

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of gravely concerned citizens of Saskatchewan with respect to the closure of the Plains Health Centre in Regina. The prayer reads, Mr. Speaker:

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

The signatures on these petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from Estevan, from Caronport, and many other small rural Saskatchewan towns. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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 numerous southern Saskatchewan communities and the city of Regina.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition reading as follows:

To the Hon. the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in the legislature assembled.

Petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly showeth that the government has failed to address the serious concerns of the landlords who provide rental accommodation to Saskatchewan renters.

The prayer reads as follow, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take action to allow an increase in the security deposits on rental properties to the equivalent of one month's rent, and that your Hon. Assembly review the remedies available to landlords who are not given sufficient notice by social assistance tenants who vacate properties and whose rent in their new accommodation is paid by social assistance without regard for outstanding obligations in previous rental agreements.

I so present. The petitions are from people from throughout Regina and Calgary.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise

today as well 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 primarily from Regina, but Balcarres as well.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well on behalf of the Plains Health Centre. The petition that I would like to present reads as follows:

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

Signatures come from Regina, Moose Jaw, and all through the southern part of the province.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the closure of 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 this petition are from Regina, from Craven, from Grenfell, and all over southern Saskatchewan.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by people from the Vibank area and the community.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan 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.

And the people who have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Redvers, Weyburn, Northgate, Montmartre, Kelliher, Belle Plaine, Regina, and Moose Jaw, just to name a few.

Mr. Belanger: — 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 petition, Mr. Speaker, are from all throughout Saskatchewan. We have them from Regina, from Rouleau, from Yorkton, Pilot Butte. They're from Osage, Fillmore, . . . (inaudible) . . . McLean, Kindersley, Broadview, Weyburn. They're from all throughout Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and I so present.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to present petitions on behalf of people throughout Saskatchewan regarding saving 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 Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are of course all throughout Saskatchewan, but a lot of them from Regina, of course, from the constituency of Regina Elphinstone, Regina Albert South, and many communities throughout Saskatchewan that have also suffered closure of hospitals.

The Speaker: — Order. Now the hon. member knows that in presenting petitions that debate is not permitted, and I know that he realizes that.

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 reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to, on behalf of the official opposition, welcome all the friends of the Assembly who have gathered here today to be with us and I ask all my colleagues to please welcome all these very special people to the Assembly here today to be with us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Komis Gold Mine

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, as a northern MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) I have some exciting

news that impacts the people of northern Saskatchewan. I'm referring to the Komis gold mine project located near Brabant Lake in my constituency.

The project recently received approval to proceed with development. Golden Rule Resources and Waddy Lake Resources were granted the surface lease to begin mining operations after the environmental impact statement was reviewed and approved by Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management. The mine and processing mill are expected to employ about 100 people, and many of them will be northern residents.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, Northerners will have every possibility for employment in this project, including training. There is excellent growth potential of the Komis mine and these companies are encouraged about the future production potential of other gold deposits in the Waddy Lake area.

This project, and the mining industry in general, are areas which have been identified under the province's *Partnership for Growth* strategy, and as having a significant impact on our economy.

I would like to congratulate Golden Rule and Waddy Lake Resources for their hard work in seeing this project become a reality. This is good economic news and a golden opportunity for the people of northern Saskatchewan.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Farm Women

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, because this week is designated as Agriculture Week, I would like to recognize some of the outstanding accomplishments made by farm women in Saskatchewan every day.

Thousands of Saskatchewan women make their living farming. Many are landowners, crop producers, livestock producers, researchers, and marketing agents. This is particularly admirable because many of them accomplish all of this while raising their families and working at part-time or full-time off-farm jobs.

It is estimated that by the year 2010 well over half the agriculture land in the world will be owned by women. A great number of Saskatchewan's women in agriculture are right in step with the global information systems, ensuring that this province is ahead of the game in research opportunities in identifying markets.

Saskatchewan women have played a vital role in the agriculture industry for the past 100 years. Their contributions are valued and need to be recognized. Today I would like to pay tribute to all women in Saskatchewan contributing to the health of the agriculture sector in our province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatoon YWCA Women of Distinction Awards

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, last night in the city of Saskatoon a group of seven outstanding Saskatoon women received awards at the 15th annual YWCA women of distinction awards banquet.

I would like to congratulate these women, and all the others who were nominated for awards. All of these women have made tremendous contributions to the life of the city of Saskatoon and to the province of Saskatchewan.

I would like to mention each of the seven, though time will not permit me to list their achievements.

The business and professions award, to Shan Landry for her outstanding leadership in health care.

Loreen Wilsdon received the community enhancement award for her work with the Save the Children Canada, the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation and other organizations.

Margo Bedo, a third year engineering, physics and computer science student at the U of S (University of Saskatchewan), received the youth award.

And track and field athlete Judy Warick was named woman of distinction in the fitness and lifestyles category.

The arts and culture award went to two nominees: painter and writer Elyse St. George, and Ann Stewart, who has been active in theatre and several social and cultural organizations.

Irma Grandon, executive director of Maggie's Day Care Centre for teen moms, received the leadership in the workplace award.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government of Saskatchewan, I would like to commend these women and thank them for their contributions to the life of the city of Saskatoon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Computerized Axial Tomography Rebuttal

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today, not happily, to take umbrage with comments that were made in this Chamber yesterday. Yesterday the member from Humboldt asked the Minister of Health a couple of straightforward questions regarding health care in our province, namely the availability of CAT (computerized axial tomography) scans in Regina. These questions deserved honest, straightforward answers. However, the minister, letting his role as a political animal get the best of him, decided instead to cross the line of honest debate in this House and suggest the member, and I quote: "get her head examined," Mr. Speaker.

