

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, I once again rise on behalf of responsible firearms owners in Saskatchewan who pray as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly will be pleased to challenge Bill C-68 in court, refuse to allow the federal government to take over enforcement in Saskatchewan, and not allow the implementation of Bill C-68 in Saskatchewan while the Bill is being challenged in court.

This petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by people from Moose Jaw, Yorkton, Melville, Esterhazy, Ituna, Kamsack, Neudorf — virtually all over the province, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present petitions of names throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed these petitions are from Moose Jaw, Regina, but all over southern Saskatchewan; Shamrock; quite a few from the member from Elphinstone's constituency, and the member from Regina Albert South, who should have stood up before. Thank you.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present more petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Moose Jaw; they're from Regina, Swift Current; they're from Asquith; they're from Shaunavon; they're from practically all over Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from such places as Radisson, Bienfait, Regina, Moose Jaw, Slave Lake, Estevan, Weyburn, and a number of others. Thank you.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from Moose Jaw, Regina, Craven, Gull Lake, and throughout Saskatchewan. I so present.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petitions, Mr. Speaker, are primarily from Regina and Saskatoon.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petitions, Mr. Speaker, are mainly from the Regina and the Windthorst area.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Regina, Montmartre, Windthorst, and all over Saskatchewan.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today to present petitions of names from all across the province regarding the Plains Health Centre. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by names from all across the province, including Regina, Estevan, and southern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from Windthorst, Regina; also from Grenfell and Wawota, just to name a few. Thank you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reverse the decision to raise SaskPower rates and freeze any further utility rates until a three-party utility review committee is in place in order to debate, review, and revise any utility rate increases in the future in order to restore fairness to the utility rate process in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

These petitions come from the Val Marie, Bracken, Orkney, Regina areas of the province, Mr. Speaker; Unity; across the province, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too present petitions to this Assembly, and I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reverse the decision to raise SaskPower rates and freeze any further utility rates until a three-party utility review committee is in place in order to debate, review, and revise any utility rate increases in the future in order to restore fairness to the utility rate process in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

And the petitions I have in my hand are signed by individuals from the Glaslyn, Val Marie, Saskatoon, and Aberdeen areas and other areas in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present some petitions; reading the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that you Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reverse the decision to raise SaskPower rates and freeze any further utility rates until a three-party utility review committee is in place in order to debate, review, and revise any utility rate increases in the future in order to restore fairness to the utility rate process in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

And these come from places such as Southey, Earl Grey,

Strasbourg, and other places in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to present petitions on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reverse the decision to raise SaskPower rates and freeze any further utility rates until a three-party review committee is in place in order to debate, review, and revise any utility rate increases in the future in order to restore fairness to the utility rate process in the province of Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These names all come from the beautiful community of Unity, Saskatchewan, and a few from Biggar. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to reverse the decision to raise SaskPower rates;

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre; and

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to challenge the implementation of Bill C-68, the federal firearms legislation.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Wednesday next ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for the Crown Investment Corporation: (1) How many tenders has the government put out under the CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) Crown Construction Tendering Agreement to date; (2) how many of these tenders apply to rural Saskatchewan; (3) how many of these tenders apply to urban Saskatchewan; (4) what are the specifics of the projects tendered; and (5) what is the total cost estimated of all tenders combined?

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall ask the government the following questions on Wednesday next:

To the Minister of Labour: could you provide a list of all public sector job classifications that are not gender neutral; if there are any, why is a gender distinction made; if pay equity is negotiated with the public sector unions, what procedures will be used to evaluate the work value for gender specific jobs; in negotiating pay equity in the

public service, will the government identify jobs which tend to be held by one gender; what will the criteria be for judging the gender tendencies of a given job classification?

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Wednesday next move first reading of a Bill, An Act to Enable Direct Reduction of the Provincial Debt; short title, The Direct Debt Reduction Act.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I look around the galleries in the House today there are very many special people that have come to see our proceedings today, and I'd like to welcome each and every one of them. However I would like to welcome two very special people in my life, people that have supported me and helped me a great deal along the bumpy road of life to allow me to achieve this achievement by being here in the House. I'd like to introduce in the opposition galleries my wife Barbara and my daughter Kim. Please welcome them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you a member, a former member, of this House, Mr. Speaker, Anita Bergman behind the ropes. I would ask everyone to welcome Anita back here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to add my welcome to the member, former member of Regina North West, Anita Bergman; and as well introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two very special guests today in your east gallery — Calvin and Noreen Mills, if you would stand please. They're from Fleming, Saskatchewan which is in the Moosomin constituency, have been ardent and very hard-working supporters of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party for many, many years. Please give them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to other members of the Assembly two very special people seated in the gallery opposite, Peter and Sophie Krawetz. Peter is my father and Sophie is my stepmother. And I'd like to inform the Assembly that my dad has been involved for decades in rural municipal government and urban municipal government and has been a tremendous inspiration to me. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join the member from Saskatoon Greystone in welcoming the Mills's to the Assembly here this afternoon. And certainly I've appreciated just the many opportunities I'd had to meet with Mr. and Mrs. Mills, and they've been certainly an interesting couple to work with. Even though they may have different

political views we certainly have had good relationships, and I thank them for taking the time to come and join us.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature my daughter Ingrid, and my other daughter Solveig; and my parents Tom and Randi Nilson; my constituency assistant Elaine Wood; and faithful worker and member of my constituency, Mr. Garry Carlson; and Deanna Christensen, another person from our constituency. I'd like you all to welcome them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — And I would further also like to welcome some other constituents who are seated in your gallery: Mr. Arvid and Donna Fonkalsrud and also Mr. David Brundige. And I would like to point out that Mr. David Brundige has not yet quite seen the light but his wife is a good member of our constituency.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I realize there are many other guests in the galleries this afternoon but I noted with interest one other individual sitting up in your gallery, Mr. Jeff Bartlam, who comes from the Whitewood area, was involved with crop insurance for a number of years. I'd like to welcome Mr. Bartlam to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Country Music Awards Winners

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Meadow Lake has good reason to be proud of its country music entertainers. I was present last night to see our very own Lorrie Church, who picked up top honours in five categories at the Saskatchewan country music awards handed out here in Regina.

Lorrie won in every category for which she was nominated. They include female vocalist of the year; entertainer of the year; single of the year, with "Baby, Don't Go"; most promising entertainer of the year; and video of the year. Also to her band, Last Train Out, went group of the year.

Congratulations to Lorrie and her manager, who is, incidentally, her husband, for an impressive showing at the awards ceremony. I know her parents, Walter and Freda Church, and her 15 brothers and sisters were very proud.

I would also like to congratulate the Cokrum sisters of Meadow Lake for being nominated in two categories.

Some of the other award winners were Brenda Chute of Prince Albert, who won album of the year, and with her brother Jim for vocal collaboration. The Johner brothers won for song of the year; male vocalist went to Scott Kyle King of Regina;

CJVR radio in Melfort picked up the radio station of the year award; while Trevor Scott of MX 92 FM won "on air" personality of the year.

The international humanitarian award went to Tom Jackson of Batoche, Saskatchewan. This award recognizes an individual in the country music industry whose selfless contributions make this world a better place in which to live.

Mr. Speaker, while the country music awards were being presented in Regina, Saskatchewan talent was also being recognized nationally. Colin James of Regina received male vocalist of the year at the Juno Awards held in Hamilton, Ontario.

To everyone, congratulations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Canadian Women's Basketball Award Winner

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with pleasure that I rise today to offer congratulations to one of my constituents.

Last week you will remember that it was announced that Andrea Gottselig of Findlater won the title of CIAU (Canadian Intercollegiate Athletic Union) rookie of the year for women's basketball. Mr. Speaker, in winning this award, Ms. Gottselig is now recognized as the best new player in all of Canadian university women's basketball.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, you take pride in hearing this as well, as Ms. Gottselig spent several years playing high school basketball at Peacock institute which I believe is in your constituency.

She took her forceful presence on the high school court to become a major contributor to the University of Regina Lady Cougars. Playing as a guard, Andrea scored 13.1 points per game and got 7.1 rebounds in her first season. She is a good enough player to make any team and we're glad she chose to play for one in our province.

Mr. Speaker, our pride in her achievements is certainly shared by her team-mates, her coach Christine Stapleton, as well as by her family. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the other members of this House will join me in offering our heartfelt congratulations to her.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Multiple Sclerosis Research Centre Opens

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An unsolved and unfortunate mystery in our province is the abnormally high occurrence of multiple sclerosis in Saskatchewan. I have a sister and a cousin afflicted by this as yet incurable neurological disorder; so it is with personal interest and hope for a cure that I bring this important announcement to the House's attention.

On Friday in Saskatoon the Cameco MS (multiple sclerosis) Neurological Research Centre was officially opened at City Hospital. This is the only research facility of its kind in Saskatchewan and the only place in Canada that allows researchers and medical personnel to work together in one facility to treat patients with MS and with other neurological disorders.

This is the result of a successful fund-raising campaign, Quest for a Cure, which raised \$1,647,219, all for equipment and related research costs for the centre. Many people and organizations are to be congratulated and thanked for these achievements: Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation, Saskatchewan division of the MS Society of Canada, the Kinsmen, over 4,000 clubs, individuals, and corporations, and most particularly Cameco.

Mr. Speaker, this centre, a centre of hope, will make a lasting contribution to our people and people all around the world affected by neurological disorders.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rehabilitation Centres

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mallard Industries in Wadena and south-west ability centre in Shaunavon have been chosen to pilot the process of accreditation and standardization of rehabilitation centres in this province.

The Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres acts as an umbrella organization for the 36 workshops in the province. Last year individual boards for these organizations approved a proposal to create a provincial committee to work on the project. The committee was made up of staff and board members, and they will directly make policy and supervise various teams that are working on areas of policy relevant to their expertise. The policies will be formulated in accordance with proven methods and provincial guidelines. Mallard Industries and south-west ability council plan to be fully accredited within one year.

Mr. Speaker, the staff and committees at both Wadena and Shaunavon have committed themselves to volunteer the extra hours of work required to formulate the policies. I would ask the other members of the Assembly to join with me in congratulating these communities and their staff at Wadena and Shaunavon on their commitment to their clients and their communities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Seniors' Fitness

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of taking part of an important event in Swift Current last Thursday that'll have a positive effect on senior citizens in Saskatchewan.

At a media conference, an agreement was signed between the Swift Current, Saskatchewan, seniors' fitness association 55 Plus provincial games committee and the Saskatchewan

seniors' fitness 55 Plus association.

The Saskatchewan Games Council, in partnership with the Department of Municipal Government, strongly support the SSFA (Saskatchewan seniors' fitness association) 55 provincial games Plus, which will be held in Swift Current in mid-July. Also, at this media conference the games council provided the grant of \$25,000 from Saskatchewan lottery proceeds to assist in the organization and operation of the games. Mr. Speaker, this agreement demonstrates the importance of these kinds of partnerships that enhance the lives of Saskatchewan residents. This is the fifth year that the provincial 55 Plus games are being held, and over 700 senior athletes from the eight game zones will be competing in the 19 games' events.

Mr. Speaker, not only does this form of cooperation benefit the groups and individuals involved, but it also fits in nicely with the concept of wellness in Saskatchewan. I extend my best wishes for a successful games and look forward to the start of the competition on July 16.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mainline Rural Development Corporation

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment today to recognize the hard work and efforts of many people across this province, specifically in the area of rural economic development. On Saturday I had the pleasure of meeting with the Mainline rural economic development committee and was quite impressed with the number of projects that they have been working on. And presently . . . or at this very time, they are selling shares in an ethanol feedlot program or plant scheduled to be built in the Grenfell area.

The interesting thing about this, Mr. Speaker, is we all have thought about ethanol as an additive to gasoline. They are looking at ethanol just going one step higher for the medicinal purposes, and certainly they have looked at going beyond just one specific area. They're also looking at the by-products and other by-products that can be used for human consumption.

I would like to say that this group have certainly shown us that RDCs (rural development corporation) can work, as along with the Mainline and Moose Mountain RDCs in my area. The people in my constituency have shown that rural economic development can work. The concern that was raised is that larger may not be better. Allow them to work without forcing them into . . . (inaudible) . . . Thank you.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration Education Program

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, this good news story is about a teacher from northern Saskatchewan who is going to the NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) Space Centre. Linda Helmke, a middle-years teacher at Precam Elementary School in La Ronge, has recently been chosen the winner of the Kirkpatrick Travel Award for 1995-96.

With this award, Ms. Helmke will visit the NASA education program in Florida. She is choosing NASA because she believes the information she brings back will enable her to prepare her students for career choices in science.

