

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Wednesday next move first reading of a Bill to recognize Jean Louis Legare for his heroic and compassionate efforts with respect to Chief Sitting Bull as his people during their years of refuge in what is now the province of Saskatchewan.

I give notice that I shall on Wednesday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Department of Economic Diversification and Trade and the minister's trade trips: what was (1) the total cost of the trade delegation's trip to Mexico including travel expenses, lodging, and communications; (2) the number of private individuals who accompanied the minister; (3) the number of staff who accompanied the minister; (4) the amount of the minister's own personal expenses including travel, lodging, communications, and entertainment; (5) does the government have a means of tracking how many sales, economic opportunities, or jobs are created as a result of these trips; and (6) what is the nature of the tracking mechanism referred to in the previous question?

I will add to that, Mr. Speaker, the trip to Cuba.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly, Mr. and Mrs. Ken Dear, residents of Langham area, in the RM (rural municipality) of Corman Park near Saskatoon. Mr. Dear was a member of the council of Corman Park for a number of years when I was a reeve there, and I wish the Assembly to join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

VON Contract Cancellation

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon. I rise, Mr. Speaker, to question the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, you are well aware that your government's actions have forced the cancellation of a contract for home nursing services with the long-standing and the well-respected Victorian Order of Nurses.

Now, Madam Minister, not only does this remove the essential services that they provide, it will put in jeopardy the other services, health-related services that they provide, such as seniors' health, counselling, sitter services for adults, foot care, friendly visitors, and so on

— all done, Madam Minister, I might add, with volunteer services totalling more than 14,000 hours.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is: would you not agree that in the name of integrating services you will have actually cost taxpayers anywhere from 150,000 to \$175,000 annually as was put forward in the letter from the VON (Victorian Order of Nurses) to you?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me say first of all that the decision that the Regina Health Board arrived at with respect to VON will save taxpayers a minimum of 80,000 to 90,000 per year by providing home care nursing services directly to their clients.

The Regina Health Board is also having discussions, I understand, with the VON to carry on such services such as sitter service, foot care, seniors' health programs, and friendly visitors services. So there are ongoing discussions with VON and the Regina Health Board to look at how some of the expanded services can be carried out within the community.

There are a number of things that . . . number of benefits as a result of the Regina Health Board decision to move to the consolidation of home care nursing services within one unit. And the Regina Health Board has repeatedly stated these to the public.

For example, they indicate that home care clients will benefit from this decision from improved coordination and scheduling of services. The clients will have benefit from improved communication amongst the team providing their home care services and other services within the system. The services provided by the team will include nursing, meals, home-making, assessment, and coordination.

What has occurred in this process, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, you have fired up your blame thrower. Throughout the entire discourse all you were doing was blaming the Regina Board of Health. You failed to acknowledge the fact, Madam Minister, that 14,000 hours of volunteer work are going down the drain. You failed to recognize that \$175,000 of volunteer money is now going down the drain.

And, Madam Minister, let me remind you, it is the VON, it is the VON that is saying that you will not reduce the cost of health care by this process. They say that it will cost more. They say, and I quote the brief quotation: with the creation of the Wascana home care bureaucracy to run the home nursing program, and the potential reduction or loss of other programs, will cost the health care of Saskatchewan taxpayer more and more.

Madam Minister, you are the minister; it is your responsibility. The question: is your drive for health care reform so blind and poorly planned as to cancel contracts which so directly go against your highly publicized wellness plan as is clearly the case with the VON?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, for the member opposite to suggest that volunteers will not work with home care, is totally false. There will still be ample and many, many volunteers working in the system.

The fact of the matter is, is that the Regina Health Board is having ongoing discussions with VON to determine what other services can be provided and how it can be coordinated with the system overall. It is not the doom and gloom that the member opposite represents: that all these volunteers are going to pack their bags and go home, because I don't believe that's the case.

I believe that the people of Regina do want to volunteer their services and there will be continued volunteers in the system, in our health care system, throughout Saskatchewan.

For the members opposite to suggest that all the volunteers are going to quit volunteering is simply not accurate and not realistic. And, Mr. Speaker, the Regina Health Board is continuing, as I said earlier, to have discussions with VON and organizations throughout the city to provide a much more coordinated and comprehensive system of health care services.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, you are correct in one thing: the volunteer system and spirit of Saskatchewan will survive in spite of you. You are correct in that one.

Madam Minister, I want to just remind you in case you have forgotten, that you refused to meet with the VON. This was confirmed as little as 10 minutes ago. You refused to meet with them. They've requested a meeting with you to discuss this important issue. You hide behind one of the many bunkers that this government is establishing for itself.

And you hide behind the Regina Health Board. You say, go talk to them; I have nothing more to do with this. You blame them.

Madam Minister, will you give the VON the opportunity to make direct application to you. Will you come out from behind those walls you are building around your office long enough, Madam Minister, to take responsibility for your actions?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the Associate Minister of Health met with the VON. So I want to make sure that the members opposite are aware of that.

Now the other fact is this, is we have in our health care

reform indicated that community boards will have more community control and input into the decision-making process with respect to health care. I do not intend, when the Regina Health Board advises us that they are looking after this particular matter, to move in and cancel their decision and try to outguess their decision-making process. I think that would be very unfair in view of the fact that we have indicated that community boards would have more control and input.

However, the members opposite should be aware that the Associate Minister of Health has met with VON.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A new question to the minister. Madam Minister, in the words of your Premier, we don't want to and they don't want to talk to your toy minister. They want to talk to the real minister, Madam Minister, which is you. The buck should stop in your position. You are the final authority, Madam Minister.

And I say to you that the VON contract is one example of what is a very ill-conceived, ill-planned, confusing plan, if you can call it that, for the health care district exercise. And we may well pay up paying more for our services as a result.

Madam Minister, the deadline for your health care district is quickly approaching. April is almost here. In light of the short period of time and the seriousness of the issue, I trust that the minister's answers will be short, brief, and forthcoming.

Madam Minister, very simply, can you tell us how much these changes that you are managing will save the Saskatchewan taxpayers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Well I think, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite should speak to the Regina Health Board, the Saskatoon Health Board, and the Prince Albert Health Board, where millions of dollars have already been saved by these health boards through the proper coordination and integration of services and the removal of duplication, at the same time expanding services in the social area such as public health services and more programs.

So the member opposite should sit down and meet with these health boards just once to find out what is really happening there, rather than listening to rumours and innuendo and his political friends trying to slant the story with respect to health reform in these three cities.

The fact of the matter is, it's already saved the taxpayer millions of dollars. And there will be increased savings as a result of this kind of exercise throughout the province as we move through health reform.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All I can say to you, Madam Minister, is that I hope that the VON in other

cities in Saskatchewan are not going to be meeting the same fate as the one in Regina have — I sincerely hope, and I think I speak on behalf of all of the VONs throughout the province.

Madam Minister, one would hope that the massive restructuring of health care such as this would necessitate the complete study of the issue and the complete diligence on the part of the NDP government. Madam Minister, have you done any analysis which states very simply how much the new district boards will save Saskatchewan taxpayers? I'm interested, Madam Minister, because you speak in glowing terms of millions — millions. Can you show us any study that you have done that will be specific, line-by-line analysis to show the people of Saskatchewan that indeed you do know what you're doing?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, the member opposite knows that we have not created districts throughout Saskatchewan at this point. We do not know what the configuration of these particular districts will be. When we have our districts established we will be able to determine more accurately what services will be needed within a district and what sort of savings will be generated and what sort of services will be provided within the district.

When we have had an opportunity to establish our districts, we will be able to . . . and do a needs assessment within a district, we will be in a better position to give line-by-line indication to the member opposite of what we are intending to achieve in this area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I believe maybe I would be having better luck if I did ask the Associate Minister of Health to bring forth the government's plan.

But I'm going to give you something now, Madam Minister, one of the very few things that is still free in this province, and that is advice, if you would just care to listen now.

People want to know where this process is taking them. They want to know that indeed it will save them money while maintaining services, Madam Minister. After all, Madam Minister, I'm sure everyone would be able to swallow the bitter medicine that you've given them if they knew that that fact was assured. However, it would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that the minister is experimenting with the patient.

How about giving us a ballpark figure, Madam Minister? Are we going to break even? Are we going to be spending more money? Will you give an indication, Madam Minister, that will show the people of Saskatchewan that indeed you do know what you're doing?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I think the members must be advised of a further thing. Health reform is not solely for the sake of saving money. Health reform is to

deliver in the longer term a much higher quality of health care.

Well the members opposite say oh. Well that goes to show just how much they've been listening in the last six to seven months. Obviously they do not want to understand what's taking place in the province because they would rather make a political issue out of it than attempting to participate in what has been a very positive process.

Through the coordination and integration of services we are hoping that we will be able to provide more comprehensive health care services to people in Saskatchewan. That means out in rural Saskatchewan, if we can create a critical mass of approximately 12,000 or maybe more, perhaps 20,000, critical mass of people, that we will be able to . . .

And the members opposite obviously don't want to hear this, Mr. Speaker, because they're sitting there and chirping from their seats. They don't want to hear what's really happening with health reform.

The fact is is this, is that by creating a larger population that health care workers can service, we may be able to encourage the establishment of group medical practices and multi-disciplinary teams in our rural communities so that once and for all we can deliver . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for interrupting Madam Minister's soliloquy there.

Madam Minister, you finally admit that it's not just for saving money. Then why are you doing that, Madam Minister? One of your other touted reasons I guess for this massive restructuring is because you are embarked upon a wellness model — a wellness model, Madam Minister.

Well could you please tell us, Madam Minister, how you are . . . how this idea of increasing community control over the health system is going to be an example of the wellness model?

Can you tell this Assembly, Madam Minister, how wellness is served and how community control is exemplified when your government unilaterally ended support services for rural hospitals? How does that fit your wellness plan, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the health reform, as I've indicated on numerous times, through a district board structure we will be able to deliver more services and more comprehensive and coordinated services.

Gone is the time when we look at one community and one institution or one program. It's time for us to look at a broader community whereby we can share services within that community and hopefully attract more health

professionals to a district that can service our rural communities.

It's been a problem in this province for years and the members opposite chose to do nothing about it. We have had trouble getting doctors to our smaller communities and there are a number of reasons for that.

It has also been recommended on numerous occasions that we have group medical practices to try and get doctors to rural communities. One of the best ways to achieve that is through a district structure, Mr. Speaker. There will . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, I'm having somewhat of difficulty following your rationale and your reasoning here. You talk of one problem about getting more professional services into rural Saskatchewan. Yet on the same . . . my previous question asked you, how are you . . . why are you doing as far as the wellness model is concerned when we have front-line people like the care professionals giving the care to the folks — dietitians, diabetic counsellors, social workers, pharmaceutical counsellors — people who are directly responsible for preventive wellness, wellness model as you would have us believe. What about responsibility? What about accountability, community control?

We have talked to regional administrators and they tell us that they had no idea this was coming. The CEO (chief executive officer) and director of nursing for the Bengough Union Hospital said they were never consulted, never. The administrator of the Wynyard hospital said that if wellness is the driving force behind health reform, then this has been done backwards — not my words.