We on this side of the House can take our lumps with the best of them, but it is my personal belief that the minister crossed the line with his insulting and unwarranted remark. He not only should publicly apologize to the member from Humboldt; more

importantly, he should apologize to all those in our province who, through no fault of their own, have a real need for CAT scans. Head injuries or other ailments involving the brain are no laughing matter and the Minister of Health should show a little more class and a little more sensitivity to the people of this province when he's dealing with such an important . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I understand that there is a fair degree of latitude that is permitted for members' statements; and there are avenues that the members can bring when they feel that debate has not exercised the respect that is becoming of the Chamber. I would caution all members, when making members' statements, to use the appropriate course of remedy when doing that.

Kelran Microbiologicals

Mr. Kowalsky: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there is a new business venture in Prince Albert that's setting an excellent example of creating new jobs and expanding into new markets. This family business is called Kelran Microbiologicals. It is a supplier of microbiological growth and identification products to labs in Saskatchewan hospitals.

Kelran currently has five employees and is looking to increase that number. As of this week, Kelran is expanding into Alberta and Manitoba and anticipates sales will triple as a result. This company states that the people of Saskatchewan have access to the highest level of health care available and believes in the integrity of our health care system.

Kelran is the single largest Saskatchewan-based supplier of microbiology, Mr. Speaker, growth and identification products for western Canada and has some excellent ideas about how to reduce expenditures in this field. People who use their products could end up saving money as a result.

I would like to congratulate Randell Toporowski and his family for believing in Saskatchewan and for demonstrating the entrepreneurial spirit that is so prominent across Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Tourism Attraction

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a relatively unknown attraction in the Thunder Creek constituency. It's located on the eastern edge of the rural municipality of Coulee No. 136.

It's a most unusual anomaly of the landscape. I've taken the opportunity to have a firsthand look at this natural wonder and I would encourage the rest of you to do so as well. It's a rather large hill which is sinking slowly but surely out of sight. Over the course of the past 50 years this hill has sunk back into its surroundings by over 60 feet.

I bring this unheralded attraction to the attention of the Assembly at what should be considered a most opportune time. Recently a new economic development strategy was announced in this province. A rejuvenated effort to attract tourism to the

province should be everyone's goal. I believe that it is these relatively unknown and unpromoted attractions which could be crafted into a tourism strategy to generate increasing revenues to our province's economy — revenues generated by ourselves on our own two feet.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would emphasize not only the importance of tourism in this province from now into the 21st century, but also just how important it is to be careful what hills we choose to invest in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Written in Stone

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For most people in Saskatchewan, stones are things to be removed by back-breaking work from a farmer's field. We all know that one spring crop that never fails is the new pile of stones thrown up by the thaw, and the whole process begins anew, part of the cycle of life in Saskatchewan.

Now, however, in the town of Lang just down the highway from my home, a remarkable entrepreneurial couple has started a business which will take Saskatchewan's most reliable crop and turn it into a new building product, and most importantly, 35-50 new jobs in the next three years.

Dean Smith and his wife, Kimberly Besler, have chosen Lang for their two businesses: Written In Stone and Geo-Ark Petrographic. Written in Stone takes blocks of stone from Saskatchewan, from Brazil, from France, from wherever, and processes them into stone veneer panels called stonelite panels that are 80 per cent lighter than traditional stone slabs and therefore easier to work with and less expensive to install. As well, they have durability and great variety of stone.

Even though the product is just now commercially available, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce has recognized Written In Stone with an Abex nomination in the new Saskatchewan product category.

Mr. Speaker, as Dean Smith said, small Saskatchewan centres are viable. This exciting new business — only the second of its kind in North America — proves just that, and I am excited to live just a stone's throw away. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

BDM Information Systems

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the University of Saskatchewan and Innovation Place in my constituency, today I want to mention one of the many companies that is making Innovation Place the hub of Saskatchewan's high-tech industry and one of the keystones of our provincial economy.

BDM Information Systems is experiencing record sales because of strong Canadian and US (United States) interest in their health care software. With rapid changes taking place in health care across the world, health care professionals are seeking new

ways of delivering services. BDM's new "Pharmacy for the 21st Century" is an industry-leading software that is proving to be an invaluable tool in the hands of health professionals. This software product, along with others, was designed and developed in BDM's North American support centre located at Innovation Place.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, as we listen to a budget that prepares us for the 21st century, it's good to know that businesses in our province are working toward the same goal of making Saskatchewan a place where common sense and innovation provide security and prosperity.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Government Reception Costs

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, the Minister of Finance will be bringing down her budget in a very short period of time. For the last few months, we've been told of the dire straits our province has been put in. Understandably, stakeholders throughout Saskatchewan are watching this budget nervously, since they simply cannot bear any more cuts to essential services from this government which has downloaded hundreds of millions onto municipalities, schools, and taxpayers.

However, Mr. Speaker, my mind has been set at ease because I find out that tonight the Minister of Finance is hosting a party for a couple of hundred of her closest friends, celebrating the budget at the Regina Rugby Club. So it must be filled with good news. Or is it?

Will the minister not agree that such a shindig would be totally inappropriate if Saskatchewan residents are made to suffer through her actions today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I think the Liberal leader is just angry that he hasn't been invited to the so-called shindig. It is . . . after all the government does have some standards, and he'll understand if he doesn't get an invitation as a consequence.

Mr. Speaker, to be serious about this, this has been a very, very long-standing tradition of all governments, Liberal and Conservative, that on budget day when there are people from all over the . . . well if not the world, certainly North America, present with us today to listen to the budget of Saskatchewan, to host a small reception for them.

