked about it. And I said how can, how can we justify shipping 750,000 head of cattle from Saskatchewan to Alberta every year to be fed? Along with it, we ship the grain. And along with that, we ship our young men and women to feed Saskatchewan grain to Saskatchewan cattle.

And I'd look across to the other side, and I'd say, does anybody over there agree with this? And you would see some people that would actually put their heads down. Did they do anything, anything at all to help cure that problem while they're in government for 16 years? And the answer is absolutely not — nothing at all to help the livestock industry.

Now here's, here's just another one — again when I say, having the audacity to speak about rural Saskatchewan. We have, we have a drought situation in the Southwest for four consecutive years. Drought and gophers been a huge, huge problem. You know what the minister then, the minister of Agriculture got up and said we don't have any money for it. Oh we got \$100 million to put into skating rinks. We've got \$100 million to put into Domtar on an MOU, but we don't have any money for the drought-stricken people of southwestern Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that is shameful. That is absolutely shameful.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I think my time is running out, so what I would like to, what I'd like to do . . . Well I got about another hour's worth here. What I'd like to do is just talk about the forward thinking that this government has in the Throne Speech — the balanced budget legislation we've heard about, tuition rebates, Enterprise Saskatchewan.

Again the fear coming from the other side about Enterprise Saskatchewan . . . it's quite interesting because again we look at Enterprise Saskatchewan as taking the politics out of, out of some of the business dealings. And in fact the minister, the minister of Industry and Trade prior to the election, he had stated on our leader's economic paper that he didn't like the economic paper because it took too much out of the hands of government. Well Enterprise Saskatchewan is designed to get politics more removed from business in this province. But it's interesting to note for members over there that haven't studied the *Regina Manifesto*, that even in theirs they talk about ". . . competent managements freed from day to day political interference." That's even in their own manifesto, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway the outstanding things within the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, it goes on and on, and we've heard from other members on this side of the House that very much agree with the Throne Speech. So, Mr. Speaker, I will definitely be in support of the Throne Speech. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the debate in reply to the Throne Speech. I want to begin following the example of many members, including the Minister of Health, and take time to thank the people who worked in the election, who supported me in the election, as a matter of fact the people who supported any candidate in the democratic process.

As the minister pointed out, it's surprising at the end of the day how many people it takes to run a successful campaign over 28 days, how many people that is, how many different individuals that is at the end of the day. And I can't even begin to try to thank them here. I have thanked them in various ways since the

campaign.

But I want to make particular note of my family. As some members have noted, spouses and children are a particular support to those in campaigns, and that's true in my case as well. My wife, Cheryl, took time from what is a very busy personal schedule — she's a very busy person — to campaign for me. And I want to acknowledge and thank her for that. And my children as well, including my son, Nathan, who was away on other duty until about the day before the campaign. And I know how hard he would have worked in this campaign, as he did in 2003, if he had been able to be there, but he was not. But I still want to acknowledge his enthusiasm even though he had to be absent for much of the campaign.

All elections for me, Mr. Speaker — whatever the result when the ballots are counted — are a reason to celebrate. It is a rare, still rare achievement of humanity that all adults in a society, in a community, despite income, class, background, get up one morning and in a very casual way go to a school or some other community building and cast a vote for who's going to govern them without even, in most cases, considering the importance of that, the value of that, and the rarity of it, Mr. Speaker. And some elections are more celebratory than others, but all elections, I think, are reasons for celebration because they celebrate the freedom that we almost breathe spiritually, such that we are not aware of it unless we are ever deprived of it. And fortunately in this country that is not our experience.

[14:45]

I was again bemused, as I was at the election of the previous Speaker, Mr. Speaker, at the ceremony involved in that election. I want to congratulate you on that election. It seemed to me that when we were looking at the makeup of the legislature that there were perhaps two members from the government's side of the House who could fill that role: one, the member from Cypress Hills who has gone into cabinet, and you were clearly the other one. And people who know you well and have known you well for a long time obviously agree with that and have spoken to that. And I want to join with them in that congratulations.

But I was bemused, as I always am, by the feigned struggle to take you to your chair, which we all smile and laugh at, but is again a celebration. And it's a celebration of the fact that the democracy that we take so casually, so for granted, when we get up on that morning on election day and walk to a school and cast a ballot for those who will govern us, that was not an easily won, that was not a given-to-us democracy. That was a hard won struggle to have that, and we are beneficiaries of that struggle. It was not always a pleasant duty to represent a legislature or a parliament, and that's where that ritual comes from, and we should acknowledge that.

We should remember that we owe a debt to those who fought those struggles, and we should be eternally vigilant of the freedoms and those rights. They are still far too rare in this world that we would have a free vote like that. And the losers, or some of them at least, would sit and be reimbursed to be Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and to criticize and attack, in the appropriate way, the government of the day — a very rare and precious thing indeed.

Now all electoral systems are imperfect. They all try to achieve the ideal of democracy. None of them do that perfectly. Ours has often been said to exclude small parties, as small parties have been excluded from this legislature. We have a two-party legislature. But other systems can be said to give too much power to those small parties, disproportionate amount of power to those parties. They all have their quirks.

And I guess a quirk of our system and this last election is that I am here with less than 36 per cent of the popular vote in Saskatoon Meewasin. I think, Mr. Speaker, you have about twice of that or pretty close to it. My seatmate has over 50 per cent of the popular vote bringing him here. I can imagine how humbling that is. I have to imagine it, Mr. Speaker, because I haven't had the experience. I've had the experience of now arriving here with 35.5 per cent.

I believe over 15 candidates in the last election received a greater proportion of the popular vote but did not win a seat in this legislature. And the reason of course that I did is because of the unique circumstances of the vote in Saskatoon Meewasin, which included the Liberal leader for the province of the Saskatchewan, David Karwacki.

Many members have in their reply to the Throne Speech congratulated new members on their arrival here, congratulated members on their re-election, and I want to do that of course. I want to congratulate everyone on their election and welcome back members that I served with the last term.

But I think it might fall to me to acknowledge the contribution of someone who was not elected, and that is Mr. Karwacki. There have been some rumours and even some mention in the press that David Karwacki may be retiring from provincial politics in some time less than the 10 years that he originally thought he might be involved. And even if that is not the case I think something should be said, and perhaps best by me, as to the contribution that he has made to date.

His job has been a difficult job. All members know how difficult public life can be, how casual and careless some of the criticism and scrutiny can seem, and how lonely — even with all the support — the job can sometimes seem. I think the leaders of the political parties — the Leader of the Opposition, the Premier — are probably most aware that although much of our decision making is collective, bearing the brunt for some of those decisions is very individual and falls upon them. In Mr. Karwacki's case I think perhaps a little more lonely and far less rewarding than the difficult job has been for some of us.

He would have brought . . . He did bring to two provincial campaigns, and certainly the last one, experience, intelligence, and character. And he would have brought those to the legislature. I know that many people in Saskatoon Meewasin found the choice very difficult for them.

I know Mr. Karwacki was told the same thing that I was on the doorstep — that people were very fond of him, they admired him, but they didn't feel that they could vote for him in the circumstances of this election and the one before that. It was a very hard choice which I think is flattering to both Mr. Karwacki and perhaps myself.

Members have boasted — I think most recently the member from Wood River — as to the margins, great margins of their victory — how many votes they garnered and how many votes more that was than the person who they defeated. I can't do that, clearly, Mr. Speaker. I can say this: that I am very honoured by the choice that the people of Saskatoon Meewasin had to make and the choice that they did make, given the choice that they had to make.

Now, Mr. Speaker, someone who has received less than 40 per cent of the vote — I think that's less than 36 per cent of the vote — has a question as to how they might best represent all the people of Saskatoon Meewasin, whether they voted or not. And certainly all those people that, you know, 64 per cent . . . well the exact number doesn't really bear thinking about, Mr. Speaker, but that large number of people who voted for somebody else. And the people who have been much in my mind, Mr. Speaker, the last while since the election day, were perhaps oh a little less than 10 per cent of the electorate in my constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin, a little under 800 votes. And these are for the most part the difference between what the highest number that the Saskatchewan Party has ever received in the riding of Saskatoon Meewasin before and what they received election night 2007 — about 800 votes. And these are people who for the most part would have never voted for the government party before, would never have voted for the Saskatchewan Party before. Some of them probably hadn't voted before, because the turnout was a little up in Saskatoon Meewasin.

And how are these people different than the people who voted for me, the people who voted for Mr. Karwacki, or the people who voted for the Saskatchewan Party in previous elections and kept on doing it?

Well I think the citizens of Saskatoon Meewasin are for the most part alike in their concerns about public issues. Whether they vote as Saskatchewan Party or Liberal or New Democrat, I think they want public universal health care to be defended and strengthened if possible. I think they hold education in high esteem. I think they want more opportunities for young people. I think they want financial responsibility and accountability from the government and they are like this in many respects across those party lines.

But the people who voted for the Saskatchewan Party this time, for the first time, are a little different. Most of the people who vote in Saskatoon Meewasin don't necessarily believe — as a matter of fact many of the people in Saskatoon Meewasin did not believe — that the Saskatchewan Party would follow through on the commitments they made in the 2007 election. That's not their expectation and they didn't support that party. They didn't support now the Government of Saskatchewan.

But the expectation of those people who for the first time voted for the Saskatchewan Party — they may have voted for a different party in the past — the expectation of those people is that the Saskatchewan Party would follow through on those commitments. That may prove to be naive, Mr. Speaker, but that's their expectation.

And if I strive to represent those people, Mr. Speaker, the people who have an expectation of the government — who

believed the government when the government said they were going to add 800 nurses, who believed the Saskatchewan Party when they said they're going to add 100 doctors, who believed the Saskatchewan Party when they said that they were going to account for the finances of the province in a significantly different way — if I represent those people and their expectations and the trust they put in the members opposite, then I can truly represent I think all the members of Saskatoon Meewasin, whether or not they had that trust in the Saskatchewan Party government, whether or not they believed that the Saskatchewan Party would follow through on their commitments, Mr. Speaker.

So it is in a sense by representing the supporters of the members opposite, I think, that I can best represent all of my constituents. Because a government was elected and a government was elected to follow through on certain commitments. I suggest the government member was elected in Prince Albert Carlton to ensure that the mill opened, not the reverse, and so on, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite made a series of commitments and an opposition was elected as well, Mr. Speaker. And this opposition was elected to hold them to account for their commitments, for the expectations they raised, for the trust that they had placed in them as members of the Legislative Assembly. And that's what I will do, Mr. Speaker, and that's what we will do on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. We will want to know where are the 800 nurses. Where are the 100 doctors? Where is the balanced budget every year, Mr. Speaker? Where are these things? Where is the P.A. pulp mill, Mr. Speaker?