She has already developed a multi-disciplinary space unit in her classroom in response to her students' natural interest in space. The students in La Ronge are from varied cultural backgrounds and Ms. Helmke believes it is particularly important that all her students gain a knowledge of the options science provides. In more ways than one, Mr. Speaker, the sky is the limit for Ms. Helmke's students.

The Kirkpatrick Travel Award is named for Dean Emeritus J. Balfour Kirkpatrick, and is administered by the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) education department, the U of S Alumni Association, and the Saskatchewan teachers' association.

I congratulate Ms. Helmke on the excitement she generates in science, technology, and education. I know that while at NASA she will keep her feet on the ground and her head in the stars.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Video Lottery Terminal Revenue Sharing

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister responsible for the Liquor and Gaming Authority, or as we call him, Gaming minister number two.

Last January, the ex-minister of Municipal Government promised cities, towns, and villages around this province they would receive a 10 per cent share of VLT (video lottery terminal) revenues. In the last few months, we've seen this government back-peddalling from this promise. And this morning we hear reports the government has indeed withdrawn the money.

Will the minister stand up in this House and tell municipalities in Saskatchewan he will live up to his government's promise and return this revenue? Or are we going to add this to the long list of broken promises made by this government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to have the opportunity to answer that question. Last year in January the minister of Gaming and the Minister of Municipal Government made a joint announcement that SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association), SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), and SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations) would be engaged in a round-table process to give advice on how 10 per cent of the municipal . . . or the VLTs' revenues could be put back into municipalities.

During the course of those meetings, the high priority that they could agree on that was identified by all was the implementation of a provincial 9-1-1 service. So what we did is we paid \$2.4 million for the electronic mapping system that has to be in place as a forerunner to the provincial 9-1-1. We then recently dedicated \$3 million to the enhancement for the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) radio system which will enable them to be in the front line of response. SaskTel, meanwhile, has spent some 5 to \$6 million on their share of the package for provincial 9-1-1 implementation.

So that totals, Mr. Speaker, for anyone who can add, more than \$9.5 million. This is a three- to five-year initiative, and further announcements and further commitments will be made as the plan unfolds for provincial 9-1-1 service.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to hear that a 9-1-1 system will be in place in rural Saskatchewan. Unfortunately that's in place of all the hospitals that have been shut down and health care services that have been cut back.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, this government has chosen again to talk about SAHO, SUMA, and SARM for the fact that this money has not been returned, or it's been redirected to other areas. Mr. Speaker, this is only another convenient excuse from this untrustworthy government.

In reality, this government did not provide any leadership on this issue because it never intended to return the money. Mr. Speaker, has the Minister explored other avenues to return some of these millions besides the 9-1-1 to those municipalities and in order they might use them for their hospitals, or is that money going to be kept into general revenue, forsaking the people who are actually counting on it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I think the member may not have heard me in reply, when I said that we did spend more than the \$9.5 million dedicated towards the 9-1-1 service.

The other thing that's changed since last January, Mr. Speaker, is the federal claw-back, the federal claw-back of transfers for health, education, and social services. That's changed since that announcement, Mr. Speaker, and it is now necessary to take that money; return it to the consolidated revenue fund to put it into health, education, and social services.

The federal Liberal's budget of last week cut . . . 73 per cent of its total reductions were in health, education, and social services. We have to make allocations to enhance those services in Saskatchewan. If we didn't, the local tax bill would go up to pay for the shortfall in education and health funding. In that way, Mr. Speaker, we are returning every dime of that money into every local community in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, the people in this province are getting sick and tired of this government whining and snivelling about federal cut-backs. The government has taken over \$220 million since 1993 through VLTs, more than enough to offset any cut-backs. But the fact of the matter is this government knew about the cut-backs while you were campaigning on this promise. It was only after the election when it suddenly became a problem. Clearly it was only another empty election promise.

Mr. Speaker, why did this government make this promise to the municipalities if it had no intention of keeping it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, this is a government that does keep its commitments to the people of this province, and we are returning that money to the people of this province for use in health, education, and social services. I'd like to ask the members opposite what would be their priorities? Those are our values. What are yours?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Municipal Government Amalgamation

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Last week in this House, I questioned the minister in charge of Municipal Government about the issue of amalgamation. Because of the mixed signals being sent out by the government on this issue, I asked her to assure municipalities that forced amalgamation is not part of this government's plan. The minister replied on March 6, and I quote:

. . . I certainly can confirm that there is no plan to force rural local governments to amalgamate.

However this morning the Premier is quoted as stating, there will be change one way or another.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier explain if the comments are meant as a threat to local governments?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I think this sounds like instant replay; I think this is the exact question that we got last week, and I could give the same answer because if you always tell the truth, Mr. Speaker, if you always tell the truth you never have to remember anything. So I'm sure I could give the same answer today.

We have committed that local governments in this province, whom we have the utmost of respect for, know what their needs are at the local level better than anyone else does. We have invited them to talk to us about how to help them strengthen their capacity to respond to the challenges that are coming our way in the next couple of years. Some of them come from the federal level, abandonment of the Crow, privatization of railways, which leads to consolidation of elevators which affects the tax base in the towns and villages of this province.

So while you are firmly mired in the past, we are working with municipalities to strengthen their capacity to respond to those challenges so that they will be the best they can be into the 21st century. Where do you stand?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the minister and the Premier are coming from completely two different directions, and the municipalities see that.

Mr. Speaker, the people in the communities of Saskatchewan want and deserve to know this government's true intentions. On one hand the minister professes there is no top-down plan, yet the Premier said there will be change one way or another. Mr. Speaker, this government cannot have it both ways. Will the minister explain why the Premier appears to be contradicting her commitment to municipalities that they will not be forced to amalgamate/

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I am more than pleased to have the opportunity to address this issue, where the Premier's responses and mine are not at all at odds. What we are saying is that we want to help municipalities, urban and rural, in rural Saskatchewan, be as strong as they can be to respond to these challenges. We are saying that our first option is absolutely to listen to them, to work with them to develop a vision and a design for rural Saskatchewan.

If we can't do that, and I see no reason why we can't because we have made arrangements to sit down with them in a cooperative mode to talk about it . . . But we will come into the 21st century stronger, one way or another. Hopefully it will be the Saskatchewan way of cooperation and compassion and community.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, delegates at this week's SARM convention have a resolution which calls on delegates to oppose provincial legislation that would force municipalities to amalgamate.

Municipal councils agree that service districts Act legislation is not needed to allow amalgamation to occur and suspect this legislation opens the door to forced amalgamation.

Madam Minister, what is the purpose of this legislation if municipalities are already sharing many services that amalgamation would include?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the opposition members have a secret agenda for some kind of forced, top-down approach. We have said before that we don't. We have the proposed service districts Act; it is an Act to help municipalities to provide inter-municipal cooperation of services more easily than they do now, but is not about

amalgamation.

Those municipalities out there, Mr. Speaker, know better than the members opposite. There is all kinds of inter-municipal cooperation — fire agreements, gravel tendering, administration, recreation — you name the service; waste management. There's cooperation all over this province. We're all cooperating with each other. The only people who aren't in a cooperative spirit are the members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

High-risk Offender Identification

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, my questions this afternoon are for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, parents in Saskatoon and parents all over Saskatchewan are very concerned about a child molester who was recently released from custody. He was convicted of molesting five little girls under the age of 10, and police in Saskatoon consider him a high risk to offend again.

Many parents would like the police to release a picture of this person. In fact many parents in Saskatoon have already signed a petition to that effect. Police cannot do this, however, because the province has no policy to protect them from being sued.

Mr. Minister, will you immediately implement a policy which allows police to release photographs of high-risk sex offenders?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the hon. member for that question. This is obviously a difficult issue, and we need to deal with sort of the balance between the rights of privacy of individuals and the protection of the community.

Protection of the community is the main goal in any kind of legislation that we have. As it relates to this particular area, we have a working committee within our government which includes Department of Justice lawyers along with people from some of the other departments, health and mental health issues, and they are carefully reviewing what is going on in other provinces in Canada as it relates to this specific issue. We are asking them to provide us with recommendations so that we can come up with the appropriate legislation for Saskatchewan.

It's a very tricky issue and the concern for families and for children is uppermost in our mind.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, it isn't a delicate balancing act between the rights of the public and the rights of the sexual offender. I don't think it's a delicate balance at all. The rights of parents to protect their children far outweigh a child molester's right to privacy.

Mr. Minister, the province of Manitoba has a policy in place that is doing an excellent job of dealing with this problem. A special committee of police, justice officials, correction

officials, and psychiatric counsellors has been formed to evaluate an individual's risk to offend again. If this committee considers a sex offender a high risk to re-offend, the police may publish his name and photograph.

Mr. Minister, before orders of the day I will be introducing an emergency motion to immediately introduce an identical policy here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, will you and your government support this motion?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I'd like to thank the hon. member for the second question about this issue. And I'm very pleased that he raised the situation in Manitoba.

The situation in Manitoba is that they have developed a protocol to deal with this. This protocol creates a system of review by a community notification advisory committee which is comprised of police, corrections, mental health, and justice officials. All of the police requests for release of information go to this particular committee.

To date they have reviewed 11 cases. In one case they recommended full public disclosure, which is what the member opposite is requesting. In seven others, there were some limited forms of public notification. And in the other four cases, they recommended no notification.

So I think what that reflects is a balanced approach. Yes, we will look at the kinds of things that are going on in Manitoba, also in British Columbia and other places in Canada and the United States, but we are going to do it in a Saskatchewan way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Video Lottery Terminal Revenue Sharing

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for the Gaming Authority. Mr. Minister, it's another day and it looks like we have another broken promise by our NDP (New Democratic Party) government. We had that commitment by them to provide 10 per cent of VLT revenues — approximately \$10 million a year — to Saskatchewan communities. Now you're apparently going to claw those back.

We talk about expenditures of 9-1-1 and RCMP. I would like to tell you that you spent the money. It was VLT money that belonged to the municipalities. SaskTel money does not replace VLT money.

My question to the minister is this. Will you discuss the plan by SARM to cancel the hospital revenue tax in place of taking their money away from them?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, this question is along the same lines as we previously answered. The one different dimension that the member has raised is the offer of the local government group to trade off VLT money for part of the health

levy. The problem with that is that the health levies, the health, social assistance, and public health levies are considerably more than the commitment of 10 per cent VLTs, so it wouldn't solve the problem.

We have assured municipal associations that we are working diligently to address the problem of the 2 mill levy and the public health levy, the social services levy on the local tax base, and we will keep that promise, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to remind the minister what the former minister said when this \$10 million was promised. He said, and I quote:

I want to make it clear that the commitment we are announcing today is to share 10 per cent of the government's net income each year. Our objective is to place this money into the hands of local people to serve community needs in more direct and tangible ways.

It seems amazing, Mr. Speaker, that this department seems to be so inept that it cannot in fact give the money away. And I suggest that maybe if they can't give the money away, they find someone else to run the department.

My question to the minister is this. Will you make a clear commitment today to live up to that promise to give that money to those communities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I have here the same press release that I assume the hon. member is reading from. And the paragraph previous that he didn't read said:

The provincial government has asked the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, and the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations to advise us on how best to distribute 10 per cent of government's annual VLT revenues to maximum benefit to local communities.

In a year of consultations, with the exception of the 9-1-1, we were not able to receive that advice, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to point out that it doesn't matter which pot the money is in, whether it's VLT, GRF (General Revenue Fund), SaskTel, it's all money that belongs to the people of Saskatchewan. It will be spent to meet the priorities and the needs of the people of Saskatchewan, and that is our promise, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Northern Health Services

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The health care dollars for northern Saskatchewan should be looked at carefully because there's such a low level of funding. While northern Saskatchewan appreciates a continuing commitment to health

care, there are still many deficiencies in health services. Right now there are no mental health workers for the entire west side.

Several people have come to me expressing concerns about how workers are hired, the lack of probationary assessment, who decides who will be hired, and what area will receive funding. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to explain the criteria for allocating staff and funding for northern medical services.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question. As the member will know, over the past three years there have been four new positions funded in the North to better meet mental health needs in northern Saskatchewan. But as the member also knows, one of the things that we want to do in the North is to set up health boards like we have in the South and to move toward elections.

And I had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to meet with the member about that just a few weeks ago and the member expressed his enthusiasm for that approach. And the member and I agreed at that time that it would be good when we get the health districts going in the North so that we can put local people in control and better meet the health care needs of people in the North, including their mental health care needs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, my second question is also to the Minister of Health.

There's also much confusion over the organization of the health districts for northern Saskatchewan. There is confusion over how many districts will be formed. People want to know what type of role and power the new boards will have. Many people still don't even know if board members will be elected or appointed.