The categorization of a shindig indicates how the trivialization of an important issue like a budget ought not to take place in this Legislative Chamber.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a government which certainly likes to spend taxpayers' dollars on its little celebrations.

Through a request through the freedom of information Act filed a couple of months ago, we've discovered the opening night party for Casino Regina held January 25 cost the taxpayers of this province over \$55,000. That's about the same — the Minister of Finance — at about the same time the Minister of Finance was on her \$100,000 PR (public relations) campaign and just before the Premier's \$30,000 infomercial.

Will the Minister of Finance not agree that spending \$55,000 of taxpayer money for her friends to get a preview of the \$37 million casino was inappropriate, given the whining and snivelling she's been doing about the state of Saskatchewan's finances?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I want to caution members to bring to the debate in the House, language in reference to one another that's appropriate of the dignity of the House. And I'll ask all members . . . I know all members respect that and I'll ask them to cooperate.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll thank the member opposite for his question.

The opening night of the casino was organized in such a way that the revenues from the proceeds of that evening would cover the costs of the opening night. No taxpayers' money has gone or will go towards this. It is a self-sustaining operation that pays for its costs through its own revenues. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Gross Revenue Insurance Program Overpayments

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One year ago this government balanced the books of this province on the backs of Saskatchewan farmers by taking \$188 million from the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) surplus.

Farmers are now calling on this government to live up to their promise to not collect the GRIP wind-up bills. It may interest this House to know that the total amount of these bills is less than the interest would be on the GRIP surplus funds this government took from farmers.

To quote from a letter from one farmer, Mr. Speaker:

You may deduct this amount from my share of the \$188 million you stole from the GRIP fund to balance the budget.

And yet another farmer writes, and I quote:

The government said there would be no bills, plus they took back money belonging to the farmers in the first place, which should be called robbery. If we stole money

belonging to someone else, we'd be put in jail.

Mr. Minister, will you ensure that these bills will be reviewed on a case-by-case scenario and that the farmers will indeed be treated fairly?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Member, we've been around this horn several times. I will repeat one more time. Mr. Speaker, the member knows the bills have to be paid; they know the process that has to be gone through. I think that, with all due respect, the fact that this member is carrying on this issue shows a bit of a lack of respect for a process and the intelligence of farmers who — all that I know — want to pay their bills and do pay their bills.

I'll just tell the hon. member one more thing. He knows a case-by-case would take probably a century to go through on a case-by-case basis. It's unreasonable, almost as unreasonable as some of the questions that he's been asking about this.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister should remember it'll take a century for the farmers to crawl out of the debt that you've put them in. Mr. Speaker, this government made a clear commitment to farmers that GRIP wind-up bills would not be sent out but bills were. Farmers cannot make sense of this government's policies, the bills, or the ministers of Agriculture's policies. The bills are ridiculous.

To quote from another letter, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to quote:

Mr. Romanow and his colleagues destroyed the initial GRIP program with the stroke of a pen. Our contract meant exactly nothing to them. Now we're expected to abide by the terms of this agreement even though it is not the same contract we originally signed.

And yet another farmer writes, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

Here is the so-called GRIP wind-up statement. It should be called NDP's broken promise report. I hope this will help nail these crooks to the wall.

Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. I want to remind members that the rules of the House do not permit members to do indirectly what they're not permitted to do directly. And I will ask the member to simply withdraw that final . . . that unparliamentary comment and proceed directly to his question or I'll go to another question.

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Speaker, I would withdraw the comment from the quote from the distressed farmer.

All Saskatchewan farmers want is to be treated fairly. Mr. Minister, will you ensure that these bills are reviewed and

cancelled as you have done previous with a number of farmers? And at this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to send over a number of bills to the Minister, if I might. And I will ask the minister if he will ensure us that all these bills will be treated in the same, fair way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have letters from farmers that I could read out, too. And the theme of those is — stick to your guns; the process you're going through is the right one.

Had we not gone through the process of collecting the overpayments, you would be in a situation where one farmer who had a large overpayment would be subsidizing another farmer who had a smaller overpayment. How would the government justify that? It's the same way.

Now I ask the member to clarify his position, to clarify his government's position along with the federal government, who have asked for the overpayment from the WGSA (Western Grain Stabilization Account) from as far back as 1987, to now be paid. The federal Liberal government is billing farmers for that overpayment. I ask the member if he'd clarify his position on this issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would remind the minister again, Mr. Speaker, that there was more than enough money in the program to pay off those debts from those farmers, as well, put more money in the other farmers that were entitled to a pay-out.

Mr. Speaker, farmers are moving into seeding this spring and many, many bills are coming upon them. I'd like to quote from another farmer:

After 10 years of hard times, one year of a price turnaround has not created a well-to-do agriculture industry in this province.

And to quote from a letter from another farmer who received the GRIP wind-up bill, and I quote:

We left good jobs in Manitoba to farm here — big mistake.

Yet another farmer quotes, Mr. Speaker:

I don't know who else to turn to for to help as my resident MLA, the present Minister of Agriculture, is part of the reason I'm in this mess in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, we have been sending GRIP wind-up bills over to the minister since this session began, calling on him to treat the farmers in Saskatchewan fairly. I will now send over the remainder of the GRIP bills, Mr. Speaker, and ask that he handle those in a fair and equitable way too.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — I'm not sure what the question was, Mr. Speaker. But the fact of the matter is this member is encouraging civil disobedience. I don't think that's a proper manner for an elected member of this Assembly to act. We know the process is paid . . . Does he want taxpayers to not collect overpayments for unemployment insurance, or the federal government not to collect overpayments of UI (unemployment insurance)? Should the federal government change its position now, is that what he's saying, on the overpayment bills that they've sent out for the WGSA overpayments?