The members opposite are entertained or appear to be entertained by quotations from the program — from their program — made by members on this side of the House. I note that members opposite, members of the government, don't quote their program very much. They don't quote their election platform very much. And as they hide and retreat and run away from their own platform, they can expect that the members on this side of the House will remember what's in that program, remember what's in that platform, and will stand up for the people who voted for them in expectation that they meant what they said, Mr. Speaker.

So I think you'll hear a lot of quotations from the Saskatchewan Party platform on this side of the legislature, Mr. Speaker. I note you'll probably hear more accurate quotations from the Sask Party election platform from this side of the legislature than you heard in the Throne Speech. And the Throne Speech already represents a retreat, a withdrawal, a running away from the election program of the Saskatchewan Party. It already displays that in fact they did have a different agenda. And that, Mr. Speaker, is why I will not be supporting the motion and I will be supporting the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to

congratulate you on your election as Speaker. While I'm a rookie in this Assembly, I've been a student of politics for many years and I'm well aware of your history and your experience, and I know you'll serve this legislature well.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Reiter: — I have several issues I'd like to talk to you about today. I want to tell you a little bit about my constituency, Rosetown-Elrose, and the good people in the communities that it consists of. I want to talk about the Throne Speech and some of the items in it that are near and dear to my heart. And finally, I have a number of people that I'd like to publicly thank once again.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin I'd just like to tell you what an honour and a privilege it is for me to be addressing the Assembly today. Indeed for me it's a culmination of a lifelong dream. Now I know what you're thinking, Mr. Speaker, and I know what the members opposite are thinking. In fact I know what the members on this side of the House are thinking as well. What on earth, what possible kind of dream could consist of sitting this close to the member from Carrot River Valley?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Reiter: — That's more of a nightmare, really. But no, Mr. Speaker, in spite of having to sit this close to the member from Carrot River Valley, this is indeed a dream come true for me.

Now on to my home constituency. Rosetown-Elrose has an economy based mostly in agriculture, both grain and livestock. We also have some oil and gas development as well as some other exciting economic development, and we are looking forward to even more development and diversification in the future.

[15:00]

Geographically we are a very large constituency. The northwest corner consists of the communities of Plenty and Dodsland. Dodsland is just a few miles away from my original home area of Tramping Lake and I've curled there many times over the years.

At the opposite corner are the communities . . . in the southeast are the communities of Lucky Lake and Beechy. Beechy is home to Elwin Hermanson, the former leader of the Saskatchewan Party, and also of a former Speaker of this House, Mr. Herb Swan.

Along the west side of the constituency is the town of Eston, home of West Central Road & Rail.

Centrally located in the constituency is the town of Elrose. South of there is the town of Kyle, and Kyle is very near to Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park which is home to one of the most beautiful 18-hole golf courses in the province.

Jumping up to the northern end of the constituency is the town of Harris. Harris is home to a theatre group, a volunteer theatre group which has become famous for its production of the musical *The Pull of the Land*. This volunteer group has

produced a very professional production and now a sequel, and has raised many dollars for its local community organizations.

Forty miles west of there is the community of Fiske. Fiske is an organized hamlet in the RM [rural municipality] of Pleasant Valley and is well-known for curling. Fiske is the home to the only single-sheet artificial ice curling club in the country.

Our two largest towns are Outlook and Rosetown. Outlook is home to Sky Trail, the longest pedestrian bridge in Canada. It also has the largest irrigation project in the province. Rosetown is the largest town in the constituency and is my home. I will forever appreciate all the support I have received from friends and family in that area.

We have many other friendly, active communities and I look forward to informing members of this Assembly about every part of our constituency in the upcoming months and years.

I can't leave this topic without mentioning two other municipalities in the constituency — those are the rural municipalities of Marriott and Pleasant Valley. I've been administrator for the RM of Marriott for over 25 years now and I would like to publicly thank . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I did. I started when I was about 12 years old. I'd like to publicly thank Reeve Colin Ahrens and councillors, Don Rawson, Les Wardrop, Mike Longworth, Orville Minish, Glenn McNally, and Perry Russell for all their help and all their support over the years, and most recently in the campaign.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Reiter: — I've also been administrator for the RM of Pleasant Valley for the past 12 years. And I would also like to thank Reeve Jerry Spence and councillors, Dave Walker, Byron Siemens, Ken Cross, Dave Lamarsch, Blake Jeffries, and Gord Houston for all their support as well. I would also like to thank the ratepayers of both those municipalities for again all the help and support over the years and most recently the tremendous support I received during the recent election campaign.

On to the 2007 Speech from the Throne — growth and opportunity, security and compassion, keeping your word. The Speech from the Throne lays out an exciting future for our province. A number of the items especially excite me. Our youth retention plan is very, very important. We have lost far too many of our young people to other provinces over the years. Now we have a plan to reverse that trend.

The commitment to negotiate a new revenue-sharing agreement with municipalities is a very important initiative. Including a percentage of the province's own-source revenue will be welcome news. I know from personal experience that many municipalities and municipal associations will welcome this; they've been asking for this for years.

One of the issues that I heard repeatedly on the doorstep during the campaign was health care. The Speech from the Throne talks about hiring more nurses. It also refers to creating more training seats and more residency positions. This is key to creating a better health system.

One of the commitments mentioned in the Speech from the

Throne is the initiative dealing with education tax on property. In my life as a rural municipal administrator I've dealt with that issue every day for many, many years. It's not an easy problem to solve. I don't believe there is a magic solution, no silver bullet, but it's a problem that needs to be solved and this government's committed to solving that problem.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Reiter: — I was thrilled to be appointed as Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Education, with specific responsibility for the property tax initiative. I've lived with this problem for years and I'm very excited at having an opportunity to be part of the solution. Excuse my throat, Mr. Speaker; I tried to go to the doctor but there was a waiting list.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to take a moment now to acknowledge a special person, my uncle, Arnold Schultz, from Unity. He's been having some health problems lately but I know he's watching today from home. And he's taken a huge interest in all the political activity as of late, and I want to wish him well and let him know he's in my thoughts.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I once again need to thank my campaign team from the November 7 election. I'm still amazed at the sheer number of people who volunteered to help out. Some people donated a few hours and some people worked on it virtually full time. I've already thanked most of them personally, and the ones I haven't got to I will very soon. I'm hesitant to start naming names as I know I'll forget some people, so suffice to say just thank you once again to each and every one of them for helping me.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I wish to acknowledge my family: my wife, Bonnie, for her support; my sister, Laura, and her husband, Eldon, from Wilkie, who were here for the swearing-in ceremony recently; as was my brother, Ken, from Lloydminster. Unfortunately my sister-in-law, Debbie, and my nephews, Jeremy and Justin, were unable to attend due to bad road conditions. Also, I was thrilled to have my parents, Ed and Elizabeth Reiter from Unity, here in attendance at the swearing-in ceremony as well. By example, my parents instilled in me the importance of doing the right thing and of having a good work ethic. I owe them everything and I know they're watching today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, hope beats fear. I will be voting against the amendment and I will be very proud to vote for the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker — I guess, in this case, Mr. Deputy Speaker — I congratulate you on your election and I congratulate the Speaker on his election to the Chair. Being a newbie, I didn't realize just exactly what all was involved with

the Speaker and I'm amazed, totally amazed, that you would take these jobs on. It is a tough job to do. I realize that now, and I congratulate you and commend you.

And I have a little bit of a story about the first Speaker's chair. Actually the first Speaker's chair was . . . The first Speaker was Thomas MacNutt and his chair was actually in Arborfield, the place where I was born in. His chair was in Arborfield at the residence of a Mr. T. R. MacNutt, who was a person who ran for the constituency of Nipawin in 1953 and was elected. He was a grocer in town. That chair is now in Saltcoats. Now at that time you could keep the chair and, Mr. Speaker, I'm telling you it's good thing they changed the rule because I wouldn't want to be the guy packing the chair out when your term is finally done.

Mr. Speaker, even though I am a newbie this is not my first time in the House. I received my Queen's Scout here in 1968. It was the last year of the Queen's Scout and actually we came down and we got our Queen's Scout given to us here by the Governor General — I believe it was Georges Vanier at that time. Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to be elected an MLA and, you know, in our orientation they said there was only 600-and-some MLAs I believe it is in all of the time the government has sat. And it's a real privilege to be one of those 600-and-some-odd people. It really is.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bradshaw: — And I congratulate all members — all members on both sides, both the returning members and the new members — for letting their name stand. Because it is a challenge. It is a challenge, Mr. Speaker, to come here and you want to do something for your constituency and it's a real challenge. And I'll tell you a lot of the guys say, well why run for politics? I had a very good friend of mine by the name of Morgan Cummings who now lives in Abbotsford, BC [British Columbia] — has for years, one of our exports — and Morgan Cummings gave me probably one of the best compliments I had. He said to me — this was while things were going on — he said to me, Mr. Speaker, he said, you know, Fred, he said, look at it this way: win or lose, the rest of us sit around the coffee shop and talk about it. He said, at least you're going to go out there and you're going to try and do something along with all the rest of the members of this place. This is great.

I also want to talk a little bit about our campaign, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank Leigh Spencer, the NDP candidate who ran in our constituency, for running a very clean campaign. Actually we had a little bit of fun and I know it was great to be running against somebody like him. But you want to talk about a team effort; we had co-campaign chairpeople — and I'm not going to bring up all the names of all the people that helped because there were so many of them, just so many of them; our executive, everybody — but a special thank you to our co-campaign managers, Murray Coulter and Shelly Meyer, who made sure, made sure that I went everywhere they told me to go and they rode with me every day. And Murray is a farmer, and he only missed two days on the campaign trail. Out of the 28 days, Murray only missed two days for combining. Other than that he was with me all the time. It took a great commitment from them.

Since the Saskatchewan Party is more like family, I want to thank the member from Kelvington-Wadena who came up and helped us knock doors in Tisdale and . . . three times as a matter of fact. In the end with the great effort of our campaign team working hard at all of this, we ended up getting 67 per cent of the vote, 67 per cent of the vote in Carrot River Valley which is . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bradshaw: — I'd like to talk a little bit about our constituency, since I'm new here, and some of the places within our constituency we have and some of the things that our constituency is known for. We have a vibrant constituency with a lot of innovations I guess I would say.

We have Nipawin. Nipawin is well-known across North America and perhaps the world for some of the best fishing in the world. When people sit back . . . And they go fishing at Nipawin. They go fishing in Tobin Lake. And when they say they got a fish that big, you can just about believe them. And now everybody said, all fishermen are liars, Mr. Speaker, but . . . and I know I'm not, but I'm not quite so sure about you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bradshaw: — We also have the town of Ridgedale. In Tisdale we have ENSASK, a new ethanol plant which is starting, and a brand new venture that started out at the Tisdale dehy area, and I believe that this is going to move ahead on the ethanol plant.