Can the Minister of Health explain what stage the organization of health districts is at for northern Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Yes, as the member knows, Mr. Speaker, since I've had the opportunity to meet with the member about this issue, people in the North have been meeting and planning the new health districts. And they're forming a consensus on the number of districts, the configuration of the districts in northern Saskatchewan. And I'm confident that, over the next short while, we'll be making an announcement with respect to the consultations in northern Saskatchewan and announcing the district boundaries that are proposed.

We'll be appointing health boards initially. And before the term of this government is ended, we will be having people elected in northern Saskatchewan, and I welcome the member's continued input in that process. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Government Investments in Cuba

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister responsible for Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation. In light of the events in Cuba and the U.S. government's reaction to those events, I believe the people of Saskatchewan have a reason to be concerned.

On January 19 of this year the minister announced that SOCO (Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation) had invested \$250,000 in a Cuban venture through York Medical of Toronto. Mr. Speaker, I assume the minister is aware of the political instability in Cuba at this moment. Just last night on CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) television's show *Venture*, there was a lengthy segment on the risk that companies investing in Cuba are facing. It came as quite a shock to see the president of York Medical on the show discussing his concerns over the risk his company now faces.

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister, is what steps has the minister taken to ensure that this risky investment, made with hard-earned taxpayers' dollars, is indeed secure and does not jeopardize our relationship with the United States?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the member has taken the approach. . . and I've heard her comment on our approach to economic development in Saskatoon at Innovation Place — that she believes that only companies that are presently in Saskatchewan should be invested in or should be attracted to that centre.

We've taken a very, very different approach. In fact many of the companies who now do research in Saskatoon come from other parts of the world. Limagrain, a company from France, now does their canola research at Innovation Place. Plant Genetic, from Belgium, is now working in Saskatoon; AgrEvo, from Germany, as well as Monsanto from the United States. The agreement with York Medical out of Toronto is a similar agreement that will move equipment and research from Cuban labs through York Medical to Saskatoon.

We take the approach that this deal is no different than other arrangements being made to make Saskatoon a world-class centre for biotechnology and pharmaceutical research. The deal that has been arranged with York Medical is being done in close cooperation with the federal government. And obviously the concerns that you express today are also very much being monitored by the federal minister, and I would imagine you are in contact with him. But they are of the view that companies should . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the minister, I hope, is very aware that Saskatchewan people work very, very hard to make ends meet. It is frightening to see the minister make an investment that he and his government say, we hope that York Medical and future developments in Cuba will lead to economic opportunities for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is not good enough for the minister to only hope that a quarter of a million dollars of taxpayers' money will lead to economic opportunities.

To date, there has been well over 1,100 Saskatchewan firms inquire about assistance through SOCO and only 11 have been approved. This leads me to believe that this government is more willing to expose taxpayers to high-risk investments out of the province than they are to helping businesses in this province.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister table the criteria used by SOCO that resulted in the approval of this risky investment, rather than approved investments by ventures of Saskatchewan people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the criteria of SOCO have already been approved by the Assembly. The legislation was brought through the House; we appeared before Crown Corporations. If the member opposite doesn't have a copy of that, I'll get that for her.

But I want to say clearly to the member opposite this. That the arrangement made with York Medical has the blessing and the approval of the mayor of Saskatoon, who worked closely in conjunction with Economic Development and SOCO in making these kind of arrangements. The economic development authority in Saskatoon is very much involved and believed this to be a good deal. These are the same criticisms we hear about *Partnership for Growth*, which business people put together.

My view is, Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of input from business people and REDAs (regional economic development authority) on this arrangement, as with *Partnership for Growth*. And if I have a choice of taking the advice of that group in the opposition versus the business people of the province, I'll stick with the business people any day.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the minister said, when speaking about the Cuban investment, that this is an area where our province expects to see further job and economic growth. Mr. Speaker, we have seen the result of the minister's job creation strategy. We lost 4,000 more jobs in the one-year period from February '95 to February '96.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister if he prefers to base his job creation strategy on risky ventures such as the one in Cuba, rather than on the proposals made by the business people of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude again by saying that we do business with many countries and many companies from around the world, especially as it would apply to ag biotech and pharmaceutical. We are huge exporters and we will continue to deal, not only in the borders of the province, but around the world.

But there is one area where the member opposite could give us assistance and that is on the transfer that is occurring in staff in the federal government Department of Health and Welfare. Mr. Axworthy has decided to move about 50 employees from Regina to Winnipeg, to his own constituency. We will be calling on you to back us up in fighting to keep those jobs in Regina, and quit playing the politics that Mr. Axworthy is doing in draining Regina and moving jobs to Winnipeg. And we'd be very, very interested in seeing your support for that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 3 — An Act respecting The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill respecting The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 4 — An Act to amend The University of Regina Act

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The University of Regina Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 5 — An Act to amend The Education Act

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Education Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 6 — An Act to amend The Community Bonds Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Community Bonds Act be now read a first time.

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

Bill No. 7 — An Act to repeal The Industrial Incentive Program Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to repeal The Industrial Incentive Program Act be now introduced and read a first time.

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

Bill No. 8 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation Act be now introduced and read a first time.

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

Bill No. 9 — An Act to amend The Direct Sellers Act

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that an Act to amend The Direct Sellers Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 10 — An Act respecting Marketplace Practices, Consumer Products Warranties and Unsolicited Goods and Credit Cards

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill, An Act respecting Marketplace Practices, Consumer Products Warranties and Unsolicited Goods and Credit Cards.

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

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

The Speaker: — The Speaker has two items he'd like to deal with and then I'll acknowledge the hon. member.

Before orders of the day, it is my duty to table letters from the office of the Lieutenant Governor regarding the composition of the Board of Internal Economy. These letters are dated September 7, 1995; December 13, 1995; January 17, 1996; and March 6, 1996.

(1430)

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Commonwealth Day Message

The Speaker: — I wish to remind members that today is Commonwealth Day and to mark this day I wish to present the Commonwealth Day message from Her Majesty, the Queen. I ask members to please rise.

The theme for Commonwealth Day this year is "Working in Partnership".

This theme reminds us that we can achieve much more if we work in a team, making use of each other's different skills and experience, than if we are all separately trying to do the same thing. A successful partnership depends on mutual respect and friendship, and what matters is not what people **are** but what they can contribute to the common purpose. Partnership builds on experience,

drawing lessons from the past and cementing shared friendships; and it looks to the future as it tackles the challenges of the present.

The Commonwealth is an excellent example of this kind of partnership. The fifty-three sovereign nations who belong to it have vastly different social and ethnic traditions, but it has been able to fashion unity out of this diversity and to become a working partnership of governments and peoples. One of the most valuable aspects of this partnership is the network of Commonwealth Non-Governmental Organisations which link members of a wide range of professions and activities — architects, engineers, journalists and broadcasters, doctors and vets, magistrates and judges, and so on — and help them to benefit from each other's experience and to work together for the common good.

There are thriving partnerships between the universities, the parliamentarians, and the trade unions of the Commonwealth countries. In the arts, literature, and music, there are Commonwealth links which enrich the cultural life of all the members. And there is also a friendly rivalry in a wide range of sporting activities.

The heads of government of the Commonwealth set out its fundamental aims and principles in a statement adopted at Hararé in 1991. And last November in New Zealand, they agreed on an important Action Programme to give that mission statement a real cutting edge with the emphasis on democracy, development, and consensus building. Those aims, like so many others, can best be pursued in partnership both within the Commonwealth and on a wider global scale.

Young people learn early the value of taking part in teams and tackling projects in partnership. I hope that you will carry these lessons into later life and, with the idealism and clear vision which the young can offer, help to build lasting partnerships to make the world a better and safer place.

Members may be seated.

Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Boyd: — Before orders of the day I would ask leave of the Assembly, pursuant to rule 46, to debate an issue of urgent and pressing matter.

The Speaker: — Order. The Leader of the Third Party, pursuant to rule 46, has asked for leave to present an issue of importance. I will ask that he will describe very briefly the reason for that and acquaint the House with the motion that he proposes.

MOTION UNDER RULE 46

High-risk Offender Identification

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

in Saskatoon are frightened about the release of a dangerous sex offender who has been released recently from the Saskatoon psych centre. This pedophile, authorities — city police in this case — believe he will likely reoffend. This individual molested five girls under the age of 10. Yet parents, grandparents, owners of businesses centred around families and others aren't even able to see a photograph of this man.

Mr. Speaker, this is not an isolated case, and therefore I believe it's imperative that the Government of Saskatchewan take immediate steps to protect Saskatchewan families and children.

The province of Manitoba has a community notification process which deals with such situations and has proven extremely successful, Mr. Speaker. And Saskatchewan should follow suit.

I would ask leave of the Assembly to discuss this very important matter as well as a fair and viable solution.

The motion is as follows, Mr. Speaker:

That the Assembly urge the government, in order to protect Saskatchewan families and children, to immediately adopt the province of Manitoba's community notification process which has proven effective at improving safety in communities and which establishes a committee to review and make recommendations regarding the release of sex . . . recommendations regarding the release of sex offenders considered to be dangerous to the public.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Leave not granted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The answer to this . . . and perhaps I may save a little time by tabling the answer to both questions while I'm on my feet. If I could have a page?

The Speaker: — The answers for items 1 and 2 are tabled.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. Murrell, seconded by Mr. Thomson.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to continue with my remarks about the Speech from the Throne. And today I am going to talk about Saskatchewan people and change. I am going to talk about some people in this legislature, people in my constituency, people in my family, two people who have influenced my political life, and then some general comments about people and change.

To start, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your election as the first elected Speaker of the legislature of Saskatchewan. This has obviously involved much change for you in the role that you must now play as you work with us. And I personally promise to be respectful of your rulings and of your demeanour as you lead us in this legislature.

I'd also like to congratulate the elected Deputy Speaker, the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood. I think congratulations are also in order on the hon. member entering his fifth decade this week. And I think that his years of wisdom will be of great assistance to the Speaker as he works with his deliberations.

I also would like to thank the member for Regina Victoria for letting his name stand, as he provided many years of valuable service to this legislature and he was a participant in this election when it was important for us to have another candidate.

Today I would also like to make a special point of thanking our leader, the Premier. And I guess my thanks for him goes to the way that he has over so many years led us in the change that has taken place in Saskatchewan.

As I prepared for this speech today, I went back to the first speech that our Premier gave to this legislature on February 23, 1968. This was a response to the throne speech of the then premier, the member from Moose Jaw, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, my generation wanted to hear in the Speech bold new ideas. It wants a Government with imagination, aggressiveness and foresight.

He then went on to say he wasn't interested in a pussy-cat government or a timid government. He wanted a government that would make change. And I guess I'm pleased to say that here we are almost 30 years later and our Premier is still on the agenda of transforming Saskatchewan and preparing it for the 21st century.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — There are some other people in this Chamber who have also experienced a lot of change, and those are all of us who are the new members. And I'd like to acknowledge all of the new members opposite, and the six of us who are sitting on this side. I note that the two smallest of the new members were the ones that were chosen to move and second the throne speech. That left the remaining four big guys to defend them if they ran into any problems.

There's one more person that I would like to talk about in the sense of transforming change but also in the sense of providing some stability for those of us who are new in the process. And I would like to acknowledge the member from Regina Victoria for all of the guidance that he has provided to all of us new people, especially as he embarks into some new areas himself.

Now I'd like to talk a little bit about the people in my constituency. All of us represent areas of Saskatchewan that cover a certain amount of territory, and we can draw the lines,

or I guess the electoral office can draw the lines. But when we really think about it, it's the people that we represent that are the most important part of our life and what we do.

I represent the constituency of Regina Lakeview. And this constituency includes this legislature and many government offices, and also many of the things that people identify with the Government of Saskatchewan. It's a great pleasure for me to do this because it gives me a chance to understand how the decisions that we make directly affect a lot of my constituents.

I'd also like to thank my predecessors in my new constituency — the hon. member from Regina Centre and the two retired members, Mr. Serge Kujawa and Ms. Louise Simard. Their legacy for me was many people who were hard working and willing to pull together with me as we work and represent the people of our area.

A number of the institutions that we have in Regina are located in Regina Lakeview, but I think rather than go through and talk about all of these different institutions, I want to talk about a couple of the people that are in my constituency. There are people who live on low incomes in rental housing who continually remind me that what one sees when they think about Regina Lakeview is not just larger houses and people who have good incomes. There are many seniors in my constituency who continually ask me about whether there will be any changes in the types of costs that affect their life. And there's continually a reminder that these questions are more important than the questions that we get in question period.

There's also a concern that's raised because part of the university is located in Regina Lakeview. And when we look at and listen to the concerns that come from the students and from the professors and from many others who are located at the university, we recognize that they are the transforming edge of any change that's going to happen in our community.