Madam Minister, I agree though. Wellness is not the driving force behind your regionalization; community control isn't either. But, Madam Minister, why would you have imposed this decision without most of the boards in place? This is neither consultative and certainly not cooperative.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — It's my understanding that there is going to be transition money, and this will be provided for under . . . through regional hospitals and eventually under the district boards once they're in place. So the services, I am advised that the services will be provided on an interim basis and there shouldn't be any difficulty in that regard.

I also want to indicate to the member opposite, who talked in terms of community control, for example, that by moving through . . . or by moving to more community control in delivering the health care system through district boards, we are going to be able to get more involvement over a broader, more comprehensive range of services in Saskatchewan than what we have now, as I indicated earlier. It won't be one board in one institution. It'll be one board in a whole range of services and these

members will come from the community. And it's hoped through the health reform that we can get more input from people within our communities.

As to regional services, I am advised there is some transition funding and I am further advised that this service will be provided in the district context.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, I'm going to try to cut through all of the stuff that you've been saying this afternoon for the benefit of those who are listening and watching. The motivation, the motivation is simply this: blame throwing and offloading. Those are the two motivations that are the engines behind your so-called initiative here of the wellness program.

The whole process is designed to create the illusion of community control and consultation when clearly the strings will still continue to be pulled by you, Madam Minister, and your cohort there, the Minister of Finance. And whenever she yanks on the strings, she will say, well I'm not the one that's dancing to the tune. And we have no indication from the minister, Mr. Speaker, how much taxpayers' money would be saved. You have no program. You have no plans. You have no indication whatsoever that you precisely know where you're heading.

Madam Minister, can you give the people of the province the assurance that when all is said and done, the people — the people — will have the last say in whatever is designed for their community? Can you give them that assurance, Madam Minister, that the last say will be theirs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — The member is so inconsistent in his arguments, Mr. Speaker. Just earlier this afternoon he said we should reverse the decision of the Regina Health Board and do what VON wants them to do, and he was complaining that we gave control to the Regina Health Board. Now he's telling me that we're not giving community control and we should be giving community control. I wish the member opposite would figure out what side of the fence he's sitting on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — What the member opposite does not realize is that health reform on a district basis is taking place across this country, in some form or another, in virtually every province and territory in this country. Because people across Canada realize that the way to move to an enhanced and improved health care system is to organize on a district basis — or in other provinces the regions are much larger — and to coordinate and integrate services and move to more community-based services. They realize this across this country, and that's what we are attempting to do.

Now he talked . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you Mr. Speaker. A supplementary to the Minister of Health. You claim, Madam Minister, that millions of dollars can be saved by elimination of duplication of services in bulk purchasing, and you're likely correct. But I have a question from the many, many people on health boards with whom I've met around the province. And there's a great deal of uncertainty about what your government's health plan really is, and this is preventing some boards from moving toward amalgamation. They don't know if the people who are on the present boards who have been appointed, and with whom they are having to make some monetary arrangements in their consolidation, are even going to be around next year or the year after. And who is going to be then held accountable for those arrangements?

When are the people of this province going to be given enough detail about your wellness plan to make any kind of sense out of much . . . whatsoever and remove the uncertainty?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well we will be tabling a piece of legislation within days in the legislature that will set out the format for organizing district boards. The other aspect is I will be meeting with stakeholders in Regina and Saskatoon to deal with any questions or answers.

And I should point out to the member that a lot of the questions that are raising as a result of out there in the communities are uncertainties because the legislation hasn't been tabled. I'm hoping that the tabling of this legislation can resolve many of those issues.

The Premier also chose to announce that a district board would not have taxing powers on the property tax base, which was one of the major issues out there. So that decision has been made and announced to the public, which has resolved a lot of the concerns.

There are other concerns, however. I know that, and we are dealing with them. In many cases they can only be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. We have 20 to 30 planning groups working throughout the province with these people at the grass roots level, answering their questions and trying to help them resolve some of the concerns.

So through a combination . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

De-insurance of Optometric Services

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another question to the same minister. I wonder, Madam Minister, if you are aware that today is vision awareness week, or this week will be vision awareness week. And I wonder, Madam Minister, if you are aware of the devastation that your government and you in particular, Madam Minister, has caused many of the people of Saskatchewan with your de-insuring of chiropractors' services, your de-insuring of the diabetic services, your de-insuring of the very air that people breathe, when it comes to oxygen.

I wonder, Madam Minister, if you are aware of the devastation that has been created by your de-insuring of optometric services. All of these things are diametrically opposed to your concept of wellness.

Madam Minister, I have one question for you. It's vision awareness week. The optometrists of Saskatoon in particular, that I'm aware of, have gone out and they have volunteered free services to those that are in need of eye services that you are no longer willing to pay for. Free eye examinations, Madam Minister. And I think that speaks very well for the generosity of the people of this province.

My question to you, Madam Minister, is: in the wake of your devastation, will you at least recognize the services provided, the free services provided by these optometrists by recognizing them by sending them a letter of congratulations and thankfulness on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan and this legislature for doing the job that you as a Minister of Health and as a government should be doing but are failing dramatically in so doing?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — The member opposite neglected to advise the public that poor people are covered for optometric services and so are children covered for optometric services by the province.

The other thing that the member opposite failed to recognize is the fact that while they were in government they continued to whittle away at the public financing, to mismanage and to spend money in such a fashion that they have put the public of Saskatchewan into a position where there's a \$15 billion debt, and we are having extreme difficulty in running the financial situation in Saskatchewan because of their mismanagement and the fact they have drummed up this absolutely incredible . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I was not cutting the Minister of Health off. I was going to suggest to the members opposite I did not think there was any interference when the member asked his question, and they should have given the minister also the same opportunity. However, I think she has had ample time to answer the question.

TABLING OF COMMUNICATION

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I have a communication from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Pursuant to section 68.7 of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby inform the Assembly of the membership of the Board of Internal Economy effective January 20, 1993:

The Honourable Herman Rolfes, Chairman; the Honourable Carol Carson; the Honourable Eldon Lautermilch; Mr. Glenn Hagel, MLA; Mr. Eric Upshall, MLA; Mr. William Neudorf, MLA; Mr. Rick Swenson, MLA.

Yours sincerely, Sylvia Fedoruk, Lieutenant

Governor, Province of Saskatchewan.

I hereby table her communication.

MOTIONS

Substitution of Members on Committees

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave I would like to move a couple of motions that deal with committee membership on some of our standing committees, and therefore I would move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Westmount:

That the names of Ms. Crofford and Mr. McPherson be substituted for the names of Mr. Anguish and Lautermilch on the Standing Committee of Public Accounts.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Regina Dewdney:

That by leave, the names of Mr. Kluz and Lyons be substituted for that of Mr. Calvert and Ms. Crofford on the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

I so move.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for P.A.(Prince Albert) Northcote:

That by leave, the name of Mr. Upshall be substituted for that of Mr. Calvert on the list of members on the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures.

I so move.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon River Heights:

That by leave, the name of Ms. Hamilton be substituted for that of Mr. Goulet on the Special Committee on Regulations.

I so move.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow:

That the name of Mr. Lyons be substituted for that of Mr. Goulet on the Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Broadway:

That the name of Mr. Roy be substituted for that of Mr. Calvert on the list of members on the Standing Committee on Education.

I so move.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Fairview:

That the names of Mr. Thompson, Serby, and Whitmore be substituted for the names of Mr. Anguish, Calvert, and Lautermilch on the list of members on the Standing Committee on the Environment.

I so move.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Rosetown-Elrose:

That the name of Mr. Upshall be substituted for that of Mr. Lautermilch on the list of names on the Standing Committee on Estimates.

I so move.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, finally I move, seconded by the member for Cumberland . . . no, the member from Rosetown:

That the name of Mr. Pringle be substituted for that of Ms. Atkinson on the list of members on the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

CONDOLENCES

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As is known to members of the House, since this House last

was in session we have had three members, or three former members, of this legislature who have passed away. And as is the tradition of this legislature, I'm going to move three motions of condolence with regard to those three members. And I will therefore, Mr. Speaker, begin first of all with that of Mr. Clifford Honey Thurston.

Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness that I rise to note the passing of a distinguished former member of this Assembly, Clifford Honey Thurston. Mr. Thurston's life was one of service. He was a true public servant who devoted his life to making Saskatchewan a better place in which to live. Clifford Thurston's life was one of service to his community and, Mr. Speaker, he will be missed.

In his younger years, Mr. Thurston was active in a milk producers' association which secured better prices for milk, and was a member of the rural electrification committee. And I use these two examples, Mr. Speaker, because they are examples of the kind of people that Mr. Thurston was, which is the kind of people that Saskatchewan people are, and that is people working together to improve things for themselves and their neighbours, often, Mr. Speaker, against great odds.

His political contribution to this province was very significant. Mr. Thurston was a delegate at the founding convention of the CCF (Cooperative Commonwealth Federation) in 1933 and was active in organizing the founding convention of the New Democratic Party in Ottawa in 1961. Within the CCF and the NDP (New Democratic Party) he served in a number of positions and his contribution to political life did much to inspire others.

I recall, Mr. Speaker, that after my first election in 1971, one of the people who I saw very often in the lounge of the members, at that time the government lounge, and in the hallways when the session was in progress, was Mr. Thurston, who became a valued adviser and a man of great knowledge, because of his vast experience, to all of the members on our side of the House, and I suspect to others, but particularly to those like myself who were the first-time members in this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my own heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the family and friends of Mr. Thurston. His contribution to Saskatchewan is appreciated and he will be missed.

And accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that all members will join me in supporting the following motion which I am about to move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Thunder Creek. Mr. Speaker, I move, by leave of the Assembly:

That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of a former member of this Assembly and expresses its grateful appreciation of the contribution he made to his community, his constituency, and to the province.

Clifford Honey Thurston, who died in Regina on August 26, 1992, was a member of this Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Lumsden from 1956 to 1964.

Mr. Thurston was born at Drinkwater on May 16, 1911. But at the age of seven he and his family relocated to a farm four miles north-west of Regina. He was educated at Greendyke School and at Scott Collegiate in Regina.

After graduation he continued to help operate the family farm. And during the winter months in the years between 1930 and 1939, Mr. Thurston also worked for the Department of Highways and for General Motors in Regina.

In 1938 Mr. Thurston took over the family farm, and on October 14 of that year he married Bernice Leer.

In the early 1930s Mr. Thurston began a very active career in provincial politics that spanned the whole of his working life. In 1933 he joined the CCF as a founding member and subsequently held many party executive posts until his election to the Legislative Assembly in 1956. Mr. Thurston was re-elected to represent Lumsden for a second term in 1960. He ran again in other elections, but did not find the same success.

During his two terms as the member of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Thurston served as the government members' whip.

Mr. Thurston served his community in many ways. In 1933 he began a 30-year term as the secretary treasurer of the Greendyke school board. As well, Mr. Thurston had long tenures on the Sherwood Credit Union board of directors during the 1950s and again in the 1970s, and on the Saskatchewan Government Insurance board from 1947 until 1955.

He was a member of the farmstart board from 1973 until 1983, the rural electrification committee, and sat on the board of Guarantee and Fidelity.

As a farmer, Mr. Thurston had a great interest in agricultural issues and served his local milk producers' association and as the Wheat Pool committee member for Condie and Armour from 1938 until 1978.

Mr. Thurston was as well an active member of the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union. He farmed until his retirement in 1983.