We have Northern Steel. Northern Steel is a company that got a bunch of Ukrainians to come in and do welding. And I met some of them as we were out door knocking and very interesting people and very hard workers. And that's really, you know, that's really helping out our constituency.

We have the town of Crooked River, Peesane, Mistatim. Of course, Prairie River — everybody knows that Prairie River is famous for Bob Poley. We have Hudson Bay, who is more of a lumber town. It's got a strand board plant there. And unfortunately their plywood mill is closed down right now, and hopefully, hopefully we can get something going there. It also has a rail to the North.

Now Churchill has been one of my subjects, and for northeast Saskatchewan I think it would be a boon if Churchill was opened up more. They are doing some experiments now on backhauls of fertilizer out of Russia. And Hudson Bay could be the rail link to the North, and we could actually supply fertilizer — as far as I can see — to all of basically Saskatchewan and the Midwest US [United States] if we could get two-way traffic working there. It's something I would like to work on.

[15:15]

We have the First Nations communities of Shoal Lake and Red Earth, and then we have Carrot River, which also has a saw mill but at the present time is shut down. I hope we can get it going. And we have obviously, in Carrot River . . . Carrot River is very famous for its carrots. It wasn't just named Carrot River by fluke because that story I was telling you about the fish being

that big, well you know how big we can get the carrots.

We have Pasquia Park there, one of the nicest parks, small parks. It's a regional park in the constituency. It boasts a nine-hole golf course. It has a large swimming pool, a great campground, and that swimming pool is only a year old, so things are going good there.

We have Premier Peat, who is a net exporter of peat moss. They're also starting about, talking another bog up over in Hudson Bay. Premier Peat is a Quebec company that has a plant in Carrot River and Olds, Alberta.

In Arborfield, Arborfield we have CanPro, which is — as I talked about in my member statement last week — it's a dehy plant but it also is fractionating canola meal to use for fish food, and this is another initiative. Like I said, our whole constituency is full of great initiatives and people working hard to make things go.

The other thing Arborfield has — as arbor and the field part of it stands — is trees. Now I have to tell you, some people, some people in the South don't know exactly what trees are, Mr. Speaker.

Now we had a member from our side of the House from Swift Current, came up there and he was wondering what these great big green things were that provided shade, etc. We were having a, we were having a leader's dinner up there. So what happened is we gave him a picture of trees, so he could take it home, and study it on the wall, and maybe do some reading up in the encyclopedia and find out what these big green things actually are.

We have the community of Aylsham. Now Aylsham is well known as to having some of the best farm land in all of Saskatchewan, and when you talk to the farmers over there they actually brag a lot. And I asked one of the farmers one day, I said, is there anything that you guys actually can't grow? Yes, they said, pumpkins. And I said, well how come you can grow everything else but you can't grow pumpkins? And they said, well they grow so fast, the vines grow so fast, what they do is they wear the pumpkins out as they're dragging them around.

It's a great area. We have progressive farmers. We have started using no-till long before anybody ever thought about it. We've been no-tilling up there for approximately 20 years, and continuous cropping. It's a great community, a vibrant community, and I am very proud to represent it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bradshaw: — As I said, Mr. Speaker, I was born in Arborfield. I was born in Arborfield and I was raised in Carrot River. We moved to Carrot River, my family moved to Carrot River in 1960, and I married a local girl there. We have had three children: Lisa, who is deceased; my oldest, unfortunately, had cerebral palsy and passed away a number of years ago. Morgan, my son, who is going to the U of R [University of Regina] here, majored in political science and is just finishing off his economics degree. His last test is tomorrow. And my daughter Gina, who is in her first year of education there, and since I am going to get a condo in town, is going to live with

me. That ought to be something a little different.

Now I have farmed basically all my life and in the mid-'80s I decided to take up crop spraying as farming diversification. By 1998, unfortunately, the spraying business got larger than I had envisioned, and so consequently I rented out the farm and just concentrated on the spraying. And talking about that, that same member from Swift Current happened to be up visiting in our area one day. I decided to fly him around the countryside and let him take a look and see what our constituency was like. And he insisted on being in control of everything, and he wanted to fly the airplane, Mr. Speaker. Well it was a good thing I was there or we would not have the leader from Swift Current now. Flying is not his forte, unfortunately.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have the experience to be an MLA. I sat on the town council of Carrot River, the Carrot River Fire Department, sat on the Pasquia Park board, the Arborfield Dehy board. I've been a Boy Scout leader. Believe it or not, I sing in the choir in the United Church — sometimes they're a little disappointed about that however — and numerous other local things. Provincially I'm past president of the Saskatchewan Aerial Applicators. Federally I'm past director of the Canadian Aerial Applicators Association. And I'm a founding member of the Northeast Early Childhood Intervention Program.

I have a good business there, Mr. Speaker, so why at this time in my life would I go into politics and why go in with the Saskatchewan Party? Well I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, we have a problem. We have a major export or have had a major export within this province for years. And it's not wheat and it's not potash. It's not lumber. It's not uranium. Mr. Speaker, it's our children.

When I look around my community, when I look around our community I see so many kids who have left, who have left to go to other provinces because they just couldn't have the jobs — what we need to provide — the meaningful jobs within Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that is why I wanted to go with the Saskatchewan Party. I believe that the Saskatchewan Party is a party that can make a difference in this province. It's going to take our children and it'll train them and retain them, Mr. Speaker.

We've had too many years of socialism and that has not done our province well. The difference between the Saskatchewan Party, the Saskatchewan Party and the NDP is — and I've told this to lots of people — when you look around at the Saskatchewan Party members, the vast majority of them are entrepreneurs. We have the dreams and we have the visions to move this province forward.

Mr. Speaker, this why I wanted to be with the Saskatchewan Party. I want to try and help. I want to try and help and therefore I support the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. I do not support the amendment. Remember . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bradshaw: — Remember, Mr. Speaker, hope beats fear. And as far as myself personally, what I'm going to do is I'm going to, like I said I was old Queen Scout, I'm going to remember my Scout promise. I still remember it, and it goes

like this: on my honour I promise to do my best to love and serve God, my queen, my country, and to live by the scout law. Mr. Speaker, that's what I plan to do. I promise to do my best.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Ms. Beatty: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Good afternoon.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

First of all I want to greet all my constituents in the Cumberland constituency, and regardless of what the member from Carrot River has said, we do have real trees and real big fish in my constituency. I also want to acknowledge the elders [Cree], family, and friends, especially to everyone in my community of Deschambault Lake. [Cree] I am honoured by their support. [Cree]

I also want to thank my parents, Oscar and Jean Beatty, [Cree] for giving our family strong cultural and spiritual values to live by. I want to pay special tribute to my greatest role model, my father, who is 83 years old, and as many know, he is not very well today. Our family is blessed that he is still with us today, especially during this Christmas season. Like so many elders, his life and legacy truly reflects what he has taught us — to always put [Cree] first, our creator, and to work for the benefit of all. He is not only a pillar of strength for our family but for our community.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

And I want to extend my condolences to the many families who have lost their loved ones, their pillars of strength. Sadly we are losing elders every day. I extend my sympathies to the family of the late Senator Myles Venne of Lac La Ronge, a great First Nations leader who believed in education and economic development as the answer for his people. Today we are seeing the results of his vision with the many business ventures the La Ronge Indian Band is involved in today.

I also thank my huge family, many nieces and nephews who keep me grounded, reminding me not to lose my sense of fun. I thank many good friends. Truly we are never alone in our journey of life nor do we ever achieve anything on our own.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to congratulate everyone on their election to the Saskatchewan legislature and congratulations to you too, sir, on your new role as Deputy Speaker.

I also want to thank the former premier for giving me the opportunity to serve in his cabinet. He is truly a man of honour and integrity. I appreciate what he did for the North, his determination to ensure that northerners too benefited from our economic boom, such as investing in education and in northern roads and, for the first time, on reserves as well.

I had a lot to learn and a lot to do when I first got elected. I so appreciated the support I received from the ministerial caucus and constituency staff and the civil service, of course. I thank

them for their professionalism and hard work. There were several anxious moments, especially when it came to protocol and royal visits. Mr. Deputy Speaker, only in Saskatchewan could you see a northern Cree woman, who is more comfortable in the bush, being asked to be part of the royal visit during our centennial. But it was truly an honour and a privilege and I am thankful for that opportunity.

I also want to acknowledge Myron Kowalsky, the former MLA of P.A. Carlton, and to Judge David Arnot, the former Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan, for fulfilling my wish to see First Nations recognized in the chambers for their place in history.

The beaded moosehide runner which sits on the Clerk's table was made by Florence Highway, formerly of Pelican Narrows. This beautiful artwork depicts treaties forever which state as long as the sun shines, the waters flow, and the grass grows. It was presented to the Assembly in 2006 by Alphonse Bird, the former chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

Mr. Speaker, let this be a reminder to all of us in this House that we are all part of treaty, as Judge Arnot often said, which allowed for a peaceful settlement of this province. The treaties allowed the newcomers to some of the best farm land anywhere in the province.

But it's going to take more than learning about the treaties to correct the wrongs of the past. But it is a good start and I commend the government for continuing on with treaty education in the schools. There is no question the First Nations have lived up to their end of the bargain. Unfortunately as governments, as people, we have not done so well. We have not done enough to fulfill the treaty commitments. We have been slow to move forward. I believe this is Saskatchewan's and Canada's black mark. Because in this day and age and with all the resources that we have, First Nations people should not be living under such poverty and Third World conditions.

[15:30]

I do acknowledge the work done by past governments and First Nations leaders, especially the Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement signed a few years ago. This allowed many First Nations — including my own, the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation — to get their land back, which was theirs in the first place. There is also many great success stories of the First Nations themselves, forging ahead despite the many obstacles they face. There is no question progress is being made.

But sadly, Mr. Speaker, we also see today the stark reality of the negative impacts because the treaties have been ignored — cultural, spiritual, social and economic upheaval of a once-proud people who were free, healthy, self-sufficient and self-governing.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard elders talk about how they had to get passes from an Indian agent to leave the reserve; how their spiritual practices were banned; how they used to sit in hallways of government buildings not so long ago, hoping for a chance to speak to a bureaucrat, never mind a cabinet minister.

Mr. Speaker, I have lived through some of the culture's

suppression myself, when I attended the mission school in Timber Bay, where I just about lost my Cree language because I was not allowed to speak for 10 months out of the year. But as the MLA from the Athabasca constituency so eloquently said last week, we all have our challenges.

And we as a province also have another huge problem. It's called racism. This is based on a survey done by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner a few years ago, and it is something that many experience every day as well.

Earlier the member from Saskatoon Northwest spoke about how we as a province lead many other negative statistics when it comes to Aboriginal people. There is a reason why. It is not by choice.