The constituency also is composed of many individuals who are what I would call the creative force — maybe the dreamers. And as I saw quoted in the last few days: How can you have a national dream or a provincial dream if you don't have the dreamers. And the dreamers in our constituency include writers, poets, painters, the dramatists, the inventors, the engineers, all kinds of people who are looking just past the horizon and they're looking to see if they can see what our next century will be like for Saskatchewan. Anything that we can do as members of this legislature to be of assistance to them should be kept right at the head of our agenda because there's nothing that we can do here as legislators if we don't have the people who have the foresight to divine what is happening in the future.

I'd like to speak briefly about some of the people in my family that have allowed me to participate in this place. First off I would like to mention my wife, who wasn't able to be here today. She's been a steady support in going on 22 years of marriage. And the thanks that I have for her is that no matter what adventure, what change I try, she's willing to be there with me.

I also am continually reminded about why it is that we are here

when I go home and visit with my daughters, Ingrid and Solveig, who are here today. Because what we are doing is we are planning for them what kind of Saskatchewan we need and what kind of Saskatchewan we want. And I think all of us have those individuals in our lives that do that for us.

I'd also like to thank my parents, Tom and Randi Nilson, who are here as well today, because they have through many, many years provided an example of how to deal with the issues as they arise as we moved from different parts of western Canada. My father is a Lutheran minister; my mother is a dietician. As a Lutheran minister, that allowed me to go into new communities on a regular basis and learn what it was like to deal with change. And I think it stood me in good stead.

One interesting comment that I had the other day when we were talking about our educational system in Saskatchewan. I realized that I had not spent a single year in education in Saskatchewan. But here I am in this legislature as a representative saying that what we need for my children is a good education system.

But I think what we need to remind ourselves of is that there are many people with roots in Saskatchewan who are not here any more but would be willing to come back and contribute. And some of those roots may be one or two or three generations out. And anything that we can do that would encourage that would be of great value.

I'd also like to acknowledge my brother Ralph and his wife Suzie and their girls, Bethany and Anna, who live in Regina. And my sister JoAnn and her husband, James Lokken, and their three boys, Nils, Olaf, and Torbjorn, who live in Saskatoon. Also my wife's family in Everett, Washington, who are a solid support for our family as well.

As I've travelled Saskatchewan as Minister of Justice, I've realized that I have relatives in every corner of Saskatchewan and that always keeps me on my toes, including in this question period.

This chance at a speech in the legislature I think is a chance to acknowledge why we are here and what we need to do. And in talking about my family, I need to tell you four short stories that are very important to me, but I think even more important to my parents.

(1445)

My mother was born at Macrorie, Saskatchewan, and her father, John Oscar Farden, was born in Minnesota and had come to Saskatchewan in 1904 with his father, Ole Jens Farden, and his two cousins, Charlie and Knut Farden. Their family roots were in Valdres in Norway. But they came up here after having homesteaded twice in Minnesota, so that they were experienced homesteaders. They came here for a reason; they were looking for some change.

A couple of years after they were in Saskatchewan my mother's mother, Anna Martha Risdahl, came to Canada. She had made a good friend when she was working in North Dakota who in turn

moved up to Saskatchewan. She came up to visit and met my grandfather. Things didn't quite click at first, and she ended up going off and working in Winnipeg and at the Banff Springs Hospital, but eventually she made it back to Macrorie and married my grandfather.

In that community my grandfather and all of his relatives were very much the people who built the school and the church. They were people who put up money to start the Lutheran high school in Outlook, and they very much had a sense that what they were building was a new Saskatchewan.

On my father's side I need to also talk about my father's mother. She was born in North Dakota and her parents had come to Iowa and then moved to North Dakota. Her name was Josefine Jacobson, and she came to Canada and to Regina on July 4, 1912. She told me about this because she remembered that this was only about five days after the Regina tornado and there was a great deal of destruction in this city and her whole family wondered what they had come to.

She eventually settled at Parkbeg with her parents and with her siblings. While she was there her sister ended up meeting a young fellow from Norway whose name was Andrew Grasdahl. His best friend was my father . . . my grandfather, Andrew, or Andreas Mikkel Vigestol Nilson, or that was the name he took. This friend, Andrew Grasdahl, ended up writing a letter to his best friend in Norway. And I have the letter here with me today, because I think that it's a bit of an example that all of us have about what it's like to make some decisions on some fairly slim information.

This letter was written in Parkbeg, Saskatchewan on January 23, 1914. And it goes:

Gode Kammerat!

Tak for dit brev som jeg har modtaget. Jeg ser du er kommet til Norge igjen.

Just that little piece in Norwegian. I'll read the rest of it for you in my translation in English.

Good friend, thank you for the letter that I received. I see that you have returned to Norway again. I suspect that you are no doubt having a lot of fun at home. It was my thought also when I travelled to America that I would be back in Norway this winter, but that was not to be. I came to travel to Canada and took up land.

I see that you would like to know how it is up here. I am enjoying myself very much in all ways. I do not know if there is any land here near me, but there is a huge amount of land all over in Canada. If you are up here, it is easy to obtain a quarter section of land. A homesteader has to live six months out of the year for three years and break 30 acres before one can prove up, and it costs \$10 to file.

And when one has proven up, then you become a citizen at the same time. The lifestyle is almost the same as in the States. Different things are more expensive and many

things are cheaper. Farm machinery is more expensive up here than in the States. The best kind of soft coal costs from \$7.50 to \$8 a ton. You ask if it's a good time here for work? Yes, that I can assure you. One can find work almost anywhere and with good wages too.

I worked out last summer for six and a half months. Then I earned for five and a half months \$40 a month, and for one month I earned \$60. And after I moved onto my homestead, then I was out for a few days threshing, so I earned \$300 in the summer.

The two summers I have been up here have been the easiest since I came to America. I wanted to travel back to Dakota to work if I got \$10 more a month. Last spring I was offered \$45 for seven or eight months, but I cannot hire out for longer than six months in the summer. However, a homesteader may work out threshing because the time will be calculated as if you have lived on the homestead.

You asked if there are longer winters up here than in North and South Dakota. Last spring I began working on April 1. We began to work in the field around April 10. And the winter began on January 10 this year, so we have had little snow. The coldest day we have had was yesterday when it was 15 below zero. Last year we had the finest autumn that I've ever seen. Last winter we also had an outstanding winter. There was not enough snow to drive with a sleigh. So the climate is just as good as in North Dakota and I cannot see any difference.

The only thing I regret is that I did not travel up here before so that I could have been an owner of a good half section of land and maybe a good amount of money as well. But I believe I shall not do so badly anyway. When I have proven up my homestead, I will go and take out a second homestead.

Employers begin to hire April 1, the same as the rule was in North Dakota. So if you come directly up here, you can get from 40 to \$45 a month, depending on how long you hire yourself out for. There is no mixed farming here where a hired man must milk 50 cows evening and morning before and after you are in the field. And corn is not grown so there are not so many hundred hogs to feed on each farm.

Yes, now I believe you have got all of the information that I can think of for the moment.

To finish, a friendly greeting from your comrade, Andrew Grasdahl, Parkbeg, Saskatchewan, Canada. Be so kind as to greet my parents and write back soon.

I begged your indulgence to read that letter because this is the letter that's the reason that I'm in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — And as I say, it was somewhat slim

information but the net result was that my grandfather came and he met my grandmother. His best friend married my grandmother's sister. Andrew Grasdahl had 12 children and my grandfather had 8 children and there are all of these connections, especially in Moose Jaw, as the Speaker may know.

Now the importance of that kind of a letter, I mean, it's still important for us today because I think we sometimes forget that people are our most valuable asset. And it's not as if there are people from Norway that are going to come, but we have people from many parts of the world that would be very willing to come and help us build Saskatchewan, and I think we need to remind ourselves that we have to include all of those people.

I have a couple of brief comments about two people who influenced me and my politics. And some of my lawyer friends may wonder how I ended up as a member of the New Democratic Party when that doesn't necessarily seem to fit with being a lawyer, although my comrade-in-arms here has got a similar defence problem sometimes.

But when I was in high school a man came to visit us, our family. We always had many guests in our home when we lived in Burnaby and I went to high school in New Westminster. This man's name was Chester Ronning. And I was only . . . well it wasn't . . . maybe it was only recently that I was reminded that Chester Ronning was the first person ever elected as a member of the Canadian Cooperative Federation in 1933, the fall of 1933, as the member for Camrose, Alberta.

At the point he came to our house, he was there talking about recognizing China and all of the issues surrounding that. He was trying to change Canada's vision of whether communist China, as we knew it then, should be recognized by Canada. This man had a great influence on me in the way that he analyzed issues and I never forgot him.

About the same time when I was in high school another political person was more important than I thought. We lived in Burnaby and our Member of Parliament was Tommy Douglas and he used to stop by after school at high school and visit with some of us students. And that was an interesting way of getting a bit of a touch of somebody who was a figure in the news. And I was reminded of that when I was campaigning last summer, that the children have a very clear image of what a politician is and to be able to talk to that politician and share some of their dreams is really important.

Now the last area I'd like to speak a little bit about is sort of people and change. The place where we're living now is a totally unprecedented time of change. One of the characteristics of our society is that we have finally institutionalized rapid and continuous change. And one of the things that I think the throne speech recognizes is that whatever we do as we prepare for the next century we can't be doing the same things in the same way and expect that we'll be meeting the problems of the day.

When we look at some of the issues that are here today, and especially the ones that confront me in my new portfolio, you recognize that it's important to look at new ways and new

ideas.

As Minister of Justice, as some of you have heard, I've raised some of the issues and said look, can we do things in another way that allows for community responsibility within our correction system; that allows some kind of personal responsibility and community responsibility as we deal with offenders.

And I guess I ask this legislature to be supportive as we grapple with some of these kinds of issues because there is no question that it is easy to score political points or media points when you can dwell on the suffering of some individuals in our community. But that really has no place as we build our community, that we abuse people.

And one of the things that we talk about is going to our friends in the aboriginal community and ask about some of their ideas of healing. And I think it is very important that we remember the wholeness of life, and they can continually remind us of some of these things.

I have had the pleasure of reading through a book that has been written by one of my constituents, Deanna Christensen, who is here today. She has been writing a history of Chief Ahtahkakoop and all of his descendants. And one of the most beautiful images that's come out of this book for me is that the name Ahtahkakoop means blanket of stars or, as many of you heard, Star Blanket is the southern relatives.

I wonder how many of us know that that means Milky Way? Star Blanket, blanket of stars, Milky Way. And it's basically the image of all of the people who have ever lived and who ever will live. And I think that we end up needing to recognize that that's what we are part of as well, is this great expanse of lights, little lights that are going to build for our descendants based on the work and the things that have been provided to us from before.

(1500)

I think this throne speech does that as well. It ends up giving us a basis by which we can move forward and work at building for Saskatchewan.

In closing, I want to read a poem. Now this poem may be somewhat — well I'm not sure — out of character. Maybe that's not the word.

As I'm reading this poem today, I want to acknowledge two people, and I'll tell you a little about the poem in a minute. The first thing is that my father is here, and two days after I was appointed Justice minister in November, he had open heart surgery. And so many issues of life and death were dealt with within our family and by me. Also I had the sad news this morning that the father of the member from North Battleford had died and that the funeral is this afternoon. And it reminds us again of sort of life and death issues.

The poem that I want to read to you is a poem by another Norwegian descendant, Glen Sorestad from the Buchanan area

of Saskatchewan, who lives in Saskatoon. And it's about his father:

Father Talked

On his deathbed my father spoke
of all the things he'd do
when he was out of hospital.
The tubes that moved the fluids
to and from his cancerous body
restrained his voice to a whisper.
But he talked, never once of death,
always of the days that lay ahead,
of all the things he'd left undone.

The surgeons had already opened him,
had closed him and his file together.
This we knew as Father talked; we nodded
approval of his endless plans.
A voice in me hated this conspiracy,
would have cried out, "Father, it is over."
But something stilled that voice,
some fear I'd never met before.
I nodded at his words instead.

I believe now that Father knew.
Never one to dwell on his past,
he looked ahead to what could be.
This is what he left me. No feeble boasts
of past achievements, no whimper
of failures, just this: there remain
always those illusive things we ought
to do before we go. This was all
he had to leave me. I have borne
his words these many years and now
I'm glad I bit my tongue
while Father talked.

We and the Saskatchewan people are ready for change as we build for the 21st century, and thus I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great honour for me to deliver this, my first speech, in the legislature. I also want to take this opportunity not only to once again offer my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, but I also want to congratulate the new Deputy Speaker, who hails from a constituency that neighbours my own.

I also want to acknowledge the hardworking staff of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. In particular, I want to congratulate Pat Shaw for assuming the role of Sergeant-at-Arms for this House. It's nice to see the friendly face of a fellow veteran of the RCMP every day.