In recording its own deep sense of loss and bereavement, this Assembly expresses its most sincere sympathy with members of the bereaved family.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

(1445)

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure for me today to rise on behalf of the official opposition

and second this motion brought forward by the Deputy Premier to eulogize a former member of this Assembly and to pass on to his family the condolences of the opposition.

Certainly Mr. Thurston is one from his days in public life in this province that contributed a tremendous amount to the fabric of our province. When one looks at involvement with things like school boards for 30-some years, with rural electrification, Mr. Thurston is a person that all rural people should respect regardless of their political beliefs, because he was obviously someone that had a very strong feeling for things that were uniquely rural issues.

Certainly a very long involvement in politics in this province must have made him a tremendously interesting person to listen to in this Assembly, and I can appreciate probably that the Deputy Premier some days probably received more advice than he probably wanted from someone that had that breadth and range of political involvement in our province. That, Mr. Speaker, is what makes this Assembly so terribly interesting. It is that we do learn from those who have gone before us, and hopefully the mistakes that were made before, that older members impart to newer ones, that won't be made again.

And certainly Mr. Thurston is to be commended for his lifelong involvement in the political process and being looked upon in his community as someone who could be held up as a good example for others to follow.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, once again I'll just say on behalf of the official opposition, our condolences to Mr. Thurston's family.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few short words. I think this gentleman without doubt is most deserving of recognition by all who admire the efforts of those who love their families and their friends through their service to their communities, their province, and their country. And on behalf of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party, I offer condolences to all who knew and loved Mr. Thurston.

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Cliff Thurston was the last CCF-New Democrat to represent what is now Qu'Appelle-Lumsden in this legislature, and I too offer my condolences to his family and friends. On behalf of all those who knew him and worked with him, I would like to add a few words to what has already been said.

I met Cliff several times and was impressed by his commitment to Saskatchewan and the people who live and work here. He was full of wonderful stories about his farming and political life, and he was particularly proud of his contribution to the CCF in his early years and being privileged to work with people like J.S. Woodsworth and Tommy Douglas.

The last time I visited him with his wife and daughter, he was full of good, sound advice on how to be a successful representative of the people. It was during that visit that he impressed upon me that honesty in all public and personal dealings was always best, and that retaining

a sense of humour was absolutely essential to retaining one's sanity.

In my recollection of Cliff Thurston — and this is borne out by all his friends — he followed his own advice. Honesty and humour worked for him, and they work for us all. My condolences to his wife, Bernice, and his family.

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my condolences to the Thurston family as well. The Deputy Premier outlined in detail Cliff Thurston's political biography which reflects Cliff Thurston's solid contributions to Saskatchewan and to his community.

Cliff was indeed a tireless worker for both the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and for the New Democratic Party, as well as for his constituents. I'd like to share with you another side of Cliff, and that as friend of mine and as an adviser of mine over the many years we knew each other.

I first met Cliff in the early 1970s, long after his elected career as an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) had ended. I found Cliff to be a personable, hard-working, dedicated man. He was a true gentleman in every sense of the word. He was sensitive to people's needs, to people's feelings, and to their concerns. He respected people and he respected their views, whether they agreed with his or whether they were contradictory.

I often spoke with him at the Co-op cafeteria, downtown Regina, and later at the Sherwood Co-op on Rochdale Boulevard, which was in my constituency. Cliff and his wife, Bernice, and daughter, Marilyn, lived in my riding for a number of years. I enjoyed and looked forward to visiting with them whenever I had the opportunity.

Cliff's strengths were his ability to listen to people, to network with people, to gather and to give information which was helpful to you. Cliff Thurston suffered from Parkinson's disease for many years. It's a very debilitating disease, slowly reducing your ability to do normal, everyday things. Cliff's wife, Bernice, was a solid rock of support for Cliff during these difficult times, and I wish to acknowledge that today.

Cliff became quite distressed at losing his ability to go to meetings and at reducing his hectic schedule of visiting with people, and farming in his later years.

During my visits, Cliff seldom criticized people. If he didn't have a positive or a happy comment to make about somebody, or something that was constructive about somebody, he seldom made a comment about them. It was always uplifting for me to visit with Cliff.

Cliff was a member of the Co-operative Commonwealth Legislative Advisory Committee. It was a committee of our provincial council, elected from our provincial council, and Cliff very strongly believed that this sort of a committee was a democratic committee which worked very effectively. He often shared his experiences with me on this committee.

For example, the time he would meet with Tommy Douglas, then the premier of Saskatchewan, and Tommy

would raise with him and his committee colleagues whether this person or that person should be appointed to a particular position in government, whether it was a cabinet post or in the upper echelons of the civil service. And many times when the committee had an input it was very constructive, and on one occasion Cliff told me that one recommendation from Premier Douglas about a potential cabinet member was not widely accepted by the advisory committee and this person was never appointed to the cabinet that time.

Ed Whelan, who was an MLA from Regina North West for 19 years, sat with Cliff for four of those years from 1960 to '64, and Mr. Whelan wanted me to acknowledge Cliff's steadfastness during the medicare debate of 1961 and '62, and I do that today.

Cliff was very keenly interested in politics after his elected career was over and always offered insights into history such as this committee.

But I want to just share one final story with you about Cliff. It was prior to the 1982 provincial election call. It was about two or three weeks before the government of the day, Premier Blakeney, called the election. Cliff came into my office in the legislature.

He was quite distressed about hearing the rumours that we were going to call an election. And he came into my office and he said, John, is this true that there is going to be an election called in the next few weeks? And I said, well I really don't know, Cliff, but I think the sense is that there will be an election call in short order.

And he said, well I'm very concerned about that because I don't think the premier has consulted with the Wheat Pool field men around the province. And I said, well I don't know if he has or he hasn't. Why, Cliff? He says, well before Tommy Douglas called elections in the 1944 to '60 era, he always consulted with not only his MLAs and his people in his inner circle, but he also consulted with a number of Wheat Pool field men around the province. And they normally told him, and quite honestly told him prior to each election call, whether they could win or not.

And Cliff had advised me to advise the premier at that time to at least undertake this very straightforward and comprehensive approach towards calling an election.

I don't think the premier in '82 did that, and I'm not saying that's the reason why we lost, but I want to just underline the fact that Cliff Thurston's instincts, even in '82 when he was in his early 70's, were still pretty sharp.

The last few days before the election took place in '91, Cliff called me to his home and he wanted to talk about the election campaign. He was unable to get out and about very readily at that time. And I think this illustrates Cliff's feeling towards people in general, but he said to me at that time that he knew that my riding was going to be different. He would not be living in the riding after the election was over and he knew that there was a great demand on people's lives in politics.

He was very much aware that elected officials spent little

time with their family. There was a great deal of cost to the MLA during the course of their careers. And he understood this very well and he offered me some money which he didn't want to go to the campaign, but to go to my personal expenses just as an MLA. And I took this as a very generous gesture on his part and, although I accepted it, I told him I would accept it on behalf of the organization and that we'd issue a receipt for him, which we did. But this illustrated, I think, a very humane understanding and generous understanding of people in politics.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the support and sacrifice of Cliff's family — his wife Bernice; their daughter, Marilyn, who's been employed by Sherwood Credit Union for 23 years; their son, Ken, who's a high school principal at Arborfield — with your support and understanding, Cliff was able to be the hard-working, successful MLA that he was. Please accept our gratitude for sharing Cliff with us.

Cliff Thurston was an MLA who was a representative who served Saskatchewan with distinction and will be remembered thus. Please accept my deepest sympathies in his passing.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I rise with sorrow to note the passing of Hans Adolf Broten, a former member of this Legislative Assembly.

It is fitting that we, in this Assembly, acknowledge the work and sacrifice of members who have gone before us. Today our sympathy and condolences go out to the Broten family. And those of us here who knew him, we too will miss Hans Broten.

Between 1975 and 1982, if I may make a personal comment, I had the honour of representing a very large part of the area for which Mr. Broten had been a member of the Legislative Assembly. And I can recall the many people who often spoke to me very highly of Mr. Broten and his dedication to his work and to his constituents.

The example that he set as an MLA and the example that he set in church and community will be long remembered. He was a tireless worker for universal medicare, a strong advocate for farmers, and a tireless worker on behalf of his constituents.

Mr. Broten and his wife, Lovern Anita Nelson of Viscount, had five children, and today I want to extend my own personal, heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the Broten family. His contribution to Saskatchewan is appreciated and will be missed.

(1500)

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would, by leave of the House, want to move the following motion:

That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of a former member of this Assembly and expresses its grateful appreciation of the contribution he made to his community, his

constituency, and to the province.

Hans Adolf Broten, who died in Saskatoon on October 19, 1992, was a member of this Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Watrous from 1960 to 1967.

Mr. Broten was born at Viscount on August 12, 1916 and received his early education at the Viscount Consolidated School. In 1937 he graduated from the University of Saskatchewan farm school. On May 25, 1940, he married Lovern Nelson of Viscount. The couple farmed near Viscount, where Mr. Broten took an active role in his community's affairs.

Mr. Broten's interest in his community is illustrated by the many organizations in which he served and held executive positions. He was president of the local Wheat Pool committee and was a director of the Rutan and Colonsay cooperatives. Mr. Broten also headed the Viscount Farmers' Union local for a number of years. As well, Mr. Broten was chairman of the Lanigan and Viscount school boards and a board member of the local telephone company.

After many years of service on his constituency council, Mr. Broten was first elected in the general election of 1960. He was re-elected in 1964 but ran unsuccessfully in the 1967 general election. Mr. Broten continued to take an active interest in his community's affairs as well as his church. He served on the board of the Canadian Sunday School Mission. After he retired, Mr. Broten moved to Saskatoon where he was active in the Circle Alliance Church.

In recording its own deep sense of loss and bereavement, this Assembly expresses its most sincere sympathy with the members of the bereaved family.

Mr. Speaker, with leave, I so move this motion.

Leave granted.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again it's a pleasure for me on behalf of the official opposition to join with the Deputy Premier today in his condolence motion to the family of Hans Adolf Broten and the service that he rendered to the province of Saskatchewan as an MLA for Watrous constituency over a period of seven years.

As the Deputy Premier mentioned, that when we eulogize people like Mr. Broten, who obviously in the day and age in which they served gave up a tremendous amount to be a member of this Legislative Assembly, and so often I think we don't talk about the family probably as much as we should because they weren't actually sitting here amongst their peers. But as we all know, behind every successful person in life there is that spousal relationship, that relationship with your children that allow you to do the extra mile in performing your public duties.

And certainly I wish to pass on to Mr. Broten's family the condolences of the official opposition. He obviously was a person that had very intense religious feelings that served his church over a great period of time, and I'm sure that many people in the Saskatoon area also would be joining the Assembly today in wishing condolences to Mr. Broten's family.

I think that the whole community of Watrous, as the Deputy Premier said, and area, is joining with us today in this condolence motion. And I think that is right and proper when we think of people that have served the public as he probably did over those seven years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in expressing my sympathy and condolences to the Broten family. For those of us who have lost loved ones, often there are certain things that have brought us solace. And in the case of the Broten family, who are religious people and have spent their time not only serving through public life but through their church as well, I would like to quote to them from Isaiah: See, I shall not forget you. I have carved you in the palm of my hand.