Mr. Speaker, any nation faced with the same suppression and injustices that Aboriginal people have to live with in this country found themselves with the same consequences. Professor Eric Howe wrote about this in a public policy paper last year. When Eastern European settlers first arrived here during the early 1900s they had a few challenges. This population was considered "... racially inferior: 'poor, illiterate, diseased, morally lax, politically corrupt, and religiously deficient,'" and the list goes on. Today the descendants of these immigrants are the movers and shakers in Saskatchewan — as leaders, as entrepreneurs, as professionals, even government members and premiers. It took political will to help these new immigrants, Mr. Speaker, and we can do it again.

We all know that by 2045 a third of this province will be of Aboriginal ancestry. Treaties cannot be ignored just because they're old. First Nations want practical solutions and they will do their part to ensure that their people have access to jobs and economic opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to talk a little bit about the Cumberland constituency. As the MLA for the past four years I have met many wonderful people, dynamic men and women both young and old who are doing great things for their communities. They care about what happens to the North, to the land, to the water, to the trees, to the environment. Most of all they care about what happens to their children and their grandchildren.

I look at Sandy Bay, a community that has had a difficult year, but what I see is a young leadership dealing with issues head-on with a strength and determination and wisdom beyond their years. Chief Tammy Cook-Searson of the La Ronge Indian Band combining motherhood and a career and still having time to run marathons.

I am privileged to know Chief Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth of the Hatchet Lake First Nation, who has overcome great odds to reach many milestones as an academic and now is a leader for her community. I have met many elders and young people working together to help those who have lost hope.

I have seen communities like the Montreal Lake Cree Nation making great strides to become more economically independent while providing good homes and good jobs for their people. I have seen innovative partnerships in health, education, and

businesses that are the envy of the country. I see partnerships with the private sector, with municipalities and industry, and First Nations and Métis communities.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to pay tribute to the trappers and the fishers and the wild rice growers — many of them elders — strong individuals, hard-working, living off the land. They are the heart and foundation of our beautiful northland.

Mr. Speaker, like all members I've had the chance to travel and talk to my constituents during the election campaign, and perhaps I've put on a few more miles than most members because my constituency is so huge. There were many issues raised. The need for better roads, especially the road to the Far North and to Wollaston Lake where people depend on the ice road every winter to get their basic supplies. The critical need for better housing, protection for our lakes and the land, support for trappers and fishers, the fish processing plant, the renewal of the federal-provincial Northern Development Agreement, keeping our forestry sector alive, access to good education and skills training, infrastructure needs like the Churchill Community School in La Ronge, access to cell service and the high-speed Internet, sports and culture facilities for a rapidly growing young population. Basic needs often taken for granted in the South, Mr. Speaker.

There's also concern the STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] bus service will be terminated. This service is critical to the North because for many patients, elders, and students, this is their only mode of transportation. Medical supplies are also shipped north using this service.

First Nations leaders state the duty to consult must be adhered to when it comes to northern development. Tribal councils like the PAGC [Prince Albert Grand Council] Grand Council, which represents 12 First Nations, want more than the ability to create traditional maps. They want to be fully consulted and to have equal recognition when it comes to the development of resources and their traditional territories.

Mr. Speaker, northerners don't want the same thing to happen to them again like the last time a conservative regime was in power. Weyerhaeuser, through the Forestry Management Agreement, was given free reign to the forests without any consultations of the northerners.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House believe when our economy is doing well everyone should benefit, that no one is left behind. That saying is real to northerners and to Aboriginal people, because this is a value and this is how they've always lived and survived. They too want to share the wealth, especially when much of the resource development is in their own backyard.

However it seems that almost everyone in Saskatchewan has received a Saskatchewan Party promise in the Throne Speech. I was disappointed that northerners weren't even mentioned. I do hope actions will speak louder than words for the north. I do hope the amalgamation of Northern Affairs into another department will not mean this government has turned its back on northerners once again. I urge the new Premier and his government to renew the treaty relationship with the First Nations and to make it real to the lives of those most vulnerable

in our society.

The duty to consult is not only about setting process and protocol. It must be a genuine partnership because, in my view, the First Nations and northerners will not accept anything less. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and with deep respect, the First Nations were here when the first immigrant reached our lands and they will continue to be here as long as the sun shines, the rivers flow, the grass grows.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude by wishing everyone a merry Christmas and all the best in the year to come. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, I would like to congratulate you on your election. For the last four years I've worked with you and I'm very pleased to see you sitting there and very proud to show the Chair the respect with you there. Thank you very much for taking the time to take on that task.

I'd also like to thank Mr. Deputy Speaker for his time of putting his name forward. For the last while he'd been my seatmate so I know him well sitting up there, and I appreciate the time and effort that you're taking to do that.

I would also like to say congratulations to all the Sask Party MLAs who retained their seats and did it in fine style. I would also like to congratulate all the 10 new Sask Party MLAs. Welcome, and I hope your stay is long and fruitful.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kirsch: — I would also like to thank the people of Batoche constituency. One of the people that I met in the campaign that gave me an indication that we were off to a good start was a gentleman I met up at Duck Lake and he said, "I'm sorry but I vote NDP. But after the election could I please have a meeting with you?" So it was sort of . . . He already saw the writing on the wall and we hadn't had the election. It was kind of nice.

This time I moved my margins up and I'm very excited that this time by a just about 2,000-vote margin and fifty-nine-point-some per cent of the vote. So I'm thrilled and pleased. Last election the town of Bellevue voted Liberal, and the previous government thought they had a chance of making progress there so they actually — on Thanksgiving weekend, paying overtime and all — they paved one kilometre through the main street of Bellevue. Thanksgiving weekend. It was quite a sight to see — 33 Department of Highways trucks bombing down the roads, taking grid roads, back roads, hauling it all the way from my hometown of Middle Lake to Bellevue to rush in this patch of pavement. But, Mr. Speaker, it didn't work. Bellevue saw what needed to be done and was strongly returned with the margins in Bellevue too. So I thank the people of Bellevue.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kirsch: — I would also like to thank my wife, Valerie, for her support, her friendship, and her believing in me and always being there beside me. She's a key member of my team and a key member in everything I do. So personally I would really like to thank her.

I would also like to thank my CA [constituency assistant], Mary Anne Telfer, and her husband, Don. They don't work for me, Mr. Speaker; they work with me, and I thank them for their advice and their friendship and always being there for me. Thank you very much to Mary Anne and Don.

I'd also like to thank my campaign chairman, Mr. Robert Georget. He took four weeks time off of his job, took his holiday time, and came and was my campaign chairman. And he did a wonderful job, and for that I thank him very, very much. And I'd also like to thank the rest of my team: Donna, Dave, Hellen, Danny, Karen. Without them we couldn't have done it. They put in the extra time, and I really appreciate that.

I'd also like to thank my three children. Roxanne came down for the election. She's the chief fellow at the Stollery Children's Hospital in Edmonton, and she had to come down and see how dad did this all, and she was there for the election. It's the first time, so was thrilled to have her there. My daughter, Tracy, she's the music teacher at Marion Graham Collegiate in Saskatoon. And she was there for the election night, and it was great to have her there. My son Jonathon couldn't make it because he's in Lethbridge now. He's pursuing a degree in broadcast journalism, and that's where the course was offered, so we've got him in Alberta too. So two of my three kids are in Alberta and hoping someday to bring them home.

I would also like to thank the member for Swift Current. Watching him handle the team, building it, executing the election has been a real thrill and a privilege and a pleasure to be on-board. I also had a great thrill the other week during Agribition. I took the Premier to Agribition. And, Mr. Speaker, we know that rural Saskatchewan are big Sask Party supporters, but when I brought him to Agribition it was like escorting a rock star. The rural people of Saskatchewan were thrilled that he would take the time to come out and expressly meet them, and I thank him for the privilege, for being there. It was wonderful to see.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to talk to you about Batoche constituency. Batoche has a very vivid history, a very old history, and of course we know the Batoche National Historic Site. There's a lot that needs to be done there, and we'll be working with the federal government because it can be so much more. We have the river lots by Batoche. And Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec are the only provinces left in Canada that still have river lots. And the river lots in Saskatchewan, which is the long, narrow strips off the shore of the river that lead back. In Saskatchewan the only river lots are in Batoche constituency. So being a history buff, I think that's kind of neat.

[15:45]

There's also new archeological digs on River Road, west of St. Louis. There's a place called South Branch House which was a fort there from 1786 to 1794. Now most history buffs, myself included, didn't know about it till last year. They've

rediscovered it — shall we say — and there's a cairn there now, and the archeological digs were started. And that's 100 years before the 1885 uprising at Batoche. And it's going to be quite a site, and it's worth something to see if you're a history buff, so take a trip to South Branch House. If you're on the road past Batoche headed north on the way to St. Louis, you watch; there's a little cairn on the side by the bush and that's . . . on the river bank is where South Branch House was . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You were there were you? A member from the other side claims to be there. Well I know that they sit a long time there.

There also is a great museum at Duck Lake, with a tower. And if you ever have the energy to climb up into the tower, it's quite a view to see the outlay of the Batoche site. You also can have a great little, old-fashioned ferry ride, the St. Laurent ferry. You can go down to the battlefield sites. There's so many sites there, so many things to see. You can spend all day doing the Duck Lake and Batoche area, and we need to do more. It would be quite impressive.

Batoche also has a great future. Batoche happens to be home of Bourgault Industries. And Bourgault Industries, Mr. Speaker, is now a worldwide sales company. I met with the CEO [chief executive officer] of Minot division, United States, of Bourgault Industries. And he says in United States, the company that they go nose-to-nose with fighting for market share is John Deere. Mr. Speaker, a little Saskatchewan company going nose-to-nose with the big green lion. That's quite impressive. And yes, they keep on expanding. They keep on expanding. They're right now in the process of another big expansion.

Batoche is home to places like Dry Air which has been very innovative in inventing heating systems that are safe, that do a wonderful job. They're big operators in the dry air system. Batoche is also home of Belle Pulses. Belle Pulses does a multi-million dollar sales in peas.

And, Mr. Speaker, a story I have to tell you about peas. There was a gentleman at Bellevue that wanted to get his seed back from the old Habitant Quebec peas — the best there were, the best in Canada, the best in North America. So he contacted company after company in Quebec. He even went back to France contacting companies. And finally they said they had found him the best peas possible, the best peas in the world. And he ordered a bag full of it for seed, and — lo and behold — when it arrives, stamped on the bag, processed and grown by Belle Pulses peas, Bellevue, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this weekend I was at Muskoday Reserve, and I was there for a diamond cutting and polishing demonstration. Mr. Speaker, this could be big in our horizon, in our future. We actually saw diamonds being processed, how they polished, how they cut them. It is truly interesting and fascinating and when you think it could be a big part of Saskatchewan's future . . . diamonds, who would have thought it?