Mr. Speaker, with your leave I'd also like to once again welcome all my friends and supporters who were good enough and so gracious to come today to hear my speech.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, it's now been over eight months since the election, an election that brought so many new members to this place. And before I go on, I'd be remiss not to take note of all the new members on both sides of the House. I know how difficult it is to wage a campaign and all the new members in this House should take pride in their accomplishments.

Mr. Speaker, I can't speak for all the new members, but I want to relate to you my feelings when I first entered this building as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the Melville constituency. I felt greatly honoured the people of the Melville constituency had placed their confidence in me to speak on their behalf in this House. In fact every member in this House should share with me that sense of honour, for to be elected an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) is indeed an honour.

At the same time, I was humbled by that responsibility. How can any of us say we have the wisdom to act on behalf of one million Saskatchewan residents? I certainly don't have all the answers to cope with the problems that face our province and, Mr. Speaker, there are very serious problems in Saskatchewan today of which I will speak later in this address.

Mr. Speaker, other than the great sense of responsibility I felt when I first entered this place, I must admit to you I also felt a hint of profound sadness — a sadness that came about as a result of my travels throughout my constituency during the election campaign. So many of my constituents greeted me with such cynicism about government, about politics, about politicians, that I wasn't always sure I'd done the right thing in entering this world myself.

This was something I had not faced before. I was proud to have served as a member of the RCMP, which I might say without fear of prejudice was and remains the finest police force in the world. During my career in the force, I never thought of myself as anything other than a servant of the people — first, last, and always. It was the people I served in the RCMP, and it was the people I worked for. And you know what? The people I served and worked for treated my colleagues and me with respect at all times. To be a member of the force was something to be proud of. It was something to aspire to. It was something children wanted to be when they grew up, and I hope it still is. In fact I'm sure it is.

I carried this attitude with me when I took a job with the Saskatchewan civil service following my retirement from the force. While with the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, I still thought of people as my boss. I worked to improve their lives the best I could, and I believe I earned our customers' respect through straight dealing and honest talk.

Why then is it so different for all of us sitting here today? Why is this Chamber and the men and women who sit here held in such disregard by so many residents of this great province and of this country? Unrealistic expectations on the part of the voters? The rocky transitional period we find ourselves in economically? The lack of integrity a small number have shown when they were members here? Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the

answer probably lies in a combination of all three.

Mr. Speaker, we may not be able to do anything about our voters' expectations and we probably can't do much about our ever-changing world and the economy other than to ensure we keep it on the right track. But what we can do — no, what we must do — is to show the residents of Saskatchewan we are men and women of integrity. We do have their best interests at heart. We are not here simply to line our own pockets or to do favours for our friends.

I may be accused of being naïve, I may be a babe in the woods when it comes to politics, I may even be a political amateur, but is it so much to ask that we never forget the people who have sent us here?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Is it so much to ask we remember who are servants and who are the masters? Is it too much to ask we treat the people of Saskatchewan with the honesty and integrity they should be able to expect from those who are fortunate enough to sit in this House? Because if it is too much to ask, if those are unrealistic expectations, this place and those who sit here don't deserve the people's respect. It's probably been said many, many, many times on this floor, but it's worth repeating: we work for the people; the people do not work for us.

Mr. Speaker, I will remember that as long as I sit in the legislature, and I challenge each and every one of my colleagues in this House to remember that simple rule as well.

The residents of this province have been really let down so many times by their elected officials, it's very difficult for them to believe what any of us have to say. Far too often in the past, politicians in this province have played political games with people's lives rather than coming up with sound policy.

I saw that first hand at Crop Insurance. I worked under three different governments, starting with the Blakeney government in 1981. Throughout my 11 years at Crop Insurance, I saw time and time again how elected officials in this province used their power and manipulated the corporation and its decisions for the benefit of the politicians, not the people. Or in some cases, ludicrous decisions were made to help the ministers' friends.

I fought against this action the best I could. And the politicians did not like it. Perhaps that's why I'm sitting here today and not in the Crop Insurance head office back in Melville.

Because, Mr. Speaker, we have too many politicians in this province today who think they're next to God. The people do not matter to them and they don't want to hear from those who are willing to stand up and fight for what's right. Too often the people have been shoved aside, forgotten by the politicians as they try to score the political hit on the 6 o'clock news. Too often they've had politicians promise them the world, only to see those promises broken as fast as the votes are counted. Can you blame them for being cynical of us, Mr. Speaker?

Can you blame the people for mistrusting their politicians when

you see a dozen or more of them in court? The disgrace the Conservative Party has brought to this building and to those who sit here is tragic. Because of the actions of that bunch, it'll be a long, long time before people will look at this place with respect.

And now we see this new Conservative Party sit here acting like they've seen the light on the road to Damascus. Now they're all for balanced budget legislation, free votes, direct democracy, ethics in politics. Wouldn't it have been wonderful if they'd just practised what they preached during their years in office? If they'd only followed their own advice . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — If they'd only followed their own advice, they might have some credibility left today. But no. Instead, the Conservatives took advantage of their position. It wasn't enough they were openly spending this province into bankruptcy; they had to rob the people as well.

It is because of corruption like this that it's vital that this House pass the private member's Bill proposed by the member from Saskatoon Greystone. This type of legislation unfortunately is necessary to ensure this province never again faces the corruption of the Conservatives or a situation such as the despicable actions taken by the Premier's colleagues in British Columbia.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Can you blame the people for losing faith in this place when they see former ministers of the Crown brought up on charges of misusing the very tax dollars the people of Saskatchewan worked so hard to earn, only to turn more and more of it over to the government? Can you blame the voters for turning their backs on government when the very government they elect breaks promise after promise after promise, as the government opposite has done and looks like it will continue doing?

I certainly don't blame them. But what I can do is try to the best of my abilities to keep their interests ahead of my own. That's the least and the most that can be asked of any of us.

Yes, we may get thrown off track once in a while. We might lose touch with the feelings of our voters now and then. The parties represented in this House may even have to overcome internal strife now and then, though I know that this will never happen in the Liberal Party. But if we are at least to try to focus most of our energies on the needs of the people perhaps then we will earn their respect, and I certainly hope so.

Before I continue let me speak a little bit about my constituency, as is a tradition in members' maiden speeches. Mr. Speaker, I may be biased, but the constituency of Melville, I believe, is one of the very best in the entire province. It is one of the most representative ridings in Saskatchewan with a mix of urban and rural interests.

Like all of Saskatchewan, Melville depends greatly on the

farming economy. When farmers are hurting, we're all hurting. Thankfully in the last number of years we've seen a turnaround in the agricultural economy. Of course as we all know or as we should know, a strong rural economy in Saskatchewan translates as well to a strong urban economy. We in rural Saskatchewan are very mindful of that. I'm not so sure that all the members opposite or those who work for them are aware of this.

(1515)

But when the province turns its back on rural Saskatchewan, it necessarily also harms our villages, towns, and cities. That is a point this opposition party and this member, Mr. Speaker, will never stop driving home to the government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Because I truly believe some of the members on that side of the House do not understand this. And those who do understand it sit voiceless on the government's back benches.

Apart from agriculture, Melville also enjoys a manufacturing sector as well, with businesses such as Babcock & Wilcox in the city of Melville and Excel Fiberglass in Balcarres, we have seen firsthand the importance of diversifying the economy in rural Saskatchewan.

Business plays a very important role in ridings such as Melville. Also in Melville you'll find something that shows the entrepreneurial spirit that exists in this province. Melville is the home of the community publishing limited which several community newspapers in the region set up in a cooperative effort to combat rising costs and falling advertising revenue. This venture and others like them will ensure that these newspapers, which are the lifeblood of communications in rural Saskatchewan, thrive long into the future. And I congratulate all the publishers involved in this venture for their forethought.

And you can't speak of Melville without talking about the city's largest employer. CN (Canadian National) Rail makes Melville Saskatchewan's rail city. And though the company has been cutting back over the last number of years, it remains the backbone of the city's economy. And it gives the city a distinctive flavour of which its residents are fiercely proud.

Melville also enjoys a wide variety of people. Many of our citizens are immigrants or descendants of immigrants from eastern Europe. I know my own eastern European heritage is something I share with many members of this House, including the Premier himself.

I'm also proud to say my constituency includes six Indian reserves — Peepeekisis, Okanese, Star Blanket, Little Black Bear, and Standing Buffalo, as well as a portion of Sakimay.

During the last few years we have heard constant talk about redefining our relationships with our first nations community. We've even heard some of our provincial politicians use some native issues in a cynical, political way designed only to get

votes through inflammatory rhetoric designed to appeal to the lowest common denominator in our society.

But, Mr. Speaker, I know firsthand from my many friendships in the first nations community the only way to change the role our Indian people play in our society is through conversation; it's through negotiation, and most importantly, through cooperation. The last thing this province needs is a political party playing the politics of race. And those who do should be ashamed of themselves and should rethink their qualifications to sit in this House, a House that should be one of honour and integrity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Our first nations and Metis citizens ask only that they are treated fairly by our society. They have a large contribution to make in Saskatchewan. It's time someone started listening to them. It's time the government began addressing their long-term goals. One-time projects that are simply designed to make it appear the government is doing something is no longer good enough.

The Melville constituency is also lucky enough to enjoy a high level of recreation activities. We enjoy the lakes of the Qu'Appelle Valley. And in the winter my riding is lucky enough to be the home of two Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League franchises. The Lebreton Eagles are currently in the league playoffs. And the Melville Millionaires, while having struggled this past season, are one of the cornerstone teams in this great league.

Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, there are many serious issues facing this province, this government, and this opposition. Number one on the list of priorities in Saskatchewan must be job creation. For too long governments in this province have either thrown millions and millions of taxpayer dollars on megaprojects that turn into political boondoggles, or they only pay lip-service to the entire issue as this government continues to do.

It really doesn't matter which course government follows here; it ends up with the same result. No new jobs are created. This has plagued our province for many years now, and I must say that I'm happy to see in the throne speech this government has made job creation and economic development a priority.

The trouble is, of course, this same government made the same commitment in 1992. We all remember it — 30,000 jobs. Now we hear the same promise. The Minister of Economic Development tells us through his astute leadership 10,000 jobs have been created in the last four years. Well I don't know what kind of jobs these were or where they were created or even if they still exist. But I can tell you our province hasn't seen the effects. I suspect in fact the minister accidentally added a zero to his job creation number, possibly borrowing some of the Minister of Finance's smoke and mirrors.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — What truly saddens me however, when this

government talks of economic development or job creation, is they really believe they are the ones who create the jobs. Mr. Speaker, you and I know, all of us know on this side of the House that government doesn't create jobs. The Premier himself admitted that.

Government can however kill jobs with an atmosphere unfriendly to small business, and unfortunately that's the course this government has chosen to follow — oppressive labour legislation, unwarranted regulations, union preference policies, unreasonable tax rates. All of these things are job killers, Mr. Speaker. Yet time after time, this government moves to stifle initiatives in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, on April 22, 1991, in this House, the then leader of the opposition and the current Premier laid out what he said was his five-step financial management plan. I'm going to take a few moments to detail that plan, Mr. Speaker, because I think it goes a long way in showing the hypocrisy of the New Democratic Party and its leader.

Step number one of this plan: an attack on waste and mismanagement. The result: a larger cabinet and more political appointees.

Step number two: approach taxation from the point of view of fairness and only where needed. The result: tax revenue is up over half a billion dollars since 1991.

Step number three: to rejuvenate our economy and to create jobs. The result: zero job creation between January 1992 and January 1996, and close to 2,300 business bankruptcies under this NDP government compared to only 1,400 bankruptcies during the same period in Manitoba.

Step number four, Mr. Speaker, was to stand behind farmers in rural Saskatchewan. The results: tearing up legally binding GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contracts, breaking the GRIP overpayment promise, and boarding up Crop Insurance offices and rural service centres.

And finally, step number five: to improve the quality of life, especially in the fields of health and education. And the result, Mr. Speaker: a gutted health care system, closed hospitals, and closed schools.

Mr. Speaker, all I can say about the Premier's 1991 five-step plan is that I'm glad it didn't have ten steps or there really would be nothing left in rural Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, in my own constituency about four years ago the local Economic Development Authority was hard at work on a plan that would have created hundreds, hundreds of jobs in the area. And, Mr. Speaker, these were not part-time jobs; these were not minimum wage jobs; these were real, sustainable jobs that would have brought people back to the area.

This plan would have seen a private company build an

environmental centre that would have helped rid a large area of its garbage. This in turn would have relieved some of the need for new landfill sites. And one of the by-products of the centre would have been generation of electricity.