Mr. Speaker, the federal government and the provincial Liberal Party should get together on their policy. But I'll say one more time, this position I'm taking is not changing. Farmers, well over half, have paid their bills. Other bills are coming in on a daily basis. They understand the process; we understand the process. I ask the member to try to raise his credibility a bit and get off this business of asking farmers to disobey the laws.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Sales Tax Harmonization

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions this afternoon are for the Premier. Mr. Premier, a report in today's *Globe and Mail* says that a number of premiers, including yourself, have already recently held private meetings with the Prime Minister to discuss harmonization of the GST (goods and services tax). Your office obviously didn't let anyone know about this meeting so it really makes a person wonder what you're trying to hide.

Mr. Premier, were you in fact discussing tax harmonization with the Prime Minister, or were you simply giving him tips on how to break his promise to eliminate the GST, just like you broke your promise to eliminate the PST (provincial sales tax)?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to answer the question. Yes, it was a pleasure of mine to meet with the Prime Minister of Canada a couple of weeks ago. The topic under discussion was not the GST or harmonization of the PST.

The topic involved a number of matters related to national unity. We also discussed the question with respect to the Saskatchewan fiscal position generally, which since we're in the business of quoting *The Globe and Mail*, I note in today's *Globe and Mail* the headline in the lead editorial says: "Again, common sense in Saskatchewan".

And if I had to capsule my message to the Prime Minister, it would be as *the Globe and Mail* said today:

The New Democrats have governed imaginatively since they took office in 1991. Facing a deficit of \$845 million, the worst per capita in Canada, they feared the collapse of the social system they had built. They didn't create the mess — the NDP had left the Conservatives a balanced budget when they were defeated in 1982 — but they knew

it would (have to) take drastic measures to clean it up. To save social programs, they would have to recast them.

And so they did . . .

And in conclusion, the editorial says:

As Mr. Romanow enters his second term . . . he is showing anew that public confidence in his administration has not been misplaced.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

McDowell Report

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Premier, since we're into quoting from the newspapers I'd like to supply you with a quote. The other day the Finance minister answered one of my questions by quoting from the *Star-Phoenix* editorial.

The NDP (New Democratic Party) obviously puts a lot of stock, as the Premier does, in editorials, just as *The Globe and Mail* or the *Star-Phoenix* in this case. And I'd like to quote from a recent *Star-Phoenix* editorial. It's called: "Quit stalling".

The posturing of (the) Premier . . . and his fellow NDP MLAs on the issue of taking a pay hike for this year is an insult to the intelligence of (Saskatchewan) taxpayers.

Not only does the Premier refuse to acknowledge that there is some \$4,000 in after-tax income at stake here for each MLA . . . but he belittles the integrity of opposition politicians who . . . (cannot accept the money or) will not accept the . . . money.

My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, will you follow the advice of the *Star-Phoenix* editors, will you be rolling back the pay increase for you and your MLAs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I want to advise the Leader of the Conservative Party that I'm into the business of quoting from *The Globe and Mail*. I'm not into the business from quoting of the Black newspapers which control the province of Saskatchewan, mainly because I believe that they are mainly erroneous and are so extremely biased as to have lost all proper perspective of how reporting should take place in the province of Saskatchewan.

But none the less, having heard your quotation from the *Star-Phoenix* and the *Leader-Post*, the Black newspapers, and the issue of stalling — and the member asked me about whether we're stalling — I ask him the reverse question. Are you stalling, and have you made the payment of the cheque of 4,400 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . no, the member says he's made the commitment. Tories make commitments and they never fulfil them. Have you written the cheque, yes or no? That's what we want to know.

And I want to say to you, Mr. Conservative Leader, if you write

that cheque of \$4,400 it would be a very small fraction of what you and the Conservatives owe the people of Saskatchewan as a result of nine years in government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the editorial comment also goes on to point out the Gaming minister's feeble argument that the poor NDP MLAs would be left in the lurch if they had to give up their pay hike.

What about the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, who are going to be left in the lurch as the result of today's budget? Workers are going to be left in the lurch by losing their jobs. Communities are going to be left in the lurch by seeing their highway depots close.

Mr. Premier, how can you possibly accept a pay increase, a pay hike, under these conditions? Or do you think that you and your MLAs are exempt from the same kind of sacrifices that you're asking everyone else in this province to make.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, again I find it somewhat amusing that the leader of all parties, the Conservative Party in the province of Saskatchewan, after their scandalous nine years of bringing the province to the verge of bankruptcy, has the audacity to say in the legislature about this particular question — and this, I might add, Mr. Speaker, from the same Conservative leader who has introduced several Bills in this legislature, all of which say that the civil service, the Government of Saskatchewan, should not only be downsized, should virtually be decimated; that Saskatchewan should be some sort of an Alabama of the North — and he has the audacity to say that we're leaving people in the lurch.

No, we don't leave people in the lurch in Saskatchewan. We deal with people in Saskatchewan with compassion. And if you doubt my words, then just consider what happens after the budget today. And I ask you to remember what your Conservative friends are doing in Ontario and the lack of compassion that Conservatives demonstrate in Canada, sir.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Well, Mr. Premier, regardless of what the editors of any newspaper say, the people of this province, the taxpayers of this province, know full well that it is unacceptable for you and your MLAs to take a pay increase. That's the bottom line. Every taxpayer in this province knows that.