Mr. Speaker, Batoche is a rural constituency and I mean fully rural. Batoche has no cities, six towns and numerous villages.

The town of St. Brieux now has, this past spring, reached the magic number of, they've passed the 500 mark, so now they are

full town. And last spring I was there for the opening of their new daycare. And their daycare could accommodate 124 students, and the day of the opening it was full — fully registered, can't hold any more kids.

Another one of our towns is Birch Hills. And one of the rural things that is a little bit different in Birch Hills that you might not see in other towns — it's a little unique — there are two churches in Birch Hills that accommodate each two religious denominations. So four religions, two churches and they share, and it works well. It's the rural way of doing things.

Mr. Speaker, for all of the above reasons and for millions more, I am very, very privileged and proud to represent the wonderful people of Batoche constituency, and to them I owe a great big thank you. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, due to the time factor, I must move on to matters of the Throne Speech. This Throne Speech is the first one I've heard that sets out a real plan for the future. It has dreams and ideas and a way of reaching them and getting there. This Throne Speech addresses green and prosperous with ways of getting there, not just the words, green and prosperous.

This Throne Speech addresses highways. This Throne Speech addresses, at long last, property tax. This Throne Speech addresses health care, nursing shortages, and has a real plan on how to achieve them and get there. This Throne Speech is already, already enacting its promises.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca spoke last week and blamed the Devine government. Sixteen years they blamed the Devine government, and then in his next breath what does he say? Don't blame the NDP. You're already blaming the NDP. Mr. Speaker, who made the mess? Who did the things wrong? And if the job was done so good, why the big change in the election?

People have had enough, and they're looking to the Sask Party to make things better. And they are already smiling.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to say on the term balanced budget, we have now said that we are going to address balanced budget, and we're going to address it in real terms, not in fictitious terms. Our Finance minister has things well under hand, and we're looking forward to how he's handling it.

When we look at the other government and they talk about not keeping promises, one of the big ones is, Mr. Speaker, who, after promising no tax cuts, raised the PST [provincial sales tax] two cents? And then come this election, they drop it two cents and brag about it. We dropped PST two cents. Well who was the one that put it up there?

One of the worst mistakes of the former government was also their duty to consult. Mr. Speaker, there was no consultation. There was no consultation on the smoking Bill. There was nothing done with it. They just put it out there and then passed it and said, consultation had been done. And it wasn't. And now we've got consultation on the memorandum of understanding, MOU. The natives came out and said no consultation. Yet the NDP claimed that they've been working on it for two years — two years — and they hadn't talked with any of the native

people or tribes on their input at all. Two years and nothing done. And they keep on referring to this MOU as a deal. It was not a deal. It was a memorandum of understanding hastily put together and hastily signed. And it said right on the front cover, it is not binding in any point, any way, any form. It was just a piece of paper and thank goodness.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank goodness it was never enacted because our province cannot afford mistakes of 100 million any more. There have been too many of them made, and we have to stop that practice. And this government is well on its way to doing that.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment, and I will be enthusiastically supporting the budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be back here in the House after the election. It's always nice to come back here. And I always enjoy the Throne Speech because it's one of the few speeches you can make in the House that gives you latitude to thank the people that helped get you here and talk a bit about your constituency, talk about the voters of Arm River-Watrous, the voters of Saskatchewan.

I want to say hi to my dad who faithfully watches the legislative channel everyday. I also want to thank Tanya for her support of helping me throughout the election.

I also want to welcome all the new members that are here on both sides of the House. The speeches that I've heard from both sides of the House have been excellent, Mr. Speaker. They've set the bar very, very high, at that end of it. I wish that my first maiden speech was as good as the speeches I've heard here off the new members.

I know that they will enjoy working here as I have for the eight years because to come here you have the respect and the confidence of your voters. Those are the main reason that we can't forget that we were here — the support of the voters that put us here, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to thank the staff. The Clerks, they're excellent. We have excellent staff — the Hansard, library staff, SPMC [Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation] which has been excellent with the move. I know that they've had 58 requests for desks and chairs and tables and shelves and all. Everybody wants everything done not now but right now. And I know that they've been very good at trying to help members set up their offices. And the move, I know, has not been easy for them. I know I've been here at nights and I've seen them working into the night, trying to accommodate members — moving filing cabinets, desks around, putting up shelves. I want to thank them and I know it has been a very hard transition period.

I know the first two or three weeks, my phone after five rings would go to the NDP caucus office. We finally got that straightened out. I know that it did surprise and alarm a few of my constituents that phoned my office here shortly after it was set up. I had a few calls back to my constituency office wondering what was going on. But I think we're finally getting the phone lines all set and all . . . I think next week hopefully we'll have my fax machine up and running.

I want to thank the voters from Arm River-Watrous for giving me the confidence to come back here again. That's the main reason that a person runs, is because of the voters. The day when you go door to door, that's what keeps you going — the people that say you know what, we need a change in this province; or we support you, we support what you believe in at that end of it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Brkich: — I also want to thank just not my constituents but the people that I ran against — Gord MacMurchy for the NDP, Lou Coderre for the Liberal Party, Arnold Taylor for the Green Party, and Gordon Pederson ran as a Progressive Conservative. They all ran good elections. We ran a nice, good, clean campaign and got along. In fact we had an enjoyable debate in Watrous which I found was . . . I think all of us enjoyed it. I would like to see more of that throughout. In the old days they used to have lots of that, what they called town hall debates, and that was the first one in eight years that we had. The first two terms either just the chamber of commerce couldn't set it up or the other people running didn't want to, but this time the chamber in Watrous set it up and I found it quite enjoyable.

And then surprisingly the hall was full and most of the people that came to that debate, they came to listen to the issues. They came to listen to what was presented out there. They didn't come with closed minds and, you know, that's a very good way. I found that the voters have been changing over the time. I remember in my dad's time — he was very active — and back then voters were more partisan, but now voters are more savvy. They vote, they vote on the party platform. They want good government is what they want and that's the way it should be out there.

I know that members opposite have talked about that they're going to be keeping an eye on us, that they're going to be making sure our promises are kept, and that's good. But you know, I'm not worried about them keeping their eye on it. I'm worried about, you know, who's going to be keeping an eye on us will be the voters. The people of Saskatchewan will be keeping their eye on us and if we don't keep our promises they will vote us out. And that's why we've already started to fill them promises in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, because the voters are going to be keeping an eye on whichever government is here, and that's the way it should be.

[16:00]

I found that the voters are getting more in tune with the elections. They're more into the issues. When you go door to door, I've been finding every year that the young people are more engaged because they're concerned about this province

and the direction that it goes to. They want it to grow. They want this to be home.

I also want to thank my staff back home. They're one of, probably the main reason that I'm here, my CA staff. They're the ones handling the cases. We're up here making speeches, we're up here in the House. My staff back home, they're the ones answering the phones. They're the ones that are bringing the cases up here. They're the ones who are dealing with it day-to-day.

I have Clark Puckett, Donna Petit, and Lavonne Lyke. And they did an excellent job for me over the eight years that I've served the people of Arm River-Watrous. I don't think you could ask for better staff, and yet I know that everybody's constituency association or constituency assistants have did excellent jobs.

I just know, dealing with members here opposite and even the staff, even some of the ministers' staffs from the previous government, I know we dealt with them and I was happy with a lot of the things they would try to do at that end of it for the constituents. Because the main thing is everybody here wants a better life for Saskatchewan, wants a better life for the people here.

And that's what we're going to be doing with this Throne Speech. And that's why I like this Throne Speech. It's a good Throne Speech.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Brkich: — I've made many speeches on Throne Speeches and to be honest with you, Mr. Speaker, this is the best one I've seen. It lays out a four-year plan and it's already kept some of the election promises that were set out.

One of them was set election dates. When I went door to door — you'd mentioned that — whether it was a voter that said, you know, I'm not voting Saskatchewan Party, I'm either Liberal, NDP, but they would still agree that we need that.

We need set election dates because the government should never have the hammer or play with the voters, trying to decide a date when it's best for them. When you go to the polls, you should be able to run on your record whatever day that you go back to the polls. And that was one of the things when I went door to door that every person agreed on that liked set election dates. And I was glad that that was one of the things that we're setting out right away.

Another one is balanced budgets. People don't want to be running debt. And we've laid out some legislation for that to make stronger, so we can have stronger balanced budgets, and also a four-year plan on budgets, and also working towards paying the debt. It's already laid out in the speech how much money will be going per year putting down the debt. I heard that a lot at door to door when I went that we must work towards paying down the debt. And that is one of the promises that was made and that was one of the promises that are kept in this Throne Speech.

Another one is agriculture. On CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization], it was laid out in the Throne Speech that

we will be fully funding CAIS. And I know that we need more support for agriculture and I know that our Agriculture minister is going to do an excellent job trying to get a better deal from the federal government, at that end of it.

But least now the producers, right now today, know that at least if that's the only program that is out there, it is going to be fully funded. In my eight years, some years it was said it would be. Some years they had to wait till the budget. And some years they only put in 100 million and some years that they didn't. I think it was 2003 you only got 60 per cent of your money, which was the federal money. And I still get calls from constituents that say, you know, the government owes me that 40 per cent for that year. So at least now that they know that at least it's going to be fully funded in the Throne Speech, which was a promise that was made throughout the election and it was a promise that's being kept in the Throne Speech.

Another good initiative is dealing with the First Nations is mandatory education and treaties. And I think we need that. I have two reserves, Kawacatoose and Day Star, in my constituency. And I've met with them regularly over the last four years because they changed the borders before that, Mr. Speaker, and they weren't in my constituency. I've met with them regular over the four years, and I think we have a very good working relationship. And I know that they have a lot of concerns and a lot of issues, but all they want is dialogue and they want to be treated with respect. And this government is going to do that, is going to treat them with respect, and consulting with them. And one of them is, is more education out there. And I think we need that in the schools. I think that was a very good initiative that was brought in from here.

Dealing with this Throne Speech, just what it's about, "Securing the Future," that's probably what I heard. That was the theme of the election as you're going door to door in Arm River-Watrous. Arm River-Watrous is filled with a lot of small towns. My biggest ones are Watrous, Davidson, and Wynyard, and they're still only running around 3,000 population — same population since the '70s, the '60s. And what they want is growth and they want a future with that. And that's what they want is hope, and they didn't like the fear campaign.

What they wanted, what I got door to door was, we want a plan. We don't care who brings it forward. But we were the only party that actually brought a plan, a four-year plan that is going to work towards grow the province. And that's what the voters of Arm River-Watrous want. That's what the voters of Saskatchewan want. They want this province to grow. They want a plan. They want to be able to see it, that they know that it's going to grow.

I have some potash on the edge of my constituency, some mines. I know in the last year or two they've been doing some seismic testing around the Jansen area and they feel that expansion could take place there, of the mines, under the right government regulations, maybe royalties changes, along that line. Or just the idea of a government that is willing to work with business.