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to add my words to those of previous speakers. And I guess I would start by saying that I feel I have missed something not knowing Hans Broten, although from the many stories that have been reiterated to me from constituents and people who sat with him in this Assembly, I do have a sense, I believe, of what he was about.

And it has been relayed to me that, and my sense is that, Hans Broten was a man who cared deeply about life and people. Agriculture of course was his main love, along with medicare and health reforms. And as other have stated, he worked tirelessly to achieve ends in those fields that would make life better for all involved.

I also ran into Mr. Ed Whelan a couple of weekends ago and he talked to me as well, as he had sat with Mr. Broten, and relayed some stories that were fond to him and I am sure to Mr. Broten as well about their experiences and the fun they used to have sitting in the legislature. And Mr. Whelan also expressed to me the desire that Mr. Broten had to make things better in this province. And I would just like to say to his family that the people from Watrous and area have very many fond memories of Mr. Broten and he will be remembered for a long time.

So with that I would like to express my sincere sympathy to the Broten family. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour for me to say a few words in remembrance of Hans Broten. I was practising law in Saskatoon from the period from 1979 until the 1991 election. And in the early '80s, and I believe it was in early 1984, Mr. Speaker, I noticed on my schedule the name Hans Broten as an appointment that I had on the following day and I guessed correctly that it was the same person that we're talking about today. I had never met him before, although

everyone in our party has heard the name and knows him to be one of the pioneers.

He came in to my office and we did the particular piece of legal work that he came to do and then we began to talk. And, Mr. Speaker, he returned to my office again and again over the years that I was in practice and carried on a conversation that consumed hours of valuable billing time but was just too good and too precious to let go of. It was worthwhile from my point of view. I'm the better for it.

You heard the Deputy Premier refer to Hans Broten's background in his community. And so typical of so many of the old-timers in our party — I can't speak for the others, but for the New Democratic Party — the Wheat Pool background, the co-ops, the church, the farmers' union, the telephone board, the school board, the rural municipality, all of that, the mark of a community leader and a person vitally interested in his community and the issues that bear upon that community and indeed upon his world.

The conversation that I had with him ranged the whole gamut of those things and more, Mr. Speaker, including of course his religion. And I will never forget for the rest of my life the conversations that I had with Hans Broten, an exceptionally, exceptionally interested and vital person with views that were rooted deeply into rural Saskatchewan, and he was a real credit to himself and his family and his province throughout his life.

I would like to pass on my sympathies to the family, to Lovern, and to his children and grandchildren. One of them I know well, Mr. Speaker, and that is his daughter, Donna Allen. And I convey to her and, as I say, to the whole family, my sincerest sympathy on Hans's death.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today our condolences are also with the family of another former member of this Legislative Assembly, Robert Irvin Perkins. Mr. Perkins was the member of this Assembly for the constituency for Nipawin from 1960 to 1964. As we note his passing, we also remember that he was a builder and Saskatchewan owes him a debt of gratitude.

As is with the case with the previous two, Mr. Speaker, I also knew Mr. Perkins very well. I recall in the 1970s, on many occasions when I visited the Nipawin area, Mr. Perkins coming to whatever the occasion might be, whether it was a political meeting or whether it was a meeting in my ministerial capacity. He was always there, very interested in the affairs of the province and always showed some exceptionally sound judgement and a grasp of all of the issues that were important to this province of Saskatchewan as well as his community.

Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my deepest sympathies and sincere condolences to the Perkins family. The example Robert Perkins set, a life of service and dedication, will continue to serve as an inspiration to us all.

And with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I want by leave of

the Assembly to move this motion:

That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of a former member of this Assembly and expresses its grateful appreciation of the contribution he made to his community, his constituency, and to the province.

Robert Irvin Perkins, who died in Nipawin on October 29, 1992, was a Member of the Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Nipawin from 1960 to 1964. Mr. Perkins was born at Owen Sound, Ontario, on June 30, 1898. At the age of nine, he and his family left Ontario for the Guernsey area of Saskatchewan where his parents established a homestead. Mr. Perkins attended public school in Attica and received his high school education in Lanigan.

On February 5, 1925, Mr. Perkins married Gladys Burge who at the time taught school at Guernsey. In 1930 the Perkinses moved to a farm near Codette. At Guernsey and then at Codette, Mr. Perkins became increasingly active in community affairs. He served as president of the Codette Consumers' Co-operative Association, as president of the Nipawin Rural Telephone Company, and on the board of stewards of his church.

Mr. Perkins was also involved in his district's agricultural affairs by serving for over a decade as a Wheat Pool delegate. He was a member of the Nipawin Agricultural Society and as a long-time member of the Saskatchewan Seed Growers Association.

As well, Mr. Perkins had an expressed interest in provincial affairs. He is recognized as a founding member of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the CCF. In 1960 Mr. Perkins was elected to serve as the member of this Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Nipawin. He ran again in the 1964 general election but was not re-elected.

After leaving provincial politics, Mr. Perkins continued to participate in the affairs of his community. In 1971 the Saskatchewan Seed Growers Association awarded him the Anderson Award. He farmed until his retirement in 1975, at which time he moved into Codette. In 1989, he moved to Nipawin.

In recording its own deep sense of loss and bereavement, this Assembly expresses its most sincere sympathy with members of the bereaved family.

With leave, Mr. Speaker, I move this motion.

Leave granted.

(1515)

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again it's

a pleasure for me to, on behalf of the official opposition, join the Deputy Premier today in this condolence motion to the family of Robert Irvin Perkins from Nipawin, who served in this Assembly for one term.

Mr. Perkins is another one of these individuals, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, who took time out from a very busy personal life to dedicate himself to the public service in the province of Saskatchewan. As a registered seed grower myself, I know the regime that one goes through as a seed grower to live up to the expectations of the Act that governs you.

I'm sure that Mr. Perkins's approach to public life was much the same as he did in his business career, that when that particular field of registered seed needed to be rogued, that Mr. Perkins was out there and did his roguing, otherwise the Anderson Award would never have been awarded by his peer group.

It means that you are diligent, that you look after the things that need looking after. And I'm sure that Mr. Perkins's tenure in this Assembly of only one term wasn't necessarily because he didn't do his homework, it is the shifting of the political sands that often occur in this province that determines the longevity of members of this Assembly.

Nipawin is a long ways from Regina. And I think in the days when transportation wasn't quite what it is today, that people that offered themselves for service here need to be commended because it meant that you were away from your family and your farm and your business for extended periods of time.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it is with a sense of bereavement on behalf of the official opposition that we join in this condolence motion to Mr. Perkins's family.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a privilege, on behalf of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party, to extend condolences to those who loved Mr. Robert Perkins. It's important that we celebrate the lifetime of achievements and contributions of such individuals who give of themselves to improve the quality of life for us all.

I just would like to let his family and friends know that we in my party think very highly of individuals who will do such things on our behalf and we appreciate the opportunity to honour him.

Mr. Keeping: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place here today to add my condolences to the family of Mr. Robert Perkins. Both on behalf of myself and on behalf of the Nipawin constituency, I want to express our gratitude and appreciation for the life he gave us.

Mr. Speaker, when I arrived at the legislature this morning, I took time to look again at his picture that hangs on the wall in the hall of this place, and I stood there for a few minutes just looking in silence at his picture and thinking of some of the memories that I have of Bob.

Before his passing, Mr. Perkins was a resident for some time in the level 4 nursing home in Nipawin and I saw him there often. But I remember Mr. Perkins from 33 years

ago when I was first old enough to vote in a provincial election. It was my privilege of . . . I had the privilege of casting my vote for that same Mr. Perkins. And as has already been mentioned, he was a founding member of the CCF and it was under those men and under Tommy Douglas that brought in medicare to our province. Mr. Perkins was a man of vision, a man of courage, and a man of integrity.

Mr. Speaker, those of us who knew him admired him, not only for the politician that he was but for the example he was in every aspect of the life he led. We admired him for the dedication with which he served the church; we admired him for the dedication and the fine example he was to his family, and of course, as has already been mentioned, to his community.

Mr. Speaker, I am one of those who can say along with many others, we are grateful for the life of Mr. Perkins and we are honoured to say that we knew him. Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly and seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Thunder Creek, I move:

That the resolutions just passed, together with the transcript of oral tributes to the memory of the deceased members, be communicated to the bereaved families on behalf of this Assembly by Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Ms. Stanger: — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Premier for giving me the privilege and the honour of moving the motion in support of this, the third Speech from the Throne of this government.

I am honoured; I am proud. I am awed at the privilege and responsibility given me.

As the member from Meadow Lake said last April: I recognize the tradition of this moment. In taking part in the debate, I am taking part in the parliamentary tradition for which I have great respect. With that recognition in mind, I realize that this moment is both fleeting and timeless.

Just as the comments we've heard in the legislature today, you are a small part of a tradition that all of us should have great respect for.

In one way though, Mr. Speaker, my moment in the spotlight today represents something fairly new in the Saskatchewan parliamentary tradition. And I would like to take just a moment to comment on that.

I mentioned the member from Meadow Lake. Before him,

the mover of the first throne speech from this government was the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden. Three speeches, two women members. I don't want to make too much of this fact, but I think it's worth mentioning in passing. The gender imbalance in this Assembly has not been broken yet, but it's bending. Fifty per cent of the population is represented by 20 per cent of the members of this Assembly. Not great, but a far cry from previous times.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, numbers really don't count. What counts is that this Assembly is represented by a fair sampling of the infinite variety of people which we have in this province. The old barriers are falling because they were too silly to stand. Gender barriers, racial barriers, religious barriers, and so on. I am proud of being a member during this time of transition because it is a simple fact that broader representation means better representation.

I'm equally honoured, Mr. Speaker, that I can present my address to you and through you to the members of this Assembly. We are both teachers in our other lives, Mr. Speaker, so we both understand the necessity of discipline and the necessity for it to be exercised judiciously. The wise use of discipline, the delicate enforcement of order, make the learning process work.

Random, excessive, legalistic enforcement of the rules impede the child's development. You, Mr. Speaker, have made the wise transition from classroom to the Speaker's Chair, and this Assembly is better for it.

Mr. Speaker, most members spoke in one or more of the previous throne speech debates. We paid tributes to our constituencies and to the voters, who in their wisdom have put us here. A few people, especially the press, thought that this was an exercise; it seemed to trouble them, the tribute paid to our constituencies. But I don't think that we can remind ourselves often enough about the people that we represent and why we are here and who put us here. We can't do that too often.

So I am proud to represent the people of Cut Knife-Lloydminster. I'm proud of its people, its business people, its ranchers, its farmers, its oil producers, its home builders, its teachers, and its home-makers. Mine is a constituency rich in resources and rich in people and history.

Some of the last shots fired in anger on Canadian soil were fired at the Battle of Cut Knife hill. Two of the bravest, wisest, and most inspirational leaders of the Cree nation, Big Bear and Poundmaker left their mark on my part of the province. It's a good place to live and work, and I am proud to represent it.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'm also a Saskatchewan MLA, not just the representative from Cut Knife-Lloydminster. I'm sure all members will agree with me when I say that we represent more than just our area; we represent and are responsible for the common good of all of Saskatchewan.

We represent our constituency best by recognizing that we are one province within one nation, that our ultimate interest is the interest of the whole, not the part. As

Edmund Burke said 200 years ago: when I choose a member, that member is not just a member from Liverpool but from the whole parliament.