Mr. Premier, the PC (Progressive Conservative) caucus recognizes that cuts have to be made in today's budget because of federal offloading. We wish, Mr. Premier, that you had the courage to tell the voters of this province the truth about the cuts during the last election.

Mr. Premier, why didn't you tell the voters the real story during the election campaign? Why did you promise a 2 per cent increase in health and education? Why did you promise \$10

million in VLT (video lottery terminal) revenues to communities? Why did you promise no job losses in this province? Why did you make all of those promises during the election campaign when you knew full well you couldn't keep them?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader has the unfortunate habit of trying to re-fight the provincial election campaigns that he loses so gloriously.

These were all the issues which he raised during the June 1995 campaign. And with the greatest of respect to the Conservative Party, you are reduced to third-party rump — five. The people of Saskatchewan spoke, and they spoke in favour of the promises which we made, which were not your promises.

Now the issue of a pay hike is of course absolutely and completely, totally false. The member knows that there is no pay hike. The member knows that the Legislative Assembly Office has tabled to you, in writing, documentation which indicates that it's a minus 2 per cent reduction coupled with a minus 5 per cent reduction for cabinet ministers prior to this time. And you know that.

You say that that is not the case. Then I say, you tell the people today. Show me the cancelled blank cheque of the \$4,300 that you have written to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. Because you have not written it and you won't write it, because you will not keep your commitment because you know what you say is inaccurate. I say to you that the proof of the pudding will be when you write that cheque, and you won't do it.

And I repeat again, it's a small fraction of what you owe the taxpayers of . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I'll ask all hon. members to come to order and abide by the rules of the House. There is opportunity for debate and it's laid out in the rules, and I'll ask that we do it. Order. Next question.

Post-secondary Education

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Post-Secondary Education announced that he has hired a Regina lawyer to conduct a review of Saskatchewan's two universities.

Mr. Speaker, the Justice department came under some criticism when this . . . when the tenure of the now Minister of Post-Secondary Education. This has resulted in two Calgary lawyers being hired at a cost of \$100,000 to review what went wrong. Now because the Premier has so little faith in his minister, a friend has been hired to help the minister do his job at a cost of \$11,000 a month.

Will the Premier explain why he created the new department responsible for post-secondary education when he obviously has no faith that the minister can carry out his duties?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, where in the world do these provincial Liberals live? From what planet do they come? The hon. Liberal member says, why is it that the Premier has created a new Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and the like? He asks, why?

Has he not paid attention to Paul Martin, the federal Liberal minister's budget? Has he not paid attention to Jean Chrétien, the federal Liberal Prime Minister's statements?

Because the federal government has offloaded, constitutionally and financially, skills training and manpower training to the provinces of Canada. Because your Liberal Party has offloaded on post-secondary education to the extent of \$80 million. Because your Liberal Party has cut back on the SIASTs (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) and have left the provinces of Canada — all of them, by the way, unanimously, of this position — have left the provinces in the lurch because of a failed manpower program and a failed post-secondary education program and reduced funds.

And the member gets up and he asks why in the world we set up a department. We set up a department because we've got to grab a hold of this Liberal mess and get Saskatchewan leading again in the 21st century, as we have in the past.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Premier created a department for a friend who in turn created a job for a friend. How long does the Premier intend to pay others to do the job that taxpayers of Saskatchewan are paying the Minister of Post-Secondary Education to do?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, again I don't mean to demean the member but I am absolutely befuddled by where he is and how long he's been a member of the Liberal Party. He says Harold MacKay is a friend. Harold MacKay has been — and I think Harold would not object to me saying this or otherwise — he's been a card-carrying member of the Liberal Party for ever. He's never been a member of the New Democratic Party — for ever.

Now if the member says that he's a friend of mine, the answer is yes, he's a friend of mine. Believe it or not, I've even got some other intelligent Liberal friends around. Unfortunately, none of them exist in this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — And I'm even looking for a Tory friend, if I can find one anywhere in Canada. And I still haven't been able to find one.

Mr. MacKay is a citizen of Saskatchewan and Canada with impeccable credentials, academic ability that has the confidence

of the universities and the people of the province of Saskatchewan; and shame on that member for attacking a person who has committed his life to public service and who believes in the very cause that he ostensibly believes. You shouldn't be following that kind of political activity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Northern Highways Funding

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Highways. Poor highways are affecting everyone. In fact I recently received a letter from one of my very young constituents. I'd like to read this letter to the House:

Dear MLA: I am writing this letter because my community road is rough. I had tipped over before I was 10 years old. I tipped and I hurt my leg, and I went to Ile-a-la-Crosse and I wished the road was paved.

Yours sincerely, Erica Billette from Dillon

And, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Highways tell this little girl and the other people in the communities of Dillon, La Loche, Turnor, Garson Lake, Patuanak, why he will not provide funding for the paving of this road, especially knowing that this government makes great profits from forestry and mining in the North?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — I want to thank the hon. member for his question. I want to tell the hon. member that this government has a commitment to northern Saskatchewan. Most recently of course, you will know that we have announced and have begun and will complete the Cumberland bridge. Highway 965, Mr. Speaker, to Canoe Lake will be done this year.

We've worked very hard with northern Saskatchewan, the federal government, on the Athabasca Road which will be from Points North to Black Lake — access to those people, Mr. Speaker, to the rest of Saskatchewan and the rest of Saskatchewan access to Lake Athabasca. Grandmother's Bay, Mr. Speaker, has never had access before by road — now they will enjoy that.