All this private company asked of the government was that SaskPower would purchase this electricity for the same price as it takes for the corporation to generate its own. That's all they asked. They did not ask for grants; they did not ask for loans; they didn't ask anything of the government or the taxpayers.

I remember attending the meeting where the proposal was spelled out for the current Minister of Finance. And what was her reaction? She said, and I quote her directly because it stuck in my memory, Mr. Speaker, she said: This is a Finance minister's dream — no taxpayer money, lots of jobs being created. The Premier also spoke very positively of this project.

So what happened? The government and Jack Messer said no to the project. That's what happened. And the cabinet did nothing. The Premier and the cabinet turned their backs on my area of the province and the huge economic boost this would have been. They said no, or at least they allowed Mr. Messer to say no.

If that is a sign of how committed this government is to economic development in rural Saskatchewan, you'll excuse me, Mr. Speaker, for being somewhat sceptical when I hear about this new found commitment to creating jobs in Saskatchewan. And you'll also excuse the residents of my constituency for sharing in my scepticism.

This is only one of the reasons the area once known as red square has turned into the red dot. We've got the member from Yorkton surrounded and in the next election, we plan to sweep every seat in the region. And, Mr. Speaker, the policies of the government will make that very easy indeed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, this throne speech is supposed to bring some sense of hope to the people of Saskatchewan. However, I submit, unless the speech is finally backed up by some concrete action on the part of this government, I fear that hope will be dashed just as this government has dashed so many hopes over the last four years.

Mr. Speaker, if our province is to grow, if our province is to succeed, if our province is to prosper, we need a new outlook. We cannot possibly succeed when we have ministers of the Crown decrying the fact that we are losing equalization payments because our resource and farming sectors are doing so well.

That type of welfare mentality does not breed wealth. It breeds nothing but stagnation. And stagnation is fatal today in this changing world. Without new ideas, without a new way of doing things, Saskatchewan will remain a have-not province, and, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan do not want to be classified any longer as one of the have-nots.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if Saskatchewan got to the point where we never saw another equalization payment? Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could finally stand on our own two feet?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think so and the people of Saskatchewan think so. They are hard working; they are innovative; they are willing to offer their blood, sweat, and tears to build a better, stronger province. If only we had a government to encourage them.

But sadly we don't, Mr. Speaker. All this government can come up with in terms of economic development is gambling. It's a sad state of affairs indeed when we see a government of this province pointing to gambling expansion as one of its great achievements.

Since VLTs were introduced into rural Saskatchewan we have seen hundreds of millions of dollars drained out of our communities — hundreds of millions of dollars. It's truly mind boggling that these members across the floor cannot see the devastation their reckless gambling policy is having in our villages, towns, and cities.

Every day thousands of dollars are being taken out of every town in this province. Money that would have otherwise stayed in these communities and helped keep a small business afloat. But does this government think about this? Absolutely not. They have forgotten their principles, if they ever had any to begin with.

And I look over to the government side and I see the few members from rural Saskatchewan they have and I wonder why those members aren't standing up and defending their communities.

Why aren't you telling this Premier and the cabinet they are killing rural Saskatchewan with their thoughtless policies? Why aren't the back-benchers over there willing to stand up for their constituents and tell this government they are wrong? They are wrong about gambling. They are wrong about GRIP. And they are wrong to write off rural Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1530)

Mr. Osika: — I know some of the rural members on that side personally, and I know they too are saddened about what is happening outside of our cities. I beg them to find their voice. Speak for the people that sent you here. Speak out for what is right. Do your jobs. Show some integrity. Tell the Premier it is not right for this government to renege on its promise to return some of the VLT money to the communities.

Tell the Premier he has to do more for the people in rural Saskatchewan than to cut their services, close their schools, and take away their hospitals. It is incumbent upon this Premier and this government to work for all of Saskatchewan, not just those who live within the city limits of Regina and Saskatoon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear

Mr. Osika: — You can't count on the civil servants to do that because they too are unfortunately as short-sighted as this cabinet. I say to those rural back-benchers, finally stand up and speak for the people, Mr. Speaker. They are paid far too much money to stay silent any longer on these issues. Take off your muzzles. Do your jobs. That's what you're here for.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech — despite its warm, fuzzy language, despite its promises — I'm afraid will not encourage the people. They have seen this government go back on too many of its promises to take any comfort in the words contained in the throne speech.

In its first term, this government blamed all the troubles of the world on the previous administration. Admittedly, that crew did and still does have a lot to answer for. But, Mr. Speaker, any government has to take action to quell its problems, not to just blame others. But as we've seen in the last few weeks, this government plans to continue to blame others for its own mistakes, its own decisions, its own choices.

Now the finger of blame is pointed at the federal government as it tries to get its own fiscal house in order. Suddenly we hear all these tales of gloom and doom that were conspicuously absent during last June's election campaign.

But, Mr. Speaker, this opposition will hold the government accountable for its actions. We will not let the government slough off blame onto others any longer. It does not wash with us, and it most certainly does not wash with the voters in this province — not any longer. They elect governments to act on their behalf. They elect governments to take swift actions when problems arise. They most certainly do not elect governments to point fingers and bellyache.

Whenever I hear the Finance minister crying about offloading by the federal government, I think back to the last few years, and I wonder how she can keep a straight face. For its last term, the government offloaded millions and millions of dollars onto the backs of local governments, school boards, universities, farmers, and taxpayers in its cynical attempt to balance the budget in time for the election. All the time they were forcing local governments to either raise taxes or seriously cut services to meet shortfalls. And, Mr. Speaker, these municipal governments do balance their budgets; they have to by law. Now this government has the audacity to stand up and point fingers at these very local governments as a source of waste. Give me a break.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker? The most surprising element in all this is that I really believe there are some on that side of the House who have bought into this garbage. I think even some of the cabinet might actually believe it because, Mr. Speaker, there is something very familiar with this government and the one that was in power when I returned to Saskatchewan in 1981.

Fifteen years ago, 15 years ago we had an NDP government in this province that had forgotten they worked for the people. They forgot the people altogether in fact. In their arrogance, that government decided it knew better than the voters and

stopped listening to them. They were so full of themselves; they called an early election in 1982. And what happened? That government that was overwhelmed with arrogance was wiped off the map. The people saw the politicians were not listening, and they punished them for that. In fact the then attorney general was caught up in the wave. He more than anyone should know what happens when governments stop listening. The Premier should know that there's always another gas station attendant out there ready to knock him off.

So will this government finally start listening? Well I hope so, but I'm not going to hold my breath. I don't think they're willing to take my advice because they're not willing to take anyone's advice. They're too far gone. Just as in 1982, they're arrogant to their core. For that reason they feel they are right to break promises, to tear up legally binding contracts. These members are not people of their word, and the people of Saskatchewan can see that. They are seeing it more and more every day.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech is nothing more than hollow words on expensive paper. It will not restore Saskatchewan's hope because the people cannot believe this government's promises — not any longer. And for that reason, this opposition caucus will vote against the government's motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I rise today to speak in support of the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: — The speech outlines the direction of my government as we prepare to face the challenge of preparing Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan people for the 21st century.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Lieutenant Governor on his presentation of the throne speech and on the important role that he so ably fulfils as the Queen's representative.

I also want to congratulate you on being chosen by your peers, the members of this Assembly, to undertake the very important role as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. The Speaker is very important to us all. You, sir, will without a doubt conduct the business of this Chamber in a manner that will bring a great deal of respect and dignity to this Chamber and to yourself as you serve your term in this very important position.

I would also like to congratulate my colleague from Last Mountain-Touchwood at being chosen by this Assembly to serve as Deputy Speaker. I have known for some time of the member's desire to serve this Assembly in this particular role. I am confident that the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood will also serve us well as he undertakes his new responsibilities.

In addition, I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to compliment my colleague, the hon. member from the

Battlefords-Cut Knife, on her moving of the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: — In addition, I wish to extend congratulations to the youngest member of our caucus, the member from Regina South, who did a commendable job of seconding the motion to accept the Speech from the Throne. These two individuals did a superb job of launching this debate, and I am proud and pleased to welcome them as new colleagues in our NDP caucus.

I would also like to welcome the new Sergeant-At-Arms as well as the pages who will serve the members for the duration of this session.

This is my second term, having been elected to serve the Assembly in 1991 as a government member representing the people of Redberry. Last June's election saw my return, this time representing a somewhat different area now known as Redberry Lake. Redberry Lake is composed of large portions of the former Biggar and Redberry constituencies. In addition, Redberry Lake includes a portion of the former Rosthern constituency, containing my largest town, which of course is Langham, with a population of just over 1,100 people.

My constituency, like all others in the southern part of the province, is made up of over 17,000 people. Unlike many others, Redberry Lake is 45 to 50 miles wide for the most part and 93 miles from the south end of Pike Lake to the northern end of Mistawasis Reserve. According to my calculations, my constituency covers an area in excess of two and one quarter times the area equivalent of Prince Edward Island.

While Redberry Lake is primarily a mixed farming area, a great many people live on acreages and in the small towns and villages. The people who live on these acreages are often self-employed or employed in neighbouring cities such as Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and The Battlefords. A great number of residents are employed in potash production in the southern portion and in the oil and forest industries in the western and northern regions, with some commuting to Saskatchewan's North for employment in the uranium industry. In addition I have two Indian reserves within the boundaries: Mistawasis in the far north end and Muskeg Lake a few miles further south.

As is true in all areas of rural Canada, Redberry Lake is an area of ageing population. So their concerns are often related to the needs of the elderly. Often when I talk to my constituents, their interest is in health care and housing as matters of great concern.

Last June the residents of Redberry Lake, as did most of the constituencies in the province, they spoke out loud and clear. During that campaign they made it known that they trust and support my government's direction in such matters that have such a significant impact on their personal lives. In addition it was quite evident that they agreed with and support our initiative on job creation.

The one overlying issue that is almost universal is the

overwhelming support for our Premier and our Finance minister in the handling of the province's finances. It is a great fear among my constituents because never again do they want to have our province totally devastated like it was allowed to — in fact was encouraged to — happen to us in the 1990s. That total incompetence, to say the least, is and will remain for many years a burden that my constituents along with all Saskatchewan people will have to bear.

However, with the responsible management of the business of government, Saskatchewan people have more reason to face the future with optimism. Not only Saskatchewan people, but also people from across this nation discuss government management and recognize that the record of our government during its first term in office is outstanding. Our Premier is regarded as one of the outstanding statesmen of all time.

The Speech from the Throne outlines the plans that this government has to continue on the road of responsible government as we approach the new century. The CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) and NDP governments have shown how, during 36 of the last 52 years, that a provincial government can through good management govern with a social conscience. Only with prudent management and a vision of the future can governments serve the needs of the people.

Due to careful planning, I fully expect this month's budget will be able to deal with the federal offloading and still maintain the finest health and education standards on the continent.

When we consider the loss of the Crow benefit and the changes in rail service, my farmers and residents of the small towns are going to face major changes, not only in road maintenance but also in their entire community. When you consider the extensive changes to the rail line guarantees and federal funding, the railways can and will redraw the map of Saskatchewan.

(1545)

The people of Saskatchewan find themselves dealing in a new climate of world trade with its obvious challenges. Our government is striving to help cope with the uncertainty that this situation provides. Value added processing, local manufacturing, and more suitable production for a competitive market are the direction that we must and are going to follow. My government is focusing on such opportunities and assisting whenever and however possible.

It is interesting to me to watch and, as a farmer, to deal with the daily problems created by higher input costs including, but not exclusively, freight rates. We all remember all too well how the federal government projected great growth and wealth in the livestock industry if only the Crow was gone. Well it is like the Newfoundland song about the cod-fishing industry; only in this case it is the Crow rate: she's gone, boys, she's gone. And let's never forget it was a federal Liberal government that did this to us. Well it's nothing to sing about, and the price of beef is a disaster. So the federal government's promise of riches seems elusive.

I often think of our neighbour who in 1952 hauled out four finished steers into North Battleford. He sold them and walked over to the Ford garage and bought and paid for a brand spanking new Crown Victoria. Well the other day a farmer from my constituency phoned me to tell me he had received \$1.29 a pound dressed weight for his steers. If you do the math on that, it will show you that today he would need 40, not four, steers to buy that same model of car — 40:4, that's where his purchasing power is gone.

So this creates a situation that the farmer, through his own efficiencies, has survived but now needs our help as a provincial government to encourage and assist him to be able to market his product at low cost through value added processing right here on the prairies, so he can continue to produce with some hopes of survival.

One such project that can benefit such farmers, and also young people looking for jobs, is being considered in the Blaine Lake area in my constituency. A group of industrial individuals in the area are promoting a state-of-the-art processing and packing plant. They've done a lot of preliminary studies including the start of a feasibility study. Should such a project be successful in becoming established in Redberry Lake, it would bring with it a minimum of 300 jobs.