So, Mr. Speaker, as the MLA from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, as a member of the governing party of Saskatchewan, and as a Canadian parliamentarian I am proud to lead the debate on this throne speech. I am proud to note that this speech continues us on the path of renewal, rebuilding, and restoration, the path we began on October 19, 1991.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's a rocky road we've been on. We have some back roads in my constituency in the Battle River valley that are two-tires-a-mile roads. Renewing the Saskatchewan economy and its society has been equally bumpy because of the Tory potholes and clip-joints left along the way.

The sorry Tory legacy is well known to the people of Saskatchewan. And now to the people of Canada courtesy of the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, a legacy of favouritism, bad planning, and worst of all, debt. Even 15 months after the end of the bad-dream government, I'm still astounded as how deep that incompetence can be.

As a school teacher I suppose I should look for something good to say about the previous administration. After all, everyone has a useful purpose in life, even if it is to serve as a horrible example. But, Mr. Speaker, a time of renewal is not a time to talk of the failures of yesterday.

As this throne speech says, the process of restoration is well under way. We have begun to restore common sense and competence to government. Unlike the federal government, we have tackled the horrendous deficit, reducing it from 1.2 billion to just over 500 million. I dare say it'll be even more greatly reduced when the new budget is introduced this session.

It's worth repeating that if we had the \$760 million in the interest payment and if that did not come off the top, then the 1992-93 budget would have shown a \$200 million surplus.

We have restored some sanity and appropriateness to the salaries of government and Crown corporation executives. We are returning the civil service to its former level of professionalism, a level that once was a model for Canadian governments.

We're moving towards gender parity in appointments to government boards and commissions, and as well as greatly increasing the number of aboriginal appointments.

Mr. Speaker, the previous government used to talk about putting government on a businesslike footing — this is such a joke to me — and in the process of bankrupting the province, they also debased the word businesslike.

(1530)

What we have done is put government back on a government-like footing. It is operating now as it did during the Blakeney-Lloyd-Douglas governments — smoothly, efficiently, and effectively.

Putting government back on track was a necessary first step and an ongoing process. No good work can be done with a weak structure. And one of the firmly held beliefs of the New Democratic Party is that government is the instrument of the people, not the enemy of the people. What we can't do for ourselves alone, we can accomplish collectively with the help of government.

As our Premier, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale said, and I quote:

It has not been easy in the past year and it will not be easy in the years ahead. We seek the support of everyone in Saskatchewan, to lay aside their individual and personal causes . . . As important as they may be . . . for the common good of all. To look to the future and to take on change. For change is not something we should fear, it is our source of hope for a better future.

What pleases me most about this throne speech, and why I am proud to be a member of this government, is it continues our pledge to rebuild our economy and to renew our society, both daunting tasks, both which we accept with determination.

Like most of the constituencies in this province, Cut Knife-Lloydminster depends on agriculture for its livelihood and for its way of life. From the days of the Barr colonists — and Barr colonists, for people that don't know, were the colonists that settled in my constituency — to the present time, we prosper or we tough it out, depending on the state of this our primary industry.

Therefore as it was last year, efforts to help our farmers face the crisis facing them, will be at the forefront of our concerns.

As the speech suggests, our efforts will be twofold: one, to do whatever possible to get us beyond this current situation caused by market conditions beyond our control; and two, to work towards a viable, sustainable, self-sufficient agricultural industry.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — Mr. Speaker, the quick fix of the previous government, GRIP 1 (gross revenue insurance program) was a sieve of a program, so expensive and so full of holes that it couldn't be plugged. It would have been outrageously expensive for the very people it was designed to help. The program was so flawed that no matter how hard we tried, it couldn't be adjusted.

We're back to square one. And I'm happy to see the new Farm Support Review Committee created to develop new safety nets. Of course, Mr. Speaker, an immediate problem is that the responsibility of the federal government cannot be solved by a provincial government, nor should it. We don't ask for the privilege to print money. The federal government should not ask Saskatchewan to compete with the combined treasuries of Europe, which of course is what it is doing. We continue to press the federal government to assume its responsibility and provide the promised third line of defence.

But, Mr. Speaker, within the limits of our powers, we are not allowing the crisis to wash over us. I'm looking forward to the discussions and responses to the minister's vision statement just released. I'm proud to see the cooperation given us by the provincial banks and credit unions in the six-year leaseback program. I particularly applaud this government's determination to support the Canadian Wheat Board and the Crow benefit. We can withstand the forces we see and combat. But if the concept of federalism means anything, we must have support from the senior levels of government.

Mr. Speaker, I will have something more to say in a moment about our economic program for renewal as I am sure will other members. But first I want to say a few clear words about our government's pledge to restore our society. I want to talk about health; I want to talk about education. First though, I want to talk about human rights.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to echo the words of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor. At this session amendments to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code will be introduced to protect discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, family status, and receipt of public assistance.

There are only two things wrong with these amendments: first, they're long overdue; and two, they should not be necessary. Unfortunately they are necessary. They are necessary, Mr. Speaker, because people like you and me — white, middle-class, working people — we have rights these three groups of individuals do not. They can be denied housing; they can be fired from their jobs, not because of anything they've done but just because of who they are. That's discrimination, and in our democracy discrimination is forbidden by law and morality.

Mr. Speaker, 45 years ago in this Assembly the Hon. Woodrow Lloyd spoke in the debate introducing the Saskatchewan Bill of Rights. As he did so often, Woodrow explained with impassioned clarity human rights are important.

He said:

Human rights are more than just the protection of minority rights. They are the building up of the recognition of the importance of people, just because they are people, whether they are in the minority or not. People are important because they are people, whether black or white, American or Canadian, whether they live in Quebec or Saskatchewan, whether they're young or old. We need to cultivate more and more the importance of people just because they are people.

Time has not diminished the truth of this statement made 45 years ago. But, Mr. Speaker, sadly there are those among us who refuse to grant that all people are important. That, regrettably, is why legislation is necessary.

These amendments are very specific and limited. They extend protection under the Human Rights Code in the

areas of employment, accommodation, and public service.

In the consultation phase leading to the introduction of these amendments, this has been stressed repeatedly by the minister and by others. The amendments will not change the definition of what is a family. They will not extend spousal benefits or adoption rights to same-sex partners. They do not, in the words of the opposition, give special privilege to anyone. Nothing could be clearer.

There are, I suppose, members of the Assembly, two attitudes towards human existence, two ideals of how society should function. These attitudes work themselves into the political process just as they do into every area of human endeavour. One attitude is inclusive, acknowledging the worth of every individual; the other is exclusive, defining itself by what its adherents are not. One promotes sisterhood and brotherhood; the other trades on suspicion and intolerance. One accepts change as part of the ongoing evolution of society; the other resists change regardless of circumstances. One says yes; the other one says no.

I am confident in saying the New Democratic Party does what it can in the political arena to affirm life and to promote the well-being of every person in society. That is the significance of this throne speech in general.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — The speech talks about health and the wellness model — the second phase of medicare as Tommy defined it, the big job, the reorganization and revamping of the delivery system. We're going to do this big job by being inclusive, by involving the communities and the health boards and the health professionals in a unified, cooperative way.

Mr. Speaker, this government had two choices with health care. It could have left the old system continue to operate with no regard to changes in technology, costs, and population, allowing it to duplicate and reduplicate itself, becoming more and more unresponsive and becoming very expensive. Or we could have recognized that times are changing, that our small population spread over a vast area is also an ageing population. We could meet some of the contradictions in the health care system head on, such as the fact that we have more hospitals and more beds per person — thanks to you know who — than any other province in Canada. We could confront the fact that we have over 400 different health agencies to administer our programs and systems. And we have done that.

As the speech announces, we are developing a new way of looking at the province's health system — the wellness model. And we are developing a new way of delivering that approach. The wellness approach will empower communities to come together and offer a better range of services and better health care to their communities.

As the speech says, four health boards have already been established. The proposed legislation to promote health districts will increase community control over the health system at the same time that it reduces the inefficiencies

of the current system.

With these modifications we ensure that medicare is preserved for future generations. And I can tell you that the members of this government have had the courage to do that. Without them our health system is in danger of sinking under the weight of its own costs and inefficiencies.

Mr. Speaker, it is no accident that as a new administration begins office in the United States, one of its first actions is to acknowledge the desperate condition of its own health system and to look at ours as a model. Saskatchewan initiated medicare in North America in 1962. It takes a while for a good idea to catch on but it will spread because no society can afford to exclude its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I grant you that for years people have talked about preventative health, that it's better to save a dollar than to spend it, and that the best way to make health delivery more effective is not to get sick. We have had and continue to have prevention programs: stop-smoking campaigns, Students Against Drunk Driving, dietary advice, cancer screening, and so on. Those are all good programs. They work and they need to be expanded. But with the wellness model, these prevention strategies are only a part of the overall plan.

The wellness model is promoting good health in every aspect of our life: physical, mental, and spiritual. It involves not only the traditional health services sector but all government departments as well as non-government organizations and community agencies. Programs that promote safe driving, that encourage the safe use of pesticides, workplace safety laws, business practices that reduce stress, school programs that give meals to children before you try and teach them — each of these is a part of wellness.

Wellness is a health-driven program promoted and directed by the Minister of Health, her department, and the health boards and districts. But it is a program that cuts across departments and the areas of societal effort. Quality of life can no longer just be a slogan. It can no longer be the responsibility of one agency or one minister. Trickle-down health doesn't work any more than trickle-down economics. Wellness is everybody's business and this program invites everyone to be involved. That's inclusion, not exclusion.

(1545)

Mr. Speaker, approximately 14 per cent of our budget goes towards education, to schools of all levels. That's a lot of money, and it doesn't include the portion raised by property taxes and student fees. I am happy, therefore, to note that we will be working very diligently with the schools boards, the universities, and the technical colleges, to review and streamline our educational programs.

Not, I remind you, with the idea of saving money — though if we do this no one will complain. Expense is not the main issue; quality of education is. As Benjamin Franklin said, there's only one thing that's more expensive than education, and that's ignorance. It is a

truism . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — It is a truism that one can easily forget in these days of restraint. But the society of tomorrow is conceived in the schools of today. We are short-changing our future if we don't provide the best possible education for our children.

So I am glad to see the initiatives of education announced in this speech. They are another example of inclusion — government working with communities, schools, and teachers to minister to the whole child. The wellness model goes to school.

As a teacher with some years of experience, part of me still believes that the best teaching method is the teacher and the chalkboard and the chalk. But the other part of me recognizes that to provide quality education to all our students in far . . . in this province, being the size it is, we have to take advantage of technology to expand opportunities. So I welcome the initiatives in long-distance education for Northerners and for rural students. It doesn't make much sense to enter the 21st century on a horse and buggy. And I am happy to see our schools gearing up for the future.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the most laudable and the most necessary piece of legislation . . . necessary piece of inclusion is cooperation between government and community as mentioned at the beginning of the speech. Without economic renewal, the wherewithal for education is absent. Without jobs, the health system all dries up.

If the measures announced by this government in this speech and in the previous two speeches had not been taken, the lights would have been going out all over Saskatchewan. Thankfully, they are not. Mercifully, with financial stability being restored, economic activity is following.