Mr. Speaker, Highways 102, 905 from La Ronge to Wollaston, we have a partnership with the mining industry to in fact improve that road. So yes, we have a commitment to the North. We will continue to work on those roads as money is available.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Minister, for the past 15 years people from my constituency have been asking to have an important 30 kilometre stretch of highway built to an isolated community of Garson Lake. Yesterday officials in the North travelled eleven and a half hours to ask him to commit \$250,000 per year for three years. This money would not only go to construction of a road, but to training construction workers as well and creating jobs. As well, these monies are being matched by training

institutions and programs.

Mr. Minister, I applaud your efforts in building a \$2 million bridge for Cumberland House. We're not complaining that the bridge was built, but we'd like the minister to explain why do problems in the Athabasca constituency not warrant the same attention and money as those next door?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Well I want to thank the member for his question, and again I say to the member that we do have a commitment in northern Saskatchewan and will continue to do that. But their unconditional support, Mr. Speaker, has blinded the members opposite. They're more interested in supporting the federal government than the Saskatchewan people.

Where were they when the federal government cut \$106 million from health care and education to this province? Where were they, Mr. Speaker, when they pulled \$320 million out of farmers' pockets with the change to the Crow? Where are they now, Mr. Speaker, with rail line abandonment going to cost the province and municipalities 30 to \$50 million a year on added road costs? Where are they? Not a word, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, we have a commitment to northern Saskatchewan, but we would like them to join with us and support us and not keep their heads in the sand.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Table a response to question no. 25.

The Speaker: — Question 26 is converted to motions for return (debatable).

Order, order. Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. McPherson: — I rise on a point of order pursuant to rule 32 of the *Rules and Procedures*, in sections 485, 486 of Beauchesne's, 6th Edition, regarding the use of unparliamentary language in the House yesterday.

The Speaker: — I'll ask the member to proceed and make his case.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Health used unparliamentary language in answering a question to the member from Humboldt in the reference to the word, cat. He knows full well that the member is a female member of this House and we would ask that he immediately apologize to the member today in this House.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I'd just like to make a very brief comment in view of the proceedings that are to follow which, I

think, transcend in importance this matter. Let me just say with respect to this matter, if any apology is to be forthcoming, surely there ought to be some consideration given to the statements made by members, such as the member from Arm River yesterday.

The Speaker: — I have listened to . . . Order, order. Order. I've listened to the point of order put by the Opposition House Leader and comments by the Government House Leader. I treat them seriously and I thank the hon. member for raising them.

I will want to consider his points, the points made here, and also to review the record and I will bring a ruling back to the House at the earliest possible convenience.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

TABLING OF ESTIMATES AND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I have a message from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

The Speaker: — I ask all members to rise.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 1997, and supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for 12 months ending March 31, 1996, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

The members may be seated.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Premier:

That His Honour's message, the estimates, and supplementary estimates be referred to the Committee of Finance.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are many special guests here today and I would like to welcome them all. But I want to especially welcome five special guests. First and foremost, my husband, Peter. Would you stand please.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — My son Alan and his friend, Tricia Mutlow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — My son William.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — And my very good friend and veteran of the Second World War, Mr. Bill Kinloch.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, this budget is about preparing Saskatchewan for the 21st century, about planning today for prosperity and security tomorrow. With this 1996-97 budget, we step boldly toward the new century. The winds of change are sweeping around us — globalization, new technologies, the new fiscal reality. But we are confident of success because Saskatchewan people do not fear change. They welcome it.

Throughout our history we have met change head on and shaped it to meet our values and beliefs. Such is our tradition. Such will be our future.

Saskatchewan takes on the future from a position of strength. We are blessed to live in the best province in the best country in the world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Our quality of life is second to none. Our economy is strong and getting stronger.

Last year our farmers harvested one of the best crops on record. Our mining, forestry, and manufacturing receipts are all up. People are shopping at home and buying locally, pushing up retail sales nearly 5 per cent last year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — That increase is higher than the national average, and even higher than Alberta which has no sales tax. Most important, last year 10,000 more Saskatchewan people were working than in 1992.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — There were more full-time jobs, more jobs for women, more jobs for youth. Personal incomes are rising and so is our population.

Mr. Speaker, in the 1980s, we lost a generation of young people who had to seek opportunity and hope elsewhere. Today we are keeping our young people here at home where they can live and raise their families with a renewed sense of hope and optimism.

Mr. Speaker, let's not forget we were the first Canadian province in the 1990s to balance its budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — That's a source of strength. However, those accomplishments are only part of the story why

we approach the new century with confidence and determination.

We can also rely on the guidance of our enduring values: cooperation — working together to build a better future; compassion — making sure that everyone, rich or poor, has access to essential services; community — seeing beyond ourselves to embrace the greater good. That spirit of community remains strong.

Our government reached out to Saskatchewan people and sought their input for this budget, and they responded — in town hall meetings, on phone lines, by the Internet, and in letters. The people of Saskatchewan told us what they expect from their government and what they hope for their communities. People told us they want jobs and opportunities, more jobs in a global economy. And that's what this budget delivers — more jobs for more people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — We start by building on our strengths. Our businesses have already proven that they can compete with the best in the world. More than half of what we produce is sold beyond our borders; a third of our jobs are tied to exports.

Our new economic development strategy, *Partnership For Growth*, builds on this strength. This budget provides funding for STEP, the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, industry and government working together with one objective: to find and develop new trade and export opportunities for Saskatchewan people.

Similarly, our farmers have shown they can develop new agricultural products for the world market. That's another strength, Mr. Speaker, and our goal is to expand value added processing. Therefore I am pleased to announce that we will invest up to \$238 million over the next four years to diversify and further strengthen agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — But farmers have to get their products to market. With the Crow benefit gone, they have to know that there is a reliable, sustainable transportation system for future crops and farm products.