And the people in that area are looking forward to . . . There already is some mine expansion, but also possibly of a new mine being put in or just more expansion. I know that every

year that they're hiring more and more people, which is good. There's more and more young people staying back from the surrounding towns. They're working in the mines. And those are very, very good paying jobs.

So any way that we can help grow that . . . And that's what the people want. They want the oil industry. They want the resources to use to help build this province, bring the people back. And the money to be used towards health care, better education, pay down the debt. But the main thing is, what they want is growth, Mr. Speaker. They want this province to grow. And that's why they put their confidence in this government. And I think with this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, it lays out that plan. It lays out a future for the province of Saskatchewan.

There are many things. The education tax which has been an issue in rural Saskatchewan and in urban Saskatchewan for many, many years, it was an issue all the way — if you remember back, I don't remember that — to Tommy Douglas had even talked about it, that it was an unfair way, an unfair way to fund education. It was too much of a burden on property owners. And this Throne Speech is addressing that.

They know, the people of Arm River-Watrous and Saskatchewan know that everything can't be done in one year, that there is the highways, even the education tax. But it needs to be addressed. It needs to work on, which it is. We lay out a four-year plan on rebates, on education tax, with a little more every year helping that. That's all they want, is that you recognize the problem, that you're going to try to work with it within a balanced budget.

They know the highways aren't all going to be fixed in the first year. They know that. But do you know what they want? They want a four-year plan. They want to know that this is why you're fixing this highway. This is money that you're going to be putting towards that highway; that you're going to be working towards making it a better place in Saskatchewan, a better place to do business; that you have a plan. And the people are patient, but they wanted to see some action.

In my constituency, there wasn't any. I mean, I've made many speeches in this House on that and my highways haven't changed in eight years. They hadn't changed before that. And I know that now the Highways minister's going to try to work. We have a budget. We're also putting more funding in. The fuel tax has all been dedicated towards highway construction. And I know it's a priority for this government to make it, to address that problem because that is a huge problem throughout Saskatchewan.

The towns along my constituency, especially between Regina and Saskatoon, there are people moving back, Mr. Speaker. They're moving back. They were moving back before the election, but they also felt that there was going to be a change in government. They felt that Saskatchewan is going to grow because there is a huge potential here.

Of all the provinces in Canada, Mr. Speaker, this province has the most potential in the next 10 to 20, 30 years to grow. With our resources and our tourism and our agriculture and the innovation and the universities that we have here, that this is going to be the next boom province. If it is managed right and if

it is brought in with a government that is going, has one goal, and that is to grow this province and grow it in a direction that is going to benefit all the people in it.

Health care has always been an issue in Saskatchewan and yes, it's going to be a challenge. But we also have an excellent Health minister. He's been working as critic for many years. He understands the system. He's willing to . . . He's had meetings with the health care professionals. He knows what has to be addressed. We're going to work towards getting new nurses, more nurses; expanding the training seats within what can be allowed at the universities. But we know that has to be addressed because it was never addressed under the previous government.

And I know that it's easy always to blame the past administration, and I know that. As myself as an ex-opposition member for years, I still tend to go back there. And I want to talk more about this Throne Speech, but I still have to mention a few things of why, of why there's a lot more members on this side of the House and why we've formed government.

And that is one of the reasons, because there hasn't been some long-range plans at that end of it. And I know that, I know this Throne Speech is laying it out at that end of it. It's also like talking about retaining our young people. Tuition rebates of up to \$20,000 over seven years for the students who stay in the province after graduation. Those are the people, Mr. Speaker, that we have to retain here. Our students — that's our future. And there's a good plan set out to retain them so that they, after they get their education here, that there's a reason to stay.

And then you have to make sure that they have the jobs. And I think the things that are being laid out over the four years, that there will be more job opportunities for them in the future. In fact I'm confident that this government is going to be providing more jobs for the students as they graduate here. And with the tuition rebate, that's just one more incentive to stay here and work in this great province, Mr. Speaker — for it is a great province.

And that was one of the reasons that I got . . . that I've always been voted because they always, in Arm River-Watrous, they always felt that this was . . . the potential for this province was never being fully utilized. And they feel that under a new government, under new direction, that that potential will be utilized. And that's a goal. That's a goal of this government and a goal of the people that I've worked with. And many of them . . . I've worked here with many of them over the past eight years. And I know that that's their goal to work towards that, to make this a better place to live. That is the main reason that each and every one of us have been elected to this House. Everybody wants to make this a better place, to leave their mark and say, you know what, I was a small cog into making this a better place, into reshaping this province into the potential that it could be, Mr. Speaker. And this province has huge, huge potential.

You know there's been . . . There's many, many opportunities for this province. Tourism is another one. I mean that's . . . even in my constituency, it's huge. We're making that a priority in this Throne Speech. We're dealing with that, trying to promote that more — more funding for tourism. There is many,

opportunities for this.

You can go through this Throne Speech, page by page, and everything about it is about growing this province. And it's about the future, and a four-year plan that is going to do it within balanced budgets and is going to work towards it. And at the end of four years, you know, like some of the members have been, over the last few days have been . . . you know, there's been a little heckle, and that's when it will be judged.

And I'm confident with this Throne Speech and the many more to come, and the budget, that we will be here for a very long time.

[16:15]

Mr. Speaker, as Christmas approaches, which this House today is, I also want to wish all my constituents that are listening a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I also want to, to the members of the House and the people in the building, same thing, wish them a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I think from the tone of my speech that, Mr. Speaker, you know that I'll be supporting the Throne Speech. And with that, to you yourself too, a very Merry Christmas.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a grand honour to rise before this Assembly to serve my maiden speech and engage in the debate to the Throne Speech. I want to congratulate yourself, Mr. Speaker, on your election as Speaker, and I know your experience will serve this Assembly very well. I look forward to working with you. I would like to echo this as well for the Deputy Speaker and congratulate him in his role as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all the members on both sides of the House within this Assembly, particularly all of the new members who have been granted the trust of their respective electorates. As a member of this Assembly, we are blessed to serve a very honourable role. To be honest with you, it is quite a surreal feeling each morning to walk up and through the doors of this storied building. I am hopeful that this is a feeling and honour that will not soon dissipate as the new becomes the routine.

I would like to make specific mention of our new members — the member from Saskatoon Massey Place and the member from Prince Albert Northcote. Both these members will have substantial roles in dictating the direction of our province and will serve the constituents incredibly well.

Any one of us would be remiss to believe that we stand here today solely because of ourselves. Personally, I stand here because of the privilege of family that I have been granted, and I am ever thankful for this foundation and aware of its influence. I stand here today because of the incredible team of supporters, new and lifelong, within Regina Rosemont who have extended their trust and offered their energy.

I stand here today because of my beautiful and intelligent wife, Stephanie, whose love shows no bounds, who can always keep me grounded and my ego in check, and whose family, the Willows, offer unwavering support. I am privileged with family, supported by friends, past colleagues, and constituents. I thank every member of this small army.

I would also like to specifically thank a few members from the campaign team. I thank Heath Packman, Chad McCormick, Terry McNaughton, Chantal LaHaye, Jennifer Sherwood, and maybe most of all 82-year-old Kurt Holstein — lifelong member, sign man, who put in over 600 signs throughout the election.

I grew up on the north end of Regina Rosemont and have lived within Regina my entire life. Thus, serving as the member for Regina Rosemont is natural. The process of nomination and then election granted me the opportunity to reconnect with so many friends, colleagues, neighbours, and to build new relations with so many families and individuals.

The constituents of Regina Rosemont who have entrusted me to offer their voices within the Saskatchewan legislature are a very diverse group. Rosemont is made up of an array of socio-economics, ethnicity, backgrounds, education, and employment. It is the home to many community leaders, new families to Canada, small- and medium-sized business owners, civil servants, hard-working individuals and families, seniors who have retired from the farm, new families who have moved from other provinces — particularly Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta — and lifelong residents.

I represent many families and individuals working to stay afloat with the inflationary cost of housing. Conversely, I represent many hard-working homeowners whose homes have doubled in value in the past few years, offering reward for their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, Regina Rosemont has a history of strong member representation. I have succeeded well-represented, well-respected Joanne Crofford, who has retired from public service, and it is with determination that I work to fill Ms. Crofford's role of excellent service to the community and meaningful work in legislature. I thank Ms. Crofford for all of her support, mentorship, and friendship.

Regina Rosemont boasts institutions steeped in tradition. It is the very home to our revered Royal Canadian Mounted Police depot and training facility. Steeped in tradition, this site boasts the new RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] museum. I extend an invite to all members at any moment to take them on a tour.

Regina Rosemont contains Government House, built in 1891 as a residence for the Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories whose territorial headquarters were within Regina. Over the years this house has gone through many uses and has recently gone through extensive renovations. It serves as both the office of the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan and as a heritage museum. It is indeed a spectacular building.

Regina Rosemont also contains a first-rate golf course, the Royal Regina Golf Club; the Devonian bike path in Wascana Creek. It boasts three high schools: Martin Collegiate, Luther

College, and Western Christian College; five public and three Catholic elementary schools.

Mr. Speaker, I will honour the commitments I have made on the doorsteps of Regina Rosemont. As such, I am committed to the hard work, honesty, and strong voice needed to be . . . serve as their member in legislature. Through listening to and working with, I intend to provide progress through effective policy development in response to my constituents needs and hopes.

I'm very proud today to add the name Wotherspoon to the only 600 and some past members who have stood before in this Assembly to shape our modern province. For record on *Hansard*, I do want to mention my grandparents. Raised on the farm, my grandparents Albert Otto Thurm and Ann Thurm, lived within Regina following the Second World War. My grandfather, a Regina Rifles veteran, was wounded within Germany and was forced to return home. He was a career civil servant who didn't miss a day of work his entire life and could do one arm push-ups until late into his 60s. My grandmother, who is my only grandparent still alive, keeps our fridge full of vegetables, cupboards full of canning, and has a new interest in watching the Legislative Assembly on TV.

Raised on farms near Melville, my grandparents, John Lesley Wotherspoon and Audrey Wotherspoon farmed for many years while raising their family. In 1956 my grandfather was hired as a Saskatchewan Wheat Pool elevator agent. They sold the farm and spent time working within the hub of many communities. They were both highly involved in the co-operative movement. My grandfather was an avid outdoorsman and passed this along to his four boys and his many grandchildren. Great memories with them remain strong.

I've been raised within a strong, social democratic family, sharing New Democrat core values. Thank my parents for providing such a strong foundation, raising us with care, activity, faith, discipline, and humour. Thank my mother for making the choice to stay at home to raise myself and my sisters and for her eternal contentedness in the resulting modest economic situation. The foundation my parents provided me as a New Democrat has fostered a sense of optimism, work ethic, and progressiveness which I maintain today.