And the same approach applies here just as it applies to health and education. Co-operation, consultation, streamlining and determination. The partnership for renewal last November is working because its mandate is clear, its targets are modest and achievable, and its planning is sound. And we are making no wild claims, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But it is fair to say that we are beginning to see results, modest results, befitting the necessary caution of our plan. The good things are happening.

The first issue of Saskatchewan savings bonds raised 565 million. Housing starts nearly tripled in 1992. Tourism inquiries more than doubled. Population is stabilizing after declining for the last several years. These economic indicators are not spectacular, but they are encouraging.

And frankly, Mr. Speaker, we have seen enough of what spectacular does. One word says it all — Rafferty. A hundred years from now the Rafferty project will be used to define the word "folly". We are not depending on megaprojects to drive the economy because we want the economy to be driven forward, not backward. The

partnership for renewal is based on manageable and manageable items because that's what works. Be sensible, be cooperative, be slow, and be sure.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is so much to praise in this throne speech, and I have only mentioned a few points. It's enveloping idea is what is most commendable, and that is what I have tried to emphasize. This speech and this government is about renewal; about rebuilding our province; about, as it says, reinventing Saskatchewan's future. And I can tell you, members of the Assembly, that we, sitting here, have to believe that. We're going to believe it and it's going to work.

It is visionary and practical at the same time. It states the goals that we hope to reach and it charts the path to these goals. It invites the Saskatchewan community to take part in this renewal because it is a renewal of the Saskatchewan community that is at stake.

We all, governments and individuals, recognize that these are perilous times — socially, economically, environmentally. Many of us recognize that to a great extent these times that we are living through now are the result of Thatcher, Reagan, Bush, Mulroney, and the guy here who wanted to be just like them when he grew up.

The era of Reaganomics was the era of exclusion — the era of much for a few, a little for most, and nothing for too many. These people reinvented the Dark Ages, which is why we are slowing coming out of it. It's taking a long time.

The previous Saskatchewan government talked of freedom and put us in bondage to the bond dealers of Zürich, Tokyo, and New York. They talked of progress and smartly marched us backward. They said they could bring the children home. Where are my children? They're not home. They said they could bring the children home, and then slowly depopulated the countryside.

And they said they were open for business. Then they watched while their friends shoplifted this province blind.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — Mr. Speaker, we can do better than that. With the cooperation of the great people of Saskatchewan, we are doing better. In our slow, methodical way, we are reinventing Saskatchewan's future. One hundred-and-some years ago, Abraham Lincoln said: I walk slowly but I never walk backwards.

With the direction given in this throne speech, with the leadership of Premier Roy Romanow, we are forging partnerships in agriculture, business, health, and education in the Saskatchewan community that will carry us with caution but with optimism into the new century.

I am proud of this throne speech, and I move, seconded by the member from Kelsey-Tisdale:

That an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To Her Honour the Honourable Sylvia O. Fedoruk, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I firstly would like to thank you for the leadership that you have shown to the Assembly and to myself personally in the last session, and I want to thank you in advance for your leadership in this coming session.

I would like to also wish the Assembly staff an enjoyable session.

My constituents and myself would like to take this opportunity as well to offer condolences to the families and friends of Mr. Perkins, Mr. Broten, and Mr. Thurston.

I would also like to congratulate the organizers and the people of Saskatchewan in another very successful Kinsmen Telemiracle; \$2.1 million was raised yesterday, Mr. Speaker — \$100,000 more than last year. I think it made a lot of people very happy in the true Saskatchewan spirit.

After a few remarks, I will second the motion just moved by my colleague, the hon. member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, who so eloquently presented her motion of acceptance.

I support the motion because I suppose to me this is one of the most important, if not the most important throne speeches in this time. It's a throne speech of renewal, a throne speech of rebuilding, and a throne speech of a continued progress that our government has made over our first 16 months.

I firstly would like to mention, Mr. Speaker, that I'm not sure if it's out of modesty or out of deference to me that the former speaker did not mention her claim to the constituency of Kelsey-Tisdale which I serve. She is understandably proud of her constituency, and rightly so. But she did attend high school in Tisdale and she had her first teaching job in Tisdale as well.

I had the privilege of working for her mom, Mrs. Helen Owchar, and she was also a very, very fine lady.

So I'm very proud that we can lay claim to my hon. colleague. And I'm certainly glad that for my own political career, that she chose to live and teach in another constituency.

Like her constituency, the constituency of Kelsey-Tisdale is varied; it is interesting; it's so diversified, like our province itself. We have somewhat a different mix than

Cut Knife-Lloydminster, but we do have a rich assortment of people, resources, and history.

Part of my constituency were first visited by Henry Kelsey, an early explorer, and apparently not-so-good poet who wrote his journal in verse. And we are proud of that.

We have forests, we have farms, we have bees, we have canola, we have industry, commerce, and education. One of the loveliest parks in all of Saskatchewan is located in Kelsey-Tisdale. And of course many of you would have had the opportunity to visit that park, the Greenwater provincial park. It is also the jumping-off place for one of our important ports, the port of Churchill. The train station in Hudson Bay will accept your ticket and I would encourage that all members visit the port of Churchill and visit the fine community of Hudson Bay.

Our greatest asset of course is our fine people. I appreciate the opportunity to serve the people of Kelsey-Tisdale. It's hard work but it's rewarding. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think many of us say this often enough: that it's fun being a working member of this Legislative Assembly, serving the larger good of the people of Saskatchewan.

(1600)

As are my colleagues, I am gratified by the blueprint of renewal presented in this speech. There is much in particular to praise and there is a general theme that is gratifying. It is truly a social democrat blueprint by a government willing to make tough decisions. I would like to thank our Premier and cabinet for that. This will ensure a future for our children.

It speaks of a new direction. Unlike the previous administration, the government will not dictate direction but the directions will be determined by partnerships — community, people, and their government coming together. It's very unlike the previous government where they had programs like Fair Share which divided communities, which divided people, which divided occupations. This is a coming together of those same communities, of those same peoples. This throne speech and the action of this government in the past 16 months makes one thing clear, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan is assuming its place again as a leader.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Renaud: — It's once again leading the way in progressive, responsible, and necessary programs. The province that introduced comprehensive automobile insurance, that pioneered medicare, and that led the way in capturing the benefits from its own resources for its own people, that same province, Mr. Speaker, is back in the forefront: health care reform, a new vision for economic renewal, a vision for agriculture now and in the future, financial responsibility, public accountability. And the list goes on. None done alone, Mr. Speaker, but in partnership with communities and with the people of this province.

I would like to speak for a moment on new partnerships and how they are linked or connected. But firstly I want to

speaking about fiscal responsibility and how this very important issue is connected to every partnership.

To talk about fiscal responsibility we first, of course, must speak about our debt. Mr. Speaker, the numbers are there for anyone to see and they are sorry numbers. Saskatchewan has the highest per capita debt in Canada — \$15,000 for every man, woman, and child in this province.

Interests on our debt are now the third-highest item in our budget, behind health and education, and if left alone would soon take over education. Over \$2 million a day in interest, Mr. Speaker; \$760 million dollars of our taxes every year goes to Zürich, Tokyo, London, Toronto, New York.

As the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster said, think of what we could do in this province with \$760 million. Those are the numbers and they are horrific. Other governments have serious deficit problems as well, but none so serious as ours. Our credit rating is at an all-time low; our borrowing power is threatened.

It reminds me about a person having a mortgage on a home, perhaps overbought, perhaps spent unwisely, but the mortgage for his home is threatening his livelihood and in fact his home. That person must make adjustments so that that mortgage payment can be made, otherwise he loses his home.

We haven't got that choice here, Mr. Speaker. We will not lose our home. We will make the necessary adjustments so that our mortgage payments can be made. They will be made.

This throne speech and the budget speech to follow in a few weeks outlines a plan, a workable plan to not only reduce the deficit but to eliminate it, and over time to rid ourselves of that dead weight, Tory millstone of debt and interest that is around our neck. As the throne speech says, Saskatchewan was the only province in Canada to make real progress towards getting its financial house in order.

And not by ourselves, Mr. Speaker. Again, I want to emphasize the partnership with the people of Saskatchewan who are working with us to rid ourselves of that debt — local governments, rural and urban, working together with us to reduce that debt. School boards.

I want to mention again that we are leaders and not followers. It's interesting to note that the new President of the United States, Mr. Clinton, has similar goals. Other premiers will follow; other prime ministers will follow.

I want to give notice to the members opposite that we are not throwing up our hands in despair. This government, in consultation with the people of Saskatchewan, are making the hard, tough, necessary choices to defeat the deficit. We are making them not as ends in themselves, not because it's pleasant; we are doing it because it is a simple but profound truism that until we can pay our own way we are not truly free.

Saskatchewan people must be able to determine their

own destiny. Today's decisions will ensure that this happens. Financial freedom will give the Saskatchewan people the opportunity to set an agenda for the people by the people.

Mr. Speaker, we will, in partnership, eliminate the deficit. We will tackle the debt. We will keep that \$760 million in Saskatchewan. We will again allow the Saskatchewan people to become masters of their own house, or as they say in the province to the east of us, *maître chez nous*.

As mentioned earlier, it is interesting to note that other governments, both within and outside Canada, are beginning to make similar financial decisions. Governments in British Columbia and Ontario have recently introduced measures to control their deficit situations.

In the U.S. (United States) the new president is not only speaking of deficit reduction but seems to have staked his reputation on doing something about it, while kick-starting the economy at the same time. He seems to actually be doing, not only talking, which distinguishes him from his two predecessors.

And he is giving much the same reasons. He needs the deficit under control so the government can conduct its business and the country can finally move forward. I wish him well as I'm sure we all do. The American people have accepted the challenging partnership, as they have in our fine province of Saskatchewan.

It is interesting I think that the governments of the 1980s — the Thatcher, Reagan, Bush, Mulroney, Vander Zalm, Getty, and the opposition next — these governments called themselves Conservative. They trumpeted their businesslike approach. They talked about responsible fiscal policy, and without exception they robbed the candy store blind. For their friends every day was a dollar day.

And I want to say one word about excuses, because I've heard excuses. In a recent article in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* called "How the gravy train went off the rails" in Saskatchewan, well the former premier, the member from Estevan, was asked to explain why there were so many scandals in his administration. He said, and I quote:

We are not without sin, but I don't elect MLAs, the people do. People select those folks and some are stronger than others. Some are easily fooled. I had some people with a lot of problems.

That's remarkable, Mr. Speaker. To say it's not my fault, it's the fault of the voters who elected me — that's incredible.

Most of those leaders are gone, all of them as of June of this year. And it's the governments of the Clinton administration in the U.S., the Rae administration in Ontario, the Harcourt administration in B.C. (British Columbia), and our government, Mr. Speaker, in partnership with the people, left to clean up the mess.

I want to again thank our Premier and our cabinet for having the courage to make the tough decisions but the

correct decisions. This is what responsible government is all about.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Renaud: — I found it quite interesting that in his resignation speech last Wednesday, the Prime Minister bragged that he was leaving the funds of the Progressive Conservative Party with a substantial surplus. He neglected to mention that he was leaving the Canadian people with nothing but an empty barrel and a pair of suspenders.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Cut Knife pointed out that deficit reduction is far from our only priority. We are not single-minded. We are not sacrificing our commitment to the well-being of Saskatchewan people. We are determined to maintain and expand the safety net for the undefended in our society. We are upgrading and updating our educational system. And we are embarking on new adventure in health care with the wellness model, all in partnership and consultation with people and with communities.