This budget prepares us for that future. It provides \$125 million to upgrade and maintain our highways in 1996-97. This represents an investment of more than half a billion dollars in Saskatchewan's highway system over the next four years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Minister, farming is an occupation with many risks. We will work with farmers to redesign our crop insurance program so that it provides the security farm families want and need — today, and into the century.

Mr. Minister, a related field, agricultural biotechnology, offers tremendous potential. Saskatoon is rapidly emerging as one of the world's foremost agricultural research centres. By the turn of the century, agricultural biotechnology is expected to generate \$200 million a year in sales and create hundreds of new, highly skilled jobs.

This budget supports this new high-growth sector with \$7 million, to expand research facilities at Innovation Place at the University of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — It also helps create 125 high-tech jobs.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses create the vast majority of new jobs in our province. We want to support them, but we want to do it right.

Saskatchewan people told us that outright grants to business are not the way to promote growth. We agree. Rather than direct grants, we are using targeted tax incentives, proven to stimulate new investment and create jobs. But we must use our scarce resources wisely. We have to identify the most effective tax incentives to stimulate investment and growth and create jobs. That's why we reduced taxes on manufacturing and processing, resulting in more than 3,000 new jobs in this area in 1995.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1430)

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — And that's why I'm pleased to announce that this reduction will be continued indefinitely.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Last year we reduced the aviation fuel tax on a trial basis. The result was more jobs for Saskatchewan people and improved air service in the province. Those are the results we were looking for, Mr. Speaker, and that's why I'm pleased to announce that this tax reduction will also be continued indefinitely.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Today, I'm pleased to announce another targeted tax measure. Effective January 1, 1997, we will change the tax rules to level the playing-field for truckers working out of Saskatchewan and to stimulate more repairs and equipment sales within the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, these are the kind of responsible, targeted tax cuts that create jobs.

We're also creating jobs by investing in Saskatchewan's infrastructure. Government departments and Crown corporations will invest over \$630 million this year to build

better educational facilities for students; to upgrade health facilities; to improve our world-class telecommunications network.

Investments, Mr. Speaker. Investments creating jobs today and building for tomorrow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — We are keeping our promise to reforest land depleted by poor forest management practices of the past. This investment will create more jobs for students. In total, we will provide funding for 2,500 summer jobs to help young people in furthering their education.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — At the grass roots level, we'll provide funding for new and existing regional economic development authorities. This highly successful approach — communities coming together to identify their strengths and coordinate their efforts — will be expanded to the North.

And we will carry through on the message to cut red tape for business and create one-stop centres for people who want to start a new business.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, the private sector is showing its confidence in Saskatchewan's future. Statistics Canada recently released a report that Saskatchewan is one of only three provinces where business intends to significantly increase its investment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Both business and consumer confidence can be enhanced by easing the tax burden. Saskatchewan people told us loud and clear to hold the line on taxes. We listened; we are responding.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that this budget contains no tax increases.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — That's a promise made and a promise kept.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — This government is also keeping its commitment to cut taxes as times improve. Last year we began to reduce the debt-reduction surtax. The second phase of this reduction will be implemented in 1996. This income tax cut enhances the fairness of the Saskatchewan tax system.

The greatest benefits go to middle and low income taxpayers — over 6,000 low income earners will no longer pay income tax.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — As well as lowering taxes for individuals and families, the tax cut will inject \$55 million a year into the Saskatchewan economy to strengthen local business and create jobs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, we are working on every front to implement our plans for jobs and prosperity — building on our strength in key growth areas like manufacturing, processing, and small business; investing millions in our infrastructure; targeting tax incentives and cutting red tape for business, and reducing taxes for families.

Mr. Speaker, that's a plan for jobs. That's a plan for today and for a better tomorrow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Preparing our province for tomorrow also means preserving and enhancing the quality of life that makes Saskatchewan the best place in the country in which to live.

Saskatchewan people told us they want the security of knowing that essential public services will be there for them. They want to know that if they are sick they can receive medical services without needing a credit card. They want to know that their children can have access to advanced education, whether they come from a rich family or a poor one. They want to know that if they fall on troubled times a social safety net will be there to catch them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — But, Mr. Speaker, these vital cornerstones of our quality of life are being undermined by the federal government. We understand that the federal government has to reduce its deficit. But we do not, Mr. Speaker — we cannot — agree with the way they are going about it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — In the 1996 federal budget, three-quarters of the total spending cuts were to the key areas of our quality of life here in Saskatchewan: health, post-secondary education, social programs — the very areas most important to Saskatchewan people.

This year we face a \$114 million cut in federal funding for these essential services. Saskatchewan people warned the federal government what these cuts would mean. The Saskatoon District Health Board, for example, wrote to Ottawa and called the federal cuts potentially devastating. The North Valley Health District cautioned the federal government that further cuts to health care would have a detrimental effect on services, people, and our medicare system as we know it.

The people of Saskatchewan asked us to do our very best to

shield them from the impact of these federal cuts on our core social programs.

Mr. Speaker, we have listened. We are responding. This budget provides \$110 million of new provincial funding to replace the 1996-97 federal cuts to our social programs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — It back-fills 100 per cent of the federal cuts to social services.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — It back-fills 100 per cent of the federal cuts to the operating funding of our universities and federated colleges.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — And it back-fills 100 per cent of the federal cuts to our health care system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, these programs are the priorities of Saskatchewan people; and make no mistake about it, they are the priorities of this budget and of this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — But, Mr. Speaker, that only takes care of 1996-97. Regrettably, the cuts in federal cash transfers increase each and every year for the next four years. By 1999-2000 these federal cuts will be more than a quarter of a billion dollars a year.