Attached to my father's hip throughout my childhood, we regularly retreated to the solace of Saskatchewan's outdoors. It offered my father — a passionate, committed, and progressive educator — a place to get away and to foster within me his interests of recreational historian, outdoorsman, and geologist. This is something I remain committed to.

The sanctuary that is Saskatchewan is unparalleled within this world. The vast size of our province that stretches across such distinct variances in geographic regions never ceases to amaze me. It is as diverse as our province's history and our ethnic makeup. Saskatchewan is a place that offers an incredibly high quality of living.

Choosing to stay within our province for post-secondary education and to build my career within, I have long espoused the benefits Saskatchewan offers. I've served as a tireless advocate as friends sought greener pastures, only to return home with a new-found appreciation of what we possess.

For an outdoor enthusiast such as myself Saskatchewan offers a phenomenal playground, retreat, and sanctuary. I'm excited by looking at the Saskatchewan map. It offers so many havens to escape to with each one of our constituencies. I will share a few of my favourite escapes.

Within a five-minute drive from Regina Rosemont in the riding of Regina Qu'Appelle I can find partridge to hunt on the gravel roads at dusk. A drive just minutes further takes me to a tributary valley of the Qu'Appelle with Wascana Creek running deep below, beautiful in all seasons; a spot my wife and I frequent on weekend mornings with Tim Hortons in hand to hike and run with our dogs.

From the member from Wood River's riding, Grasslands National Park with its sweeping grass hills, lush with mule deer and complete with the original buffalo herd, natives of the prairies.

Within the member from Big Muddy's riding, hiking the badlands, geographic formations that offer panoramic perspectives on the land that have served First Nations hunters, bootleggers, police, and settlers among many others for thousands of years.

To head north through the parklands, the boreal forest on into the shield within the member of Cumberland's riding, provides a speckled land of lakes and vast arteries of rivers and streams; to navigate historic waterways such as the Churchill River, a region that has served First Nations for thousands of years with its bountiful sustainable resources; to camping on the rock of the Sturgeon Weir and to imagine the journey of those first European explorers to connect with the West.

To the member from Swift Current's riding, hunting on the majestic steep shores of the South Saskatchewan River amongst the deer, moose, antelope, cranes, and upland game; to spending a cold winter day huddled by a fire within the member from Touchwood Last Mountain's riding on a frozen 60-mile-long lake waiting for a big hit, a lake brimming with walleye, northern pike, and perch.

To Regina Rosemont, my home riding, jogging on the Devonian bike path within an incredible urban park mapping its way along Wascana Creek to a newly deepened lake.

Each region, each community within this province has a rich history and a proud legacy. It is through understanding our history that we can thoughtfully approach offering direction to our future. The diversity of the geographic regions of our province could only be trumped by the diversity of our history, the communities, the people, the stories of and from our land.

In any mention of Saskatchewan's history, First Nations must be first and foremost. Living on the land in all corners of this province for thousands of years before any European influence, their history is our longest. Within their harmonious systems of governance, health, justice, education, traditions, ceremonies, and spirituality, First Nations have an extremely proud legacy within Saskatchewan. We still have much to learn from our First Nations and Métis people.

Our province's modern history comes through immigration, the

settlement of the West, the dawn of agriculture, the establishment of trade and commerce. It is with this wave that my family entered the province. This generation has passed along a pride in the qualities of perseverance and hard work needed to establish and sustain life on the Prairies. Very few of us are very far removed from the family farm, and these values run deep.

As a province we are blessed with a geographic landscape that offers a wealth of resources — wildlife and fish, rich glacial basin topsoil, miles of pasture, vast oil reserves, natural gas, coal, potash, uranium, diamonds. The list goes on, and it's extensive. The wealth of these resources has long been the source of our economy, and today we are experiencing a significant boom.

From this boom we need to ensure that each family and individual sees the benefits of this, that opportunities to prosper and go forward are extended to all within our society. We need to be very certain that the policies that we enact during this robust economy are of this very nature. Otherwise we risk allowing only a select few to go forward and marginalize the broader society.

A very important measurement within our society is how we respond to our most marginalized. If we do not care for our young people struggling to afford their education and low-income families, if we do not push to break the cycle of poverty, if we do not offer equality and respect to minorities, if we do not extend dignity to those with a disability, and if we do not fight the addictions cycles which tear our families apart — then we have failed.

I'm a believer that you only know what you know, that one's knowledge is limited by one's experiences, that we are constructs of our environments. And I am certain that we do not choose the circumstances for which we are born into. In my history of working with youth and families afflicted by significant challenges such as cultures of addiction, abuse, neglect, hopelessness, helplessness, I've gained new perspectives. I'm adamant that I have learned and grown as an individual far more from these relations than the youth and the families ever did from myself. Working with an approach of mutuality, shared respect seemed to offer the most benefit for all parties.

This guides my belief that we must ensure that the resources and healthy relationships are provided within our communities and that we reduce the barriers to sport, culture, and recreation and that our education system along with community stakeholders continue to respond to the whole-child needs of students.

[16:30]

A new Sask Party government is tasked with the continued response to these issues, and effective and meaningful policy will be essential.

I'm honoured to serve within this Legislative Assembly as a member of the New Democrats. The values for which New Democrats represent have offered innovation and progress to Saskatchewan and Canada. To sit in the same chairs that hold

the legacy of our party, past leaders such as Tommy Douglas, Allan Blakeney, and Roy Romanow, to name a few, is truly humbling.

To enter politics standing behind our leader, Lorne Calvert, a man of vision and principle who has delivered to the people of this province, is truly my honour. The New Democrats I represent are committed to a progress-oriented, growing, inclusive, and green progress — more than just growth.

As New Democrats, we leave this province in enviable condition and have placed the province onto the international stage. And we must continue to take this lead with continued robust, economic, and dynamic social growth.

We have taken many steps forward as a province. A new confidence has emerged and exists in our people. However we retain the resiliency, community spirit, and unwavering loyalty to home.

As New Democrats we leave this province as a place where we have more jobs than people. With endless opportunity in this province, it is truly an exciting time. Saskatchewan has the second lowest youth unemployment rate in Canada. When young people in Saskatchewan look to realize their dream, they need not look any further than home.

As New Democrats we leave government with our heads held high. Our population is growing and our economy is booming. With this we need a government who, through policy, planning, and investment, will ensure the benefits of this economy are returned to the ordinary people, workers, parents, and seniors within this province. A thriving economy should not preclude ordinary residents from owning a home or accessing the highest quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, at this time of prosperity we have the opportunity to enhance and enrich our quality of life and progress our province. The Sask Party's number one goal is growth. I believe we need to be more focused on progress, of which growth is a very important part of. Growth alone does not ensure progress.

Mr. Speaker, through the election, the past election, the people of this province chose a new direction. They chose a party that departed their historical and deep-rooted, right-wing, conservative values through message, enacted tight control of communication, and developed sleek marketing. The Sask Party populist political tactics found them providing a message that appeared both safe and moderate to make themselves electable by the voting public. They have for a long time pandered to every disenchanted group or individual within this province offering the benefit that they would rectify these issues.

The problem that exists is the platform that they developed; the commitments that they have made are not in line with the beliefs or the ideology of its party's founders and/or financers. So the Sask Party is tasked with the challenge — let down the electorate who granted them power or let down their supporters who financed and backed the party. It is very clear that following the election that there will be individuals, groups, and companies that will be let down by this Sask Party government. It is evident because this is already the case with many. This is a shame and it does nothing to increase the trust and

involvement in the democratic process.

At this moment here, I may now be entering a slightly more partisan bent. So, I know it's my maiden speech, but if the side opposite wishes to object, I would not be offended if you do speak out.

Mr. Speaker, the new Sask Party government is offering far too little to the people in this very short time in government. The people of this province have been let down by their newly minted Premier whose glum outlook for Saskatchewan is a disrespect to all within our borders. Saskatchewan is booming as a province, has a pile of money in the bank, and expectations should be very high. This is a time within our province where families and individuals should be able to share in these benefits. Saskatchewan residents should be offered to share in the confident and solid state of Saskatchewan and their Premier should be one to extend that invitation.

The Premier and the Sask Party need to be aware of the hard work families have provided within this province, paying down reckless Conservative debt to place Saskatchewan on the world stage with limitless opportunity. The Premier, who upon election described the province's financial state as stark, should be ashamed and families deserve more.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan deserve far more than a Premier and a party who has either a severe case of performance anxiety or simply willing to play political games at the voters' expense. The Sask Party government promised far too much to far too many, for which it has no chance and it seems no intentions of delivering.

Mr. Speaker, as the Sask Party likes to point out, actions do speak louder than words. The Sask Party actions speak for themselves and families are not impressed.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Sask Party need to be held accountable for misleading the public on the topic of school closures. Despite the now Minister of Finance claiming to have a solution, to have a solution, a plan for school closures, we have not seen a thing. They have left the people of the province with the impression that, under their watch, rural schools would not close. They started using jargon like schools of necessity, schools of opportunity.

What we have heard is that the new Sask Party Minister of Education confirms that school closures are inevitable, and he does not have a plan in place. The lack of plan and disregard to this issue is little comfort for the many rural communities who had pegged their hopes on a Sask Party government, a government that had played with the heartstrings for purpose of election. This offers a prime example of the Sask Party saying one thing but doing another.

On the matter of the pulp mill in Prince Albert, the same can be said. The Sask Party says one thing but then does another.

The Sask Party's hasty and surprise decision to enact essential service legislation immediately upon election, despite the now Minister of Health stating clearly just prior to election that this

would not be necessary, has voters up in arms. Why did the Sask Party government so clearly conceal its true intentions to the voters? It is not right to say one thing and then do another. The Sask Party will try argue that essential services is to ensure public safety. This is not its objective. Its objective is simple. It's to destroy the collective bargaining process and place the wheels in the hands of the employer. They will try to be sneaky with this legislation. They'll say we are not taking away the right to strike; however, they will legislate that service must continue to be provided thus neutering any effectiveness of job action.

In a growth economy such as Saskatchewan and its precipitating effects of rising cost of living, it is not the time to slash collective bargaining abilities. This legislation will naturally cross all work boundaries as it will remain very nondescript. It will leave enough room to drive a truck through, and it will be left to the discretion of the Sask Party government. From what I understand, the Sask Party did not seek to consult with teachers, nurses, unions, or the Sask Federation of Labour on this landmark legislation. This is a shame. Legislation which they stated was not needed just prior to the election . . . again the Sask Party says one thing, does another.

Mr. Speaker, I have concern for Crown corporations. I suspect they will not privatize them; however I am sure they will begin to hive off the profit centres of these, reducing each one of its to its core services. With reduced profits, rates will be forced to increase and costs will rise. They will, in essence, take away the ability for the Crowns to remain competitive. Utility costs will rise. The people of Regina Rosemont will not be happy. They will dismantle the Crowns from the back door in, at the expense of the ratepayers in the province.