The wellness model is ground breaking approach to health care delivery. It focuses on health instead of sickness. It expands our awareness of wellness into every area of our lives. It takes as its starting point something our aboriginal people have known for ages — everything is connected; nothing exists in isolation.

The great Chief Seattle said, and I quote: we did not weave the web of life; we are merely a strand of it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. One cannot stop a child's cough with just cough medicine until the child has warm, draught-free housing. Everything is connected. And that's what wellness is — connected.

And, Mr. Speaker, other jurisdictions are taking note of this new partnership, community-based approach to health care. People from all over North America watched the introduction of medicare in 1962. Today governments from Ontario, B.C., and from states like Minnesota have come to observe.

We are not leading because we look for a leadership role, but as the movie says: if you build it, they will come. If you build it and if it is good, they will come.

I'd like to quote from the *Toronto Globe and Mail* from February 3, 1993: "BC to overhaul health-care system" is the headline:

Newly created community health councils and regional boards will make the bottom-line decisions . . .

They're talking about B.C. Further down in the article it says:

In 1991, the Premier's Council on Health Strategy in Ontario recommended handing over decisions about health-care spending to local authorities. Last year, Saskatchewan entered what was described at the time as uncharted territory,

creating regional health boards to administer their own budgets and operating plans.

(1615)

Mr. Speaker, I guess we are leaders, and it's good to see other provinces follow.

As wellness is connected to itself, it is also connected to other initiatives. Reinventing the future of this great province also touches other areas, in particular agriculture, the lifeblood of this province.

We are what we are because of agriculture. We will become what we can be because of agriculture. The previous administration made a quick deal with the federal government to participate in a program, a program that was very best questionable and at worst a program that could ultimately cost farmers their livelihood.

Why could it hit the very people it was supposed to help? Well, Mr. Speaker, because among other things it would become so outrageously expensive that farmers would actually wind up paying enormous bills rather than collecting from a program supposedly designed to protect them.

I would also like to quote from *The Edmonton Journal*, I believe, Mr. Speaker: A two-year-old farm subsidy program that governments claimed would be self-funded has already piled up a \$400 million deficit in Alberta. And the troubled gross revenue insurance plan cost provincial and federal taxpayers up to 1 billion within the next four years, says Alberta Agriculture Minister Ernie Isley.

And we tried, Mr. Speaker. We responded to farmers' insistent demands that the programs needed to be changed, that it needed to be more market responsive, and it had to eliminate the part of the program that forced some farmers to make business decisions to farm according to the program.

We made changes that were designed to make this bad program a little bit better, and what happened? The bottom fell out, that's what happened. The federal government, who has been saying for over a decade that they're here to help us, pulled the plug on cooperation again, and this time they pulled the plug on the third line of defence commitments and they've pulled the plug on continuing support for western Canadian and Saskatchewan farmers.

They are pleading that they have no money to help us, yet they seem to have funds to buy expensive military rescue helicopters and funds to assist east coast fishermen who, I might add, face a dilemma similar to ours, to our Saskatchewan farmers. We're not saying the federal government should not assist the fishermen. I believe that that's the right thing to go. But it raises the question, where is our structure; where is our protection?

Those are tough questions, and I expect, Mr. Speaker, that we likely will not get the answer to them soon. And that leaves us to trying valiantly to make up for the federal government shortfall in safety net programs, which is very

difficult, given the financial difficulties that our province faces.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, we do have hope for the future. We do have a vision for this province in agriculture, a vision that will be shaped and developed in partnership with farmers, communities, and the agriculture and food industry.

A recently released discussion paper for a long-term strategy for Saskatchewan agriculture is the foundation for some pretty exciting policy. It will help provide the framework for agricultural strategy for the next century. And the best thing about the document, which is called "Forging Partnerships in Agriculture," is that it will test the minds and hearts of those across our province. It will challenge all of us to find solutions to the crises facing agriculture today and tomorrow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Renaud: — The paper will identify three areas, three vital areas which will form the basis for public consultation: firstly, the role and development of agricultural institutions like the Canadian Wheat Board; secondly, the methods of adding value to goods produced in our province and finding new markets for our products; and third, the maintenance of the family farm.

I'd like to pause here, Mr. Speaker, to interject what the vision statement is.

Our guiding principle must be to foster a self-reliant, sustainable agriculture and food industry and viable communities in rural Saskatchewan. We must ensure the maximum opportunity for the highest number of families and individuals to earn a livelihood from agriculture.

"Forging Partnerships in Agriculture," Mr. Speaker, will see eight regional meetings starting March 4 and continuing until April 21, 1993. The meetings will be held in Swift Current, Weyburn, Watrous, Rosetown, North Battleford, Moose Jaw, Melfort, Yorkton. At the end of the road is a conference in June to consolidate the views gathered at the meetings and to continue work on the strategy which is expected to be completed in August.

This is an innovative approach to finding workable solutions for our province's agricultural future. And those who actively participate in shaping policy will begin to see the results of the partnerships they forged as Saskatchewan's economy begins to revive.

This wellness partnership in agriculture will add to the well-being of the entire province, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is showing leadership in fiscal responsibility, in government accountability in health and education, in agriculture, in land entitlement for aboriginal peoples. We are taking control of our destiny once more.

And we are leading in other areas, an area which envelopes all of the others. We are pioneering in partnerships, in economic development, in tourism, in

cooperatives, and in community organization we are leading the way by stepping aside. We are becoming partners in the renewal of Saskatchewan, not directors.

In the 1980s we were told that all we need to know about is how to manage a big bucks, megaproject agenda. From that agenda, Mr. Speaker, we learned that the government cannot and certainly should not take all the responsibility and all of the risk, especially for megaprojects. Many of those projects were splashy, all terribly expensive, very risky, and not much lasting economic worth.

We have a better way and the minister's name for the strategy says it all — *Partnership For Renewal*. Government, communities, businesses, entrepreneurs, co-ops, working men and women, all working together on this journey of renewal.

It is a very pleasant irony that Saskatchewan is once again taking the lead by creating a strategy in which there are no dictators, only partners.

Mr. Speaker, we have all heard it said that these are perilous times. We need, it is said, new ideas, new approaches, a new vision to get us out of the economic soup and comfortably into tomorrow.

And, Mr. Speaker, the *Partnership For Renewal* provides that necessary framework built on the foundation of fiscal responsibility and with the knowledge that we are all in this together and things are already beginning to happen.

The indicators are not extravagant, but they are encouraging. The corner is being turned slowly but steadily. Crude oil sales are up by 12.7 per cent; coal and potash sales are up. Housing starts are up a whopping 87.2 per cent in the first nine months of 1992; bankruptcies were down by 13.3 per cent in the same period. Tourism inquiries are up by 52 per cent and visitor registrations at tourism reception centres were up 18 per cent. A new and improved AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.) agreement has been signed, an agreement that does not commit us to a nuclear waste dump nor a nuclear reactor.

Saskatchewan communities are accepting the challenges of *Partnership For Renewal*. And what I really find gratifying about all this, Mr. Speaker, is the willingness, the enthusiasm, the spirit in which Saskatchewan people are meeting the challenges facing us.

Change can be scary to be resisted. But change can be positive, invigorating, renewing. And this is the case here. The *Partnership For Renewal* is not just about dollars and cents, it's about restructuring the Saskatchewan economy. Like the wellness model or the vision in agriculture, it's about a new approach to well-being. It is responsive to the needs and aspirations of Saskatchewan people. They will be able to continue to live and work and prosper in this province. The economic benefits will spin into social benefits so that Saskatchewan people will have the opportunity for happiness and good health. As I said, everything is connected.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've been an MLA for

16 months and during that brief time I have learned some things. I've learned first, gratitude for those who put their trust in me. I've had re-emphasized the strong Saskatchewan foundation — agriculture, resources, small business, and the working people — that Saskatchewan is built on. I have learned a great deal about how to do things, or how not to do things, I should say, by moving into the ruins of what was once a smoothly operating and efficient province.

We have seen the truth of that old statement: any jackass can kick down a barn, but it takes a good carpenter to build one. Well we've cleared away the rubble and now we're rebuilding. I've learned that it takes courage to govern with a \$15 billion debt, interest bills of \$760 million a year, over \$2 million a day, and a credit rating that is extremely low.

And, Mr. Speaker, I've learned what our poets and preachers and teachers have always known — that Saskatchewan's spirit is strong, resilient, and deep. Without going too far it is fair to say that we only dimly understand how strong that spirit really is.

In my constituency of Kelsey-Tisdale — and I am sure there are similar stories across the province — communities are taking responsibility for their own development. They recognize that government resources are stretched beyond their limits and are taking up that slack themselves.

For example, the town of Bjorkdale put in its own artificial ice plant without any government help. And professional groups like the optometrists who also recognized the need of cooperation and are willing to contribute to free eye examinations in the first week in March to take the area that government can no longer afford to support.

This is cooperation. This is partnership. That's what Saskatchewan is all about.

There is a saying about people who visit China. If you go for a week you can write a book. If you stay for a month you could write a magazine article. If you stay for a year, you remain silent so you can begin to learn. That's how I feel about Saskatchewan, the province where I've lived all my life.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a number of challenges facing us. There are big ones, daunting ones, for those with less determination. But we will meet those challenges. With the leadership of our Premier and this government, with the plan outlined in the speech, and with the partnership of the people of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan will be restored to its rightful condition of wellness.

Not long ago Irma Douglas sent a note to the Premier, a note of encouragement and hope. And she said, and I quote: someday soon the sun will shine again on Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, with that vote of confidence, for one who surely knows what this province is made of, I am proud to second the motion in support of this Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1630)

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Once again it's a pleasure for me to enter into a throne speech debate in the province of Saskatchewan. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it's the second one of this new New Democratic government that everyone in the province has been waiting to bring forward some kind of a plan.

I must say off the top though that I would like to thank Her Honour for the tremendous asset that she has been to the province of Saskatchewan. Her delivery the other day here with the leaders and movers in our community, was tremendous. And certainly over the last five years that Her Honour has been Lieutenant Governor of this province she has fulfilled her duties as an example, I think, to other people in the province.

And I'd also like to thank the people of Thunder Creek for the opportunity to speak on their behalf once more in this Legislative Assembly. Thunder Creek is a large, sprawling rural riding, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I guess it epitomizes so many of the problems that are out in Saskatchewan today. It's mostly made up of people that either make their living directly from agriculture or are related to agriculture in some direct way. It means that everyone is feeling the pinch today.

It means that the towns and villages are under as much stress as the people living on the farms. So many of the problems that they're experiencing, I believe, as being exacerbated by this particular government because of its inability to project to these people some type of a plan, a window of opportunity that will give them some hope that there is a future for rural Saskatchewan and for those towns and villages that have been the bulwark of this province ever since our entry into Confederation.

I guess the thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about this second throne speech of the government of the member from Riversdale, is the fact that once again we are faced with some awful truths. And I guess if I was to develop some headlines for this particular throne speech, it might be slightly different than the ones which the government presented to us last week. I would have to start with the first headline, which is one that says total dishonesty.