This is just an example of the kind of project my government is encouraging with communities, businesses, and governments working together to create jobs and business opportunities in rural Saskatchewan.

I have been particularly pleased over the pilot project that my government introduced last May to train young farm people. I have been striving for several years to have an apprenticeship course for agriculture made available for young Saskatchewan people. With the full support of the present Minister of Agriculture, the green certificate program is under way. Initially this apprenticeship program was established out of necessity to have a trained workforce to fill important jobs in such places as feedlots and dairy operations, but more significantly to prepare young men and women to own and operate their own farm business.

At this time, approximately 50 young Saskatchewan farmers have enrolled in the program with the first certificates to individuals who have completed the first level required to receive a certificate. My congratulations to the graduates and my thanks to the fellow caucus members whose support made it possible to establish this very important trial project.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: — I have talked to many people who are looking forward to the review of the crop insurance program. It is quite apparent that the crop insurance, as it has evolved over the years, has developed some growth disorders. Perhaps some of those disorders are now involved in the political game.

The Minister of Agriculture is to be complimented on his efforts to conduct a meaningful review of the program. The crops, the cost of production, the communication have changed

so much since the program was introduced some 35 years ago that it is crucial that a review be done. These meetings will provide an opportunity to evaluate, discuss, and recommend program adjustments that will enhance crop insurance and its delivery to the farmers involved. I am looking forward to the meetings in my area so that I have a direct opportunity to meet with the farming public as it is presented to the minister for his consideration.

My constituents are telling me they want a simple, clean-cut, responsive program that provides them emergency support at a reasonable price. We as farmers in this province are very fortunate to have a Minister of Agriculture who not only understands our needs but lives them himself.

I for one want to thank him for this review process which gives us as farmers a chance to design a program to better serve our needs. With higher input costs, the basic insurance of risk coverage is more important to us than ever. With the improved grain prices and a provincial economy that is well managed, a great deal of optimism is apparent among the farmers of the area.

My constituents will also be pleased by the proposal to complete the twinning of the Yellowhead highway, which will soon be four lanes from North Battleford to Saskatoon. This beautiful new road will be much safer and more pleasant to drive on for residents and tourists alike.

I am looking forward with enthusiasm to this session as we introduce, debate, and pass progressive legislation that will improve the quality of life for Saskatchewan people as we approach the 21st century.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate you on your new position and I will be voting in support of the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this stylized form of non-mortal combat that we have in this legislature, there are certain traditional things. The first traditional thing of course is to congratulate the guy in the funny hat, and then of course to thank the voters of the constituency. And I do indeed congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, and I do thank the voters of my constituency.

I would also like to thank the people who ran against me — Mr. Wally Lockhart for the Liberal Party and Mr. Marcel Guay for the Conservative Party.

I also want to congratulate all the veteran MLAs who were returned to this House and to congratulate most particularly the new MLAs. You will find that it is a difficult time, being an MLA, but it's also a wonderful time. Despite the lack of privacy that we have, despite the fact that our friends are always questioning what we've done and why we've done it, and despite the paradoxes that we have to cope with between being people who are members of a political party as well as part of a social movement. Nevertheless being a politician is an

honourable profession. And I'm very pleased that I ran again.

I'm also very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to be in the back benches, and some people may find that a little bit funny for me to say. But I want to say that one of the things I have as a back-bench member of the government is a lot of flexibility, a lot of freedom, and most particularly, a lot of time to consider my political philosophy. And I believe the politicians are better served by having that time to consider their political philosophy so that they can be consistent in their principles and in the things they champion.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, all across this world we are seeing that social democratic thought is under attack. We are seeing that it is imperative for social democrats to come to grips with the necessity to change, with the necessity to redefine traditional forms of interventionism, to move it from the central state level down to the community level. We are also seeing that social democrats have to come to grips with the fact of the market-place, the ascendancy of the market-place, and yet the absolute, imperative necessity to ensure that social democratic principles of compassion, fairness, and social and economic justice guide and inform that market-place.

We are grappling with change, Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite who come to the House talking about the same old things over and over again, complaining about hospital conversions, complaining about GRIP, talking about integrity, and yet demonstrating the opposite. Instead, Mr. Speaker, what we are doing on this side of the House in the New Democratic Party, indeed in the social democratic movement all across this world, is we are recognizing that change will be the norm for the next while. We recognize that we have to be strong, probably stronger than ever. Once we thought we had almost tamed the market. Now we're seeing a return to pre-industrial times, almost, in terms of democracy.

The capitalist economy is now becoming turbo charged, and we seem to be returning to the unfettered times of the mid-1800s where influence was \$1 equals one vote rather than the democracy of our times, which we wish to champion, where one person equals one vote.

To that end, Mr. Speaker, I would point out a headline in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, on Saturday, entitled, "Market meltdown: Good news on job front brings bad news for investors." What a strange kind of capitalist society we're into when the fact that there are more people employed in the United States should cause a market to develop the heebie-jeebie jitters.

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing the end of the nation state. We are seeing forces that are pulling us either towards the direction of tribalism or towards the direction of Mc-junk, where everybody becomes the same amorphous consumer. It is our duty and our mission as social democrats to kindle social hope and to point out that there can be — that there is — a third way of coping with the end of the nation state.

We need to rise above the notion of the nation state and talk now about the community values that inspire us as social

democrats. We need to talk about how these values can help the world cope with changes. We need to talk about the fact that society has a responsibility to give people the hope for a better life. And in return, the people have a responsibility to give something back to their community and to obey their community's rules. We need to deal with the crucial issue, as we enter the next century, of finding the balance between obligations and entitlements.

(1600)

In that sense, Mr. Speaker, I would quote from an ancient philosopher; his quote of thousands of years ago is as relevant today. Aristotle said: "It is the duty of the statesman to create for the citizen the best possible opportunity of living a good life." "This is not to degrade morality", he said, "but rather to moralize politics." And that is the job that we, all of us in this legislature, have — to moralize politics.

We have now a global economy. We have to accept it, but we do not have to accept the fact that everyone constantly talks about a global economy but forgets to talk about a global community, a community where the voices of the citizens prevail and where the voices of the citizens are not stifled.

Mr. Speaker, we have developed in Canada and in Saskatchewan, wonderful social programs, programs that are the envy of everyone in the world. But we need to recognize that our programs, while they may be wonderful compared to the poverty and squalor we may see in other parts of the world, have not totally helped all the casualties of the market system.

So we need to figure out ways to find specialized programs to look for assistance for people in our community to take their rightful place as fully functioning, fully contributing members of our community. I'm talking about single parents; I'm talking about first nations people; I'm talking about the people who have been crunched by the new economy — the middle-aged and older long-term unemployed workers; the people in rental accommodations; and the disenfranchised and under-educated youth. We need to figure out ways to divert funds and programs to them in a specialized way, beyond universality but still universally beneficial. We also need to figure out ways to convince the privileged that it is in our own best interests to support these specialized programs.

The key issue, it seems to me, for social democrats for the future is security — security municipally, provincially, nationally and internationally. The old certainties of church, club, and coffee klatch are disappearing and we need to ensure that people do not simply, in this new information age, climb into artificial, counterfeit, cyber communities as a way of coping with the changes.

As New Democrats, we know that we cannot build economic and social security with a strong sense of community unless people feel a strong sense of stake and belonging in their community. Therefore we need a moral purpose, a noble purpose in politics, with the individual family and social values to sustain that noble purpose.

From my point of view, Mr. Speaker, speaking obviously as a biased member of the government, only the social democratic politics of the NDP has that noble purpose. Certainly, it seems to me, it has a much more noble purpose than the politics of the members opposite, where the purpose seems to be to chip away at our collective institutions, all for the sake of maximizing individual profits.

Mr. Speaker, we are in a period of transformation. Therefore our job as politicians, as members of the government — our job, our mission, our purpose — is to ensure that the transformation is positive for all. And we have to also ensure that people have a sense of security during this time of revolutionary and evolutionary change.

Today everybody talks. They natter on about jobs, jobs, jobs, when they're not muttering about taxes, taxes, taxes. But it is imperative that we also talk about stability, about security, and about values. That is why in the last provincial election we talked about how we would handle any budgetary surpluses. We said that it would be one-third for jobs; one-third for tax reduction; and most importantly, one-third for program help for the casualties of the changing times. That's why in the Speech from the Throne we have introduced things such as the redesign of social assistance.

The old, left, rigid solutions, Mr. Speaker, of centralization, dogmatic economic planning, and state control won't work any more, even if they ever did work. Neither will the hippy-dippy 1960s new-left solutions of confrontation, picket politics, and the championing of particularistic interests.

As social democrats, in the last century we tackled outdated attitudes and prescriptions. We won many major battles for women, for the environment, and for oppressed people. We were fighters on their behalf. We achieved results through those fights. Now we have to move beyond fighting. We have to build; we have to create. We need to make sure that all the people who are involved in particularistic politics start to see that all of us in this province and in this country, that we, all of us, have common cause. That common cause right now in this age of transportation, the transformation, is how to achieve security amidst change.

The choice is not between resisting change and just letting it happen. We can work in partnership with traditional foes and our friends. We can achieve a government that is not primarily interventionist. Our active government will have a sense of purpose and mission as we work to build social order and stability with strong community values and respect for diversity.

We will build a more open, pluralistic style of government with more honesty from politicians about what is doable and what is just cream puff, feel good promises. We will work with the community to make sure that the voices of the citizens prevail.

Mr. Speaker, what you will see in the Speech from the Throne are various tools that will help us achieve greater participation in community decision making, that will help communities have an increased flexibility so they can deliver services to

meet local needs and, most importantly, that will provide communities with the support, the skills, and the needed legitimacy as we move into this age of transformation.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I would say, in these paradoxically volcanic and prosaic times, two things are in short supply: the faith to imagine a better world and the political ingenuity to bring it about. Mr. Speaker, New Democrats have both, and so therefore for that reason it is my great pleasure to support the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me begin my intervention in this debate, Mr. Speaker, by saying that it is a great honour to have the opportunity to speak in this throne speech debate in this first session of this legislature as a member for Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Speaker, as is often the tradition in this House, I am tempted to make some comments on the remarks made by members opposite, particularly the Acting Leader of the Opposition. I am tempted to make some remarks, Mr. Speaker, because as I listened to the comments by the member from Melville, particularly his comments about integrity, I had this feeling and this urge that it could be a speech in itself. But I shall show respect for the fact that he is a new member, as I think is also a tradition of this House, and I shall not comment at any length on the comments that he made, other than to say, Mr. Speaker, that I think it is of some interest to note that the member who just spoke as the Acting Leader of the Liberal Party about integrity is the member who once was a Progressive Conservative and then a Reformer and now a Liberal. Now, Mr. Speaker, that says something about integrity.

Mr. Speaker, I think one could speak about integrity when one watches the machinations of the Liberal caucus since the last convention of the Liberal Party in the month of November. But that is all I intend to say, Mr. Speaker, about comments by members of the opposition, from both the official opposition and the third party, because I would prefer to say some of the things that I think are particularly relevant in this debate. And there won't be another opportunity to make comments on comments made by members from the opposition.

Well, Mr. Speaker, for those of us on both sides of this House who are given the responsibility by our constituents in each election to share a privilege that only a very few people in our total population get to experience, is really something very special. This is a very special opportunity and with it comes a very onerous responsibility.

I can remember when I was first elected in the constituency of Humboldt in 1971 as a very young individual, and at that time I was convinced without any shadow of a doubt that there could be no greater service that a man or a woman could give than that of an elected parliamentarian or legislator.

And I believed then, Mr. Speaker, as I do now, that to take part in the political process, to take part in the political party of one's choice, was an honourable and an important thing to do.

And today, Mr. Speaker, after being here for quite a few years and in spite of the attempts by some to discredit the political process, to discredit the legislative process, to discredit the democratic political process, and in spite of the fact that I think, not necessarily always intentionally, the cynical in which some of our media report on the work of this institution, I believe more than ever that there is no greater service that a person can provide to one's society or one's country or one's province than in the legislature or the parliament of one's country or one's province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, to be elected to the legislature is a very special honour that very few experience. And so I begin my remarks today by expressing a very sincere thank-you to the constituents of Regina Dewdney who for the fourth time have entrusted me with the responsibility of representing them in this legislature.

Regina Dewdney, Mr. Speaker, is a constituency where people from every walk of life live. There are business people and working people and farmers and people from most professions in the modern society, and seniors and young people and people of aboriginal background, new Canadians, people who are waiting to become Canadians, as well as some of our pioneers, all of them endeavouring to make a living and contribute to their community, their province, and to their nation. And I consider myself to be indeed very fortunate to be able to have the benefit of the advice and the opinion and the ideas and the confidence of these people who live in Regina Dewdney.