By eliminating significant funding to meet our emissions targets, it appears that the Saskatchewan Party does not place value on the environment, an issue very important to our younger voters . . . and generations. But both the Sask Party's platform and actions have not done a thing to support those challenged by the rising costs of housing, causing increased stress on renting families across this province. This is out of line with voters' needs. At a time of growth and prosperity, we must all ensure we go forward.

Mr. Speaker, the marginalizing policies and nature of the Sask Party offer benefit to a select few. Sask Party policies and their conservative agenda will not take Saskatchewan in the right direction.

It appears just a mere month following this election that the Sask Party government is one that cannot be trusted. It appears that they will say anything to get elected and then whatever they want following.

It appears in fact that the Sask Party have re-allocated the three R's of environmental stewardship and have renamed them. I believe they now serve as the Sask Party's model on how to deal with their platform's post-election expectations. The Sask Party's three R's — reduce, retreat, and reinvent.

The Sask Party says one thing and then does another. As a party that likes to refer to itself as the corporate party, the Sask Party

is well acquainted with the term shareholders. However I stand as an opposition member here today to let the people of our fine province know that the Sask Party is serving the wrong set of shareholders. The people of this province are our shareholders, not corporate Alberta, Wall Street, or Bay Street.

Now while working with the corporate world is very, very important to sustain this robust economic growth, it is not the end goal. As New Democrats, we believe that the benefits from the wealth of our province should not simply serve the Sask Party's allegiances of out-of-province investment. We believe it needs to serve and benefit the province's true shareholders — the families, the individuals, the people, and the builders of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, after much deliberation, I've chosen that I will not be supporting the Throne Speech, and I am supporting the amendment. And I thank the Assembly for the ears they have offered me.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to enter into the first reply to the Throne Speech in this new twenty-sixth legislature and our first sitting, Mr. Speaker.

As many other members have offered you congratulations, I would like to add my name to that list of members. I know your years of experience here in the House will certainly serve you well in serving the members of the legislature, and you certainly have my confidence, I'm sure, of all members, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't thank the voters of Last Mountain-Touchwood for once again placing their trust in me to represent their interests in this legislature, Mr. Speaker. It's always humbling to have the people of your constituency renew their confidence in you as an elected member to carry forward the issues that they have, to speak for them, to work for them, to make sure that they are well represented and have access to all avenues of government services and to be a voice for their opinions on important issues, Mr. Speaker. And I would certainly like to thank them for, as I said, for placing their confidence in me once again.

I should just say, take time, Mr. Speaker — and I know time is of the essence this afternoon — to say a few words about the uniqueness of Last Mountain-Touchwood. It's a constituency that at one time was a bellwether constituency that always elected an MLA to the government side of the House. That changed back in 1999, and now it's resumed its original role of electing a member to the government side of the House, Mr. Speaker. It is also a very ... the greatest portion of the constituency is a rural constituency. We have numerous small towns, hamlets, and villages. We don't have any large centres. Our largest communities are less than 1,000 in population.

But there's also a component of Last-Mountain Touchwood which I describe as a suburban part of the constituency ... is that area along our lakes and the Qu'Appelle Valley where we

have numerous residents living in communities like Craven and Katepwa and Lebret and Pasqua Lake. But many of those residents work here in the city of Regina and commute on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker. So even though they live in rural Saskatchewan, their issues are more urban-based. Certainly all constituents have issues around health care and highways and transportation, but I find quite a difference when I'm dealing with those residents of the constituency who live in the suburbia part of the constituency, Mr. Speaker. And so it certainly makes the workload more diverse, and we certainly welcome that, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to extend congratulations to all new members that were elected in the last election on both sides of the House, Mr. Speaker. I can remember back to the first time being elected and making my maiden speech in the chambers here, Mr. Speaker. It was a whole lot less noisy at that time, Mr. Speaker. And one thing you do develop over a period of years is the ability to speak to the people of the province even though there is some discussions that happen occasionally, and I'm sure they are always productive discussions, Mr. Speaker.

[16:45]

This new legislature is a time for new opportunities. The people of the province have voted to have a new party govern them and that party being the Saskatchewan Party. And I personally am certainly pleased that the voters of this province made that wise decision. It's an opportunity for a new direction in the province, a time for sustainable growth and opportunity which I know will result in revenues that will provide the wherewithal for infrastructure and services that our citizens certainly deserve, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it also provides an opportunity for the members of this legislature in that we have an opportunity to deal with what Preston Manning in a recent article in the *Calgary Herald* termed the democratic deficit. And that is ... it's a problem that is developing in this country, perhaps at a lesser extent in this province, but nevertheless it has to do with the view of the average citizen of elected members. There's been a number of polls in recent years whereby various occupations are rated as far as job performance and satisfaction of the general public. And, Mr. Speaker, we as elected individuals have collectively a developing problem that I believe we need to address. Our job approval rating is not very ... we don't rate very high in the eyes of the general public, Mr. Speaker. We are way below 50 per cent in job approval ratings — and I'm speaking collectively — not only in this province but all elected individuals across this country, particularly in the legislatures and in the House of Commons.

And that is resulting, I believe, in some cases, in very low voter turnout. If we look at the recent Ontario provincial election, I believe, if memory serves me, there was something like 52 per cent of eligible voters actually voted. Now the traditional thought on that is that the rest of the people were satisfied with the way their province was being governed and therefore just didn't bother showing up at the polls. I'm not so sure that that's really a correct or true interpretation of that figure. I think there is a general disapproval and, as the old saying, well it really doesn't matter who's in power; they're all the same, Mr. Speaker.

And I think we need to deal with that. It's something that has been developing over a long period of time, and it won't be reversed very quickly. But we have an opportunity now where we can perhaps change some of the things that we do to instill more voter confidence in all of us as elected members, Mr. Speaker. And I believe that applies evenly to both sides of the House.

Some of the things that are currently, in recent times, that are happening — and particularly at the national level, I'm thinking of the sponsorship scandal or the more current issue in Ottawa, the Karlheinz Schreiber-Mulroney issue — certainly doesn't help matters. And fortunately, Mr. Speaker, in this province we aren't plagued with those sorts of things although sometimes the members opposite will remind of us some unfortunate things that occurred quite some years ago.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that has troubled me in the last number of years since I've been a member of this legislature is the conduct of the House during question period. We all realize that this is the most charged 25 minutes of the day, and there are certainly good reasons behind why it is so charged and so on. But question period is, for most citizens of this province, the window which they view the workings of this Assembly. It's the only time they actually see . . . that being on news clips or quite often if they're visiting, particularly school groups, they're here from the start of the work afternoon or morning till question period, and then quite often they leave.

And I'm sure I know many members of the House have received letters and emails and telephone calls from people accompanying school groups, expressing their disapproval with the actions of all members of the House. And I think that we have an opportunity . . . Except for the member for Canora-Pelly — he gets two emails to one of every one that the rest of us get, Mr. Speaker. But I think we have an opportunity, all of us, to perhaps be cognizant at least of the way we are being viewed and particularly when the galleries are full of school groups.

Quite often in the month of May when we used to sit much longer — it was in the early part of June — our galleries would be full of school groups. And we as members sitting here did quite often . . . I include myself in this. We didn't recognize or at least we weren't mentally aware that we had a bunch of young, very impressionable young people sitting in the galleries, looking down and watching us. And I think we need to be cognizant of that, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess this was brought home to me in a very personal way very recently, Mr. Speaker, at our swearing-in ceremony, and when I had my oldest grandson sitting in the crowd observing the ceremony. There's a little bit of a story behind that. On election night . . . My oldest grandson lives in Regina here, and on election night when the first results of Last Mountain-Touchwood were posted on one of the local TV channels, he phones and he says, grandpa, he says, you're leading. And then I received a second phone call from him some time later when I was declared elected, and he says, grandpa, I just saw that you were elected. And he was very pleased that his grandfather was once again re-elected to the Assembly.

And he always has had a real interest in politics and that certainly as he's . . . I should mention he's 11 years old. And as he's gotten older his interest in politics has become much more active and he's much more keen as far as watching what's happening and trying to be aware. And so I certainly was very proud and pleased that he was able to attend the swearing-in ceremony. And I could see him sitting beside his grandmother asking her different questions about what was happening and making comments and so on. And he wanted to . . . The Premier, after we all left the Assembly, the Premier was being scrummed and he certainly was very interested in that, Mr. Speaker. And I took him over there and tried to explain the dynamics of a scrum and I think he still asks me questions about that.

Also I must thank the Premier, Mr. Speaker, for being so gracious as to inviting myself and my grandson into his office and agreeing to have some pictures taken. And they are pictures that I know I will value for the rest of my life, and I'm sure my grandson, Owen, will.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it's for that reason that I raise this issue. I think we all have times in this Assembly that will probably stay with us for the rest of our lives, whether it's a great speech that we give or, for those people participating in question period, for coming up with great answers or putting questions in a very effective way, whatever the occasion is.

One of the things that I will remember, I think, Mr. Speaker, after I leave this place is I remember, I believe it was probably the first time I was elected; it was our first full session, and I was sitting in the opposition side. And it was shortly before the start of the day's proceedings when I overheard one of our tour guides speaking to a school group, and she was saying, at that time describing who we were and what we did. And the phrase that I remember is that she said the people below us speak for us. And if you think about that, that is why we are here. We speak for the people that we represent, and I think we need to reflect in our actions their values, Mr. Speaker.

So this is something that I would hope that all members would take notice of, that we have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to perhaps reverse that job approval trend, Mr. Speaker. And I would certainly appreciate and am hopeful we would all work toward that. I'm not saying that we need to take the competitiveness out of the Assembly, but we need to find the balance, I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the people outside the Assembly can relate to more on a daily basis.

Another opportunity, Mr. Speaker, that we do have with this new legislature is to, I believe, to expand the democratic process which was started after the 2003 election through the formation of the standing policy committees, field committees, that we have in the legislature. I recall the remarks of our retiring Clerk, Gwenn Ronyk, when she urged us to expand the democratic process by not being afraid to use our committees as they were intended. And it would be my hope, Mr. Speaker, that in this new legislature that — and particularly with the view, with the makeup of the committees where there are certainly more, now more government members than there are opposition members — that all members of committees use the committees to expand the democratic process, Mr. Speaker. And we need to do that in a fashion that will result in better government.

So, Mr. Speaker, I see the hour is late and I would just like to conclude my remarks by saying that I'm certainly very proud and pleased to be able to support the Speech from the Throne, and I will be voting for the main motion and not voting for the amendment.

I would like to also adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member from Last Mountain-Touchwood has moved to adjourn debate. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — This Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:57.]

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