As I said earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the second attempt of this government to bring forward a plan of action, a plan that would show Saskatchewan people that as we went through the '90s and into the next century that this province was going to keep moving ahead, that this province would be a land of opportunity, that this province could deal with some of the very difficult circumstance that it has before it.

Instead I'm faced with a document that, on the economic development side, only talks about initiatives of the former government, that only talks about AECL and community bonds is the way that they're going to lead this province to a better day. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those ideas were all roundly condemned by the previous New Democrat opposition.

So that is why I'm afraid, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the titles that are assigned to various components of this speech don't work out very well. Nowhere does the government talk about all of the election promises delivered only a short while ago, about all the election promises that obviously were never meant to be kept.

Nowhere in this document do I see the issue of taxes addressed in the way that it is being thrust upon Saskatchewan people. Nowhere did the former New Democratic opposition talk about the breadth of the taxation increases which they would foist upon Saskatchewan taxpayers and consumers, as we have seen in the last 16 months.

Nowhere do we try to see an explanation of why we would promise to do away with sales tax and now the reality is that they have increased and may increase more. Nowhere in here do we see an explanation to Saskatchewan people of why the family of Crown corporations is back in business, digging into the pockets of Saskatchewan people as they did in years gone by, where we see utility increases, utility rate increases, occurring every six months. And for what justification? The justification being that, well, we have to make the Crowns profitable. Well I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that all records show that the Crowns were profitable. That we have to have these rate increases because we're paying for the debt that we've transferred from one Crown to another Crown.

Well nowhere in here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, does anyone explain to Saskatchewan people and taxpayers how using one Crown's debt to justify rate increases in another is going to bring forward some type of a plan that will make people feel good about the province of Saskatchewan, about paying taxes here, about living here and being here to try and build for the future.

Because quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we see before us is more of a shell game based on control and power and picking the pockets of Saskatchewan taxpayers to make up for the lack of an agenda and for the, I believe, total, total dishonesty of the former opposition in this province as they told people one thing and actually intended on doing another.

Because we have to go through the major areas of our economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and assess them for what they are and where they are and, I believe, to be quite up front with Saskatchewan people in these times of difficulty. And instead we take an area like agriculture which the previous speaker said is the foundation, and will be for many years to come, the foundation of Saskatchewan's economy.

And we see agriculture in terrible straits, promised so much by the previous opposition; promised so much during the last campaign. Agriculture promised that all we had to do was get on an airplane and fly to Ottawa with some of our friends and everything would be right with the world. But that hasn't been the case.

The people in agriculture in my constituency are like the people in agriculture in every other rural riding in this

province, and they are saying we are in trouble. We expected more from a government that promised us so much. If they had never intended on delivering, if they had intended on instead taking away every tool that we had at our disposal to weather this economic storm, then I believe the tremendous number of rural back-benchers, which this government brought to this Assembly in October of 1991, would not have been here.

We saw health. Day after day in this Assembly, we saw the former opposition — the New Democratic Party, the people who founded medicare in this province in the old CCF days — standing here demanding more, more, more, more from the government of the day. And saying: we will deliver more. We'll deliver it with less and there will be so much more.

And as my colleagues so aptly pointed out in question period today, that so many of those services which Saskatchewan people used in order to get well and stay well, so many of those programs the government has said: farewell. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm afraid that the philosophy of wellness seems to be saying to Saskatchewan people: get well, stay well, or farewell.

And then we have the issue of patronage where we had the former opposition talk day after day after day about patronage. And we have seen in the short 16 months, this New Democratic Party government indulge in patronage to the tune of hundreds, of hundreds. We've got former members of this Assembly who sat for the New Democratic Party running around the province, people who are on very significant pensions, doing studies for the government.

We have almost the entire structure of the family of Crown corporations populated by people who existed in the 1970s when the family of Crown corporations ran rampant across the face of this province and were roundly rejected by people.

We see defeated candidates back in the service of those who stood in this legislature and said under a New Democratic Party government this will never happen; things will be different. We will have a public service which is truly a public service, one that doesn't have political appointments attached to it.

Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, nowhere in the Speech from the Throne document, at least nowhere that I have read, have I seen these issues addressed. And I can only take from there that the government of the day doesn't want Saskatchewan people to know and talk about those things because it might cloud their ability, it might cloud their ability to smooth things along for that day in 1995 when they once more will have to be accountable to Saskatchewan people.

It doesn't talk about the broken contracts with public servants, the broken contracts with farmers in this province. And it's interesting to listen to the perspective of the government members who have entered the debate today on that particular issue.

If things were so wonderful in the decisions made in the spring of 1992 by the member from Rosetown, then why

today does the government find itself back in court again? Why today does it find people across this province contributing money to defence funds? Why will the Government of Saskatchewan invariably find itself in the Supreme Court of Canada over this issue of a broken contract?

And I say it is because these people, these new-found Democrats, were so busy designing programs that weren't for people but for their own political agenda, that they were willing to risk to take the rights of Saskatchewan people away, take away the rights of Saskatchewan people to take their own government to court. And any government that hides from the people, that isn't capable of facing its peers in a court of law, is a government that is rapidly losing touch with those it is elected to represent.

And it appears, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the same can be said for health workers, organizations that have been providing care to Saskatchewan people for a hundred years, that their contracts, the service they provided, no longer means anything.

It appears from the letters that I'm receiving as Leader of the Opposition and MLA for Thunder Creek, that the role of volunteers in this province is being shunted aside, that this government, the treasury benches, the cabinet, have determined that people like the Wildlife Federation, people like the hundreds of organizations who go out and raise money in bingos and other ways, shouldn't have access to that hard-earned money, money which has always been seen to be dedicated to certain worthwhile endeavours in this province.

And each and every one of us over the weekend watched Telemiracle once again reach tremendous goals. But you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that goal was built on volunteers. That goal was built on bingos, on various charitable organizations, on people being able to work together to raise money to help their fellow citizens.

(1645)

And nowhere in this Speech from the Throne does the government talk about trying to take away the dedicated funds of the Wildlife Federation, about the threats to the charities, to the countless thousands of people in this province who say that the government has designs on their money, all in the guise of accountability. And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's terrible that the government would use the Gass Commission as the cover when explaining to wildlife members, as I attended a meeting last week, that their money had to be taken and directed in a different way.

And most of all I guess when we talk about broken contracts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one has to think about the contract of October of 1991 when over 50 per cent of Saskatchewan people said we are voting for the New Democratic Party based on the promises that they've made, the commitments they've made, on how they would govern this province. And that contract is broken each and every day — each and every day that this government continues to use its large electoral mandate to ramrod its way over Saskatchewan voters and

taxpayers.

There are some things in this speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I think I would like to hear government members talk about over the next five days, and give some people in this province some assurance that the things that they talk about in there are for real.

This is the second throne speech where I have seen the government commit itself to reform of the Legislative Assembly, reform of conflict of interest guidelines, reform of the code of ethics of members of this Assembly. And I would like to say to the government members today, on behalf of the opposition, that we take this matter very, very seriously. That we, in our role as members of the Board of Internal Economy, have proposed to that board and to members of the Assembly that perhaps it's time for us to find some impartial third party to once again adjudicate the way in which members receive certain reimbursement.

And I can assure the government that if they are serious this time about bringing these issues forward to this Assembly, that with some consultation with members of the opposition, with some cooperation, that we are ready to move speedy passage of these types of items, which would once again give Saskatchewan taxpayers the security and the knowledge that their Legislative Assembly and its members are conducting themselves in a reasonable fashion.

We would say to the government members and commend them for some of the documents that they've brought forward like the *Partnership for Renewal — A Strategy for the Saskatchewan Economy*, a white paper that says many good things.

But we want to know from the government — because we haven't seen it in the throne speech — we want to know from the government that they are listening to the very stakeholders mentioned in this particular document, that they are listening when they bring proposed legislation forward, legislation that we hear could be diametrically opposed to the objectives of a strategy for the Saskatchewan economy.

They talk about having a single window of delivery for economic projects. And once again we applaud that concept. But we want to know from government members that that single window of delivery actually is a reality and that there is meat and potatoes there for people to grab onto in the business community.

We want to know from this government — and don't see it in the throne speech — that the Minister of Economic Development's words on NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) are real, that his words about Saskatchewan having more to gain from the North American Free Trade Agreement is greater than any other province in our Confederation. And yet we don't see it in here.

And we want to know, Saskatchewan men and women, business people want to know, that the minister is serious, that when he says that about NAFTA, it is a reality, and that he is prepared to work with people all across our

province to enhance our exports.

We want to know that when they talk about an energy strategy in this province, a province blessed with all five natural energies, that the government is serious, that all of the co-generation projects that people talk about, which could mean diversification for this province, are all going to be judged on their merits and not someone in SaskPower. Someone potentially with very strong connections to the Government of Saskatchewan could stand in the way of community after community being part of the energy solution to the year 2000.

And we want to know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from the government members — because it isn't told to us in this throne speech — if this government is truly serious about stopping the flow of Saskatchewan people out of our province. And I guess I can only think with some degree of hypocrisy back to the election campaign of 1991 when I saw NDP campaign ads on TV about bus loads of people leaving our province, a province that under the previous New Democrat administration in the 1970s got down to 890,000 people, a province that went over the million mark for the first time since the early '30s under a Conservative administration in the 1980s, but which to this very day in the numbers that, when I inquired last month, saw 1,600 more people leave our province — a problem that I believe can only be arrested when the government comes forward with an economic and social agenda that says to people: in the next two or three years this is what Saskatchewan is going to look like.

It's an agenda which isn't prevented from achieving its goals because of short-sighted political-gain attempts by the Government of Saskatchewan. It's an agenda which won't be short-sighted in its implementation because members of this government aren't willing to come clean with Saskatchewan people with some of the promises that they made in the past.

I think it's absolutely incumbent if that plan is to work, if Saskatchewan people are to feel confident enough about staying here, and if others are confident enough to come and be part of our fabric in this province, that this government stop the doom-and-gloom scenario which seems to be the only message that members of the treasury benches can give Saskatchewan people at this time.

It's interesting that others around the province are starting to question, starting to question this negative story provided by the government to each of us every day. And I was looking at the *Star-Phoenix* of February 26, 1993, where a person writes in and says that we should be talking about the net debt of the province of Saskatchewan rather than the gross debt.

... the "gross debt" the Romanow government reports which does not take into consideration the offsetting value of the assets the province owns).

Regina keeps telling us that Saskatchewan has a debt of about \$13,000 a person and that this is the highest in Canada ... But that is the gross debt (Mr. Deputy Speaker). According to Statistics Canada, our provincial net debt is \$4.8 billion or about

\$4,800 a person.

That means that there's seven other provinces, seven other provinces in worse shape than Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I wonder, as we develop a plan in this province, that we shouldn't be telling people both sides of the story. Because it seems to me that the only way, the only way that this province, as a cohesive unit, is going to pull itself up by the bootstraps and lick the problems that are in front of us is if we are told the absolute truth about where we're at; we aren't told a story that simply tries to cover up a political party; and the campaign promises that they made to us a short time ago in which this second throne speech in a row has not had the fortitude to come forth and talk about.

Because I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as my colleagues will mention over and over again in the days to come, that if this government doesn't come and flesh out this particularly very weak document, that the only hope for Saskatchewan people in the future is that this government is a one-term government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the time draws to a close, I'm going to move adjournment of debate at this time.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:57 p.m.