They represent a cross-section of Saskatchewan people. They care about the province and its future and they expect their government to make the changes needed to provide for that future. The people of Regina Dewdney, Mr. Speaker, are also part of a larger community which is the city of Regina. And its also an honour to be a member of a group of members of this legislature representing this capital city in the legislature.

One could say many things about the merits of our capital city and its people, but I think it can all be illustrated by saying that it took Regina — with its volunteers, its hospitality, and its ability to organize — to organize the best Grey Cup in the history of the CFL (Canadian Football League).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, to everyone who contributed to this tremendous national classic, I say thank you and congratulations. You not only did Regina proud, but you made a tremendous contribution to Saskatchewan and to Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in 1972 I had the honour to second the address to the Speech from the Throne, and so I kind of had a sense of what the movers — the members from Battleford-Cut Knife and the Regina South constituencies — what kind of feelings they must have gone through as they prepared and then delivered their speeches here in the House in reply. I could share some of those feelings.

And I want to at this time congratulate both of them for the exemplary way in which they presented well prepared, thoughtful addresses. Their constituents, I know, can be proud of what they presented here today. And they can be reassured, if they had the opportunity to listen or to read the speeches in *Hansard*, that they chose well in the last election when they remembered . . . when they elected those two members to this legislature.

(1615)

Briefly, Mr. Speaker, I also want to make a very short comment on my time as a member of the Executive Council in which I served for some 14 years. It was a time which was very rewarding. I served with many colleagues, some of whom are here and some of whom are no longer here. We faced many challenges, and I like to think that I was part of some accomplishments that were significant to the province of Saskatchewan.

But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that it was an honour to have served with those many people during those many years and have taken part in many of those decisions that were made.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss in making those comments if I did not take the opportunity to acknowledge the very important role that the public service played in that as well. And I say that, Mr. Speaker, because too often we neglect to do that in this legislature. And too often political parties in opposition choose to attack these people who serve the public in much the same way as anybody else does, working very hard in order to provide the services that the public expects.

And I want it put on record, Mr. Speaker, that during those years that I served in the Executive Council, the reason governments of that time, whenever I was there, were able to accomplish the things that they did was because of the hard work and the dedication and the seven-day, don't-take-a-holiday attitude that's taken by many of our public service, by our public service in general, as those decisions are made. And I want to say to them, Saskatchewan people have every right in the world to be proud of the public service in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, and finally on that I want to say that I've stepped out of cabinet twice. In 1982 I stepped out of cabinet at the express wish of my voters; in 1995 I stepped out of cabinet as my own personal decision. And to all members of the House on both sides of the House, I would commend the second alternative. It is a great deal more satisfying.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, today as I considered the Speech from the Throne and looked to the session agenda, I am more confident than ever that the agenda of the people of Saskatchewan is going to be well served. I want to make specific comment on the comments that have been made in this

House by the members who have been elected here for the first time, and particularly the members who are new to the Executive Council.

And I listened to the member for Wascana today, the Minister of Justice, who made a very thoughtful speech about a very important issue. And as I sat here and I listened to him — and I consider him representing all of the other first-time members here — truly, Mr. Speaker, I felt totally assured that the provincial agenda and the needs of the people and the future of this province were in very good hands, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Now as members of this legislature have been elected and were elected in June, Mr. Speaker, you too were recently elected by your peers. And I want to say to you that you will do your job, I know, as well as any Speaker before you. I have no doubt that you will be one of the Speakers who will set a legacy in the true tradition of Speakers of this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — You're going to oversee the rules which the members of this House make for themselves, and I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that you will make sure that those rules are adhered to in order that this House can function in the way it's supposed to so that those very important issues of this province are debated appropriately. So I congratulate you on your election, and I look forward to serving with you.

I also want to congratulate the Deputy Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood, and I commend to you, Mr. Speaker, that in the more difficult times in this House, you may vacate your chair to him because, if nothing else, his just sheer physical stature, I think, will help to bring some decorum to the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — But seriously, Mr. Speaker, I do, having known the member for a long time and have spent some time in his constituency, I know the tremendous job that he is going to do and the contribution he will make.

The other point I want to make about that election, Mr. Speaker, is that you are a member from urban Saskatchewan; you have an urban riding. The member from Last Mountain-Touchwood is a member from a rural riding. And I don't think that that point should be passed by in this legislature because I think this legislature should be represented in the whole composition of this province: rural and urban and northern. And the composition of the people . . . and the fact that we have the two people who will be chairing this House representing both rural and urban Saskatchewan is significant, and it's the way it ought to be in this legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I also want to congratulate the members who got elected in the last election and particularly all of the

new members. I've had the opportunity to listen to most of the new members who have spoken in this debate, and I must say that they look a lot more comfortable than I felt when I first rose to deliver my speech in the legislature in 1971.

Over the term of this legislature, I suspect when there will be times when I will be less kind to members opposite, as is the case in debate, but they can be assured of one thing. They can be assured that they will always be considered to be legislature colleagues, even though we might be worlds apart in our views and on certain issues. And I say that, Mr. Speaker, because for a time in the 1980s, this sense of the parliamentary process disappeared here in this legislature, I believe to the detriment of this Assembly and its processes and its debates.

But slowly it has been returning and all members should be encouraged to help that process on its way. The public expects all of us to have strong views, to state them strongly, to point out what we think and what is wrong and what is right, and to point out how we disagree with each other. But while we do this, Saskatchewan people want most of all for their legislature to work for them. They expect a high level of debate and actions by politicians based on integrity and honesty and commitment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, the time is short and I was wanting to comment briefly on the federal budget but I will leave that at another time. I know we will have budget debates and other times at which we can do that so I will not at this time comment on that other than to say that it deserves a lot of attention because of the impact that it is going to have on Saskatchewan in a very dramatic way.

So, Mr. Speaker, while we are here, debate on the throne speech presented last Thursday, I stand in my place and proudly say that I will be speaking in favour of and will support the Speech from the Throne. It is a statement of vision for the future. And as this session progresses day by day with the presentation of Bills, the budget, and the debate of estimates, it will become clearer and clearer that what was presented on Thursday last, or sometime before that, was a blueprint and a visionary blueprint on how our province will be positioned as well as possible for the next century.

This was not a document prepared by individuals working together as a government who are afraid to take on the challenges before us. It is a courageous statement which says clearly: here is what must be done in order that the best possible future can be provided to our families, our children and future generations.

Now because I've been there, Mr. Speaker, I can say here in the House and I want to say for the record, that the work that was done by Executive Council members in preparation of this document and this blueprint and the agenda for this legislature needs to be recognized because I know the kinds of hours and the energies and the stresses that come with doing that. And I want to say to the members of this cabinet in this government: job well done on a very difficult time in spite of the fact that

there is no help coming from the Liberal government in Ottawa in that respect.

If anything the federal Liberal government is standing away in the progress that the provinces have made with regard to deficit reduction and good financial management.

You, Mr. Speaker, and members, are familiar with the extensive public consultation which took place prior to this throne speech, probably the most extensive consultation in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that because of that, this Speech from the Throne is not just a vision of the future of this government, it reflects the vision, the hopes, the aspirations, and the desire for change for all of the people of Saskatchewan.

Now of course, Mr. Speaker, it won't please everyone, and in my view, nor should it. Because any government or any political party — and I commend this point of view to members opposite — that think they can always please everybody on every issue is a political party or a government that is not doing its job. Because our role, Mr. Speaker, is to put together policies which are public policies that are good for the public good and not good for any particular interest group or lobby group or any narrow-interest group. We're here to develop good public policy and that's what this Speech from the Throne I think shows better than ever.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Cognizant of the time, Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by saying this. As we debate the issues, the legislation, and the budget during this session, I say to all members of the House through you, let us not forget the events of October 1995, which rekindled a Canadian consciousness that I have not seen before. As the Quebec referendum approached, more people in every city, town, and village began to talk about their country and its greatness than has been heard for a long time. And there was an emotion which could be felt in the streets and in the workplace and at social gatherings, an emotion of Canadianism which we don't often experience. And although there was worry, people felt good about their country; they were proud, and they wanted a Canada to stay united. Why would anyone want to break up a country which throughout the world is seen as the best place in which to live and raise a family?

And so I say, let us do everything that we can to keep that emotion and that pride, that love for Canada, alive and growing. And just as we reject racism, of which I was going to speak but because of the time will speak at another time, so must we reject the temptation politically to take advantage of the serious situation that sometimes exists in Canada to try to make personal or political gain for any particular party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, we know that in order for this country to stay together some change is necessary. To keep Canada strong, some change will be needed, just as changes are needed in our province, changes which this Speech from the

Throne speaks about. We need a vision for the future of Canada and we need a vision for the future of Saskatchewan. And this Speech from the Throne speaks about a vision for the future of Saskatchewan. It speaks of preparing for the 21st century. It speaks of reform of many programs and policies that were created for another time. It offers hope for the future.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I see no reason why every member in this House, other than for partisan political reasons, would not vote for this Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — And I say, Mr. Speaker, I intend to proudly stand when the vote is called, in my place, with my colleagues, and vote in favour of this Speech from the Throne because it is one of the best blueprints for a positive future for the province of Saskatchewan that we have seen in a very long time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 4:30 p.m. until 4:37 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 31

Van Mulligen	Mitchell	Wiens
MacKinnon	Lingenfelter	Shillington
Tchorzewski	Whitmore	Goulet
Kowalsky	Crofford	Renaud
Koenker	Trew	Bradley
Lorje	Scott	Teichrob
Nilson	Cline	Serby
Stanger	Hamilton	Murray
Wall	Kasperski	Ward
Sonntag	Jess	Flavel
Thomson		

Nays — 15

Osika	McLane	Draude
McPherson	Belanger	Bjornerud
Julé	Krawetz	Gantfoer
Boyd	D'Autremont	Heppner
Goohsen	Toth	Haverstock

MOTIONS

Address be Engrossed and Presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I move, seconded by the member from Regina Dewdney:

That the said address be engrossed and presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor by such members of the Assembly as are of the Executive Council.

Motion agreed to.

Ways and Means

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I move, seconded by the member from Regina Elphinstone:

That this Assembly, pursuant to rule 92, hereby appoints the Committee of Finance to consider the supply to be granted to Her Majesty and to consider the ways and means of raising the supply.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Osika187
McPherson187
Belanger187
Bjornerud187
Julé187
Krawetz187
Gantefoer187
Draude187
McLane187
Aldridge188
D’Autremont188
Toth188
Heppner188
Goohsen188

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk188

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Goohsen188
Heppner188
Aldridge189

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Osika189
McPherson189
Haverstock189
Krawetz189
Toth189
Nilson189

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Country Music Awards Winners

Sonntag189

Canadian Women’s Basketball Award Winner

McLane190

Multiple Sclerosis Research Centre Opens

Lorje190

Rehabilitation Centres

Draude190

Seniors’ Fitness

Wall190

Mainline Rural Development Corporation

Toth191

National Aeronautics and Space Administration Education Program

Goulet191

ORAL QUESTIONS

Video Lottery Terminal Revenue Sharing

Osika191
Teichrob191

Municipal Government Amalgamation

Bjornerud192
Teichrob192

High-risk Offender Identification

Boyd193
Nilson193

Video Lottery Terminal Revenue Sharing

Heppner194
Teichrob194

Northern Health Services

Belanger194
Cline195

Government Investments in Cuba	
Draude	195
Lingenfelter	195
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS	
Bill No. 3 — An Act respecting The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology	
Mitchell	196
Bill No. 4 — An Act to amend The University of Regina Act	
Mitchell	196
Bill No. 5 — An Act to amend The Education Act	
Atkinson	196
Bill No. 6 — An Act to amend The Community Bonds Act	
Lingenfelter	196
Bill No. 7 — An Act to repeal The Industrial Incentive Program Act	
Lingenfelter	196
Bill No. 8 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation Act	
Lingenfelter	197
Bill No. 9 — An Act to amend The Direct Sellers Act	
Nilson	197
Bill No. 10 — An Act respecting Marketplace Practices, Consumer Products Warranties and Unsolicited Goods and Credit Cards	
Nilson	197
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	
Speaker	197
STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER	
Commonwealth Day Message	
Speaker	197
MOTION UNDER RULE 46	
High-risk Offender Identification	
Boyd	197
ORDERS OF THE DAY	
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	
Shillington	198
Speaker	198
SPECIAL ORDER	
ADJOURNED DEBATES	
ADDRESS IN REPLY	
Nilson	198
Osika	202
Jess	207
Lorje	209
Tchorzewski	211
Recorded division	214
MOTIONS	
Address be Engrossed and Presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor	
Shillington	214
Ways and Means	
Shillington	214