Mr. Speaker, this province introduced medicare to North America. We will not stand by and allow Saskatchewan to enter the 21st century with its health, education, and social system undermined by these federal cuts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — That is why I am pleased to present a four-year financial plan today that will provide \$242 million of new provincial funding for our social programs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — For every dollar that the federal government cuts from our vital social programs, this plan puts back 96 cents.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — As I've said, there are risks; our economic circumstances may change, or the federal government may offload even more of its financial problems onto the provinces. If that happens we may have to adjust our long-term plan. But this government is absolutely committed to shielding

our health and education partners from the full impact of these federal cuts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — But, Mr. Speaker, this does not mean shielding them from the need for change. While providing time for our partners to prepare for new fiscal realities, we must work with them to redesign our essential services for the 21st century. To change our health, education, and social services to meet the new demands of the new century.

We're already seeing the benefits of our work to renew Saskatchewan's health system over the past four years. More illness-prevention and support services are available at home and in the community. In response to the appeal by health boards for stable funding, we will maintain total funding for district health boards at current levels for 1996-97 and 1997-98.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — And we will work with our health partners to find ways to maintain that funding level right through to the year 1999-2000. But, Mr. Speaker, we must continue finding new and better ways to deliver primary health services so that they can be sustained into the new century. We must continue to enhance home- and community-based services and build a client-centred health system to improve the health and well-being of Saskatchewan people.

Health reform provides the vision. This budget provides the stability of funding to keep Saskatchewan a health care leader right into the 21st century.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, compassion is a defining feature of this province. Working together, we can redesign our social safety nets to make them effective and sustainable. Working together, we can ensure that the most vulnerable members of our society are protected while we help able-bodied men and women seek the independence and the security that comes from a job. We want to help people move from welfare to work. We want to encourage young people to get the education and the training they need to prepare them for the future.

This budget maintains funding for social assistance at current levels for 1996-97 and provides increased funding for children in need.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — It also provides \$500,000, as promised, to help ensure that child-care workers are paid a fair and decent wage.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — As long as we're fashioning our

social safety net, we are committed to changing our post-secondary education and training system. In the words of the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union: the path is clear. We must reinvent our universities. The time has come for real change.

People want a flexible and accessible post-secondary system, one where there is more integration among programs or sharing of resources. They want duplication reduced, administration cut, and more resources directed to programs.

While this government can maintain operating funding for universities and federated colleges this year, the increasing federal cuts will make it necessary to reduce funding by \$5 million in 1997-98, and a further \$5 million in 1998-99. This still means that this government is providing \$75 million of new provincial funding over the next four years.

(1445)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, that's a commitment to post-secondary education.

The federal government is also withdrawing its support for skills training in Saskatchewan. This province cannot ignore the emerging 21st century demands for highly skilled workers. We will build a made-in-Saskatchewan skills training network to prepare people for the new technological workplace. The Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training will lead and coordinate the new training strategy.

In total this budget provides \$91 million to train Saskatchewan people for new and better jobs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — This funding includes \$5 million to continue upgrading and employment opportunities through the very successful JobStart program.

Mr. Speaker, the best foundation for higher education and skills training is a relevant, high quality education system from kindergarten to grade 12. Therefore I am pleased to announce that foundation operating grants for school divisions will increase by \$2 million in 1996-97, and a further \$900,000 in 1997-98.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people told us to find administrative savings while ensuring that our children continue to receive quality education. We will work with our partners in education to achieve savings of \$7 million annually in 1998-99. The Minister of Education will consult with school divisions, educators, and parents, on how best to achieve these savings.

Once again we are giving our partners as much time as possible to plan and prepare for change. But we must continue to renew

and revitalize each of these essential areas.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government has also started to restructure itself. To free up money to protect the cornerstones of our quality of life, we will continue to streamline our operations.

Our ongoing strategy includes: cutting administrative costs; eliminating duplication and overlap; and delivering services better. We took a fine-tooth comb to the administrative structure of government. We knew we could reduce layers of management and consolidate operations while still maintaining important services. For example, we are streamlining operations in the Department of Highways and Transportation to save \$6 million a year. That's 6 million more dollars to be used to build and preserve roads.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — We found another \$7 million in administrative savings in the Department of Health. That's 7 million more dollars to be used each and every year to help maintain funding for health districts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — We also looked to reduce duplication of services. For example, while the government has to set the rules and guidelines for student loans, financial institutions can write and manage these loans. Therefore, a chartered bank will provide loans directly to students beginning August 1 to save taxpayers \$6 million a year. That's 6 million more dollars to replace federal funding cuts to post-secondary education.

Farmers, like students, can also take advantage of other borrowing options. As one farmer from McLean asked: why duplicate the Farm Credit Corporation, a federal agency which lends money to farmers? Mr. Speaker, we agree and we are winding down the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan to save taxpayers more than \$3 million a year.

Ending duplication is one way to save money. Delivering services better is another. For example, consolidating all small vehicle safety and registration in SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) will save \$1.4 million a year. Saskatchewan Crop Insurance is consolidating its delivery and marketing systems to save \$5 million a year. These and other changes throughout government will result in savings of more than \$50 million in 1996-97.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — And that's not just for this year. That's savings of \$50 million every year thereafter.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Overall, the largest single reduction in this budget is to government operations. And these savings will go to protecting our health, our post-secondary, and our

social programs, from federal cut-backs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Restructuring and streamlining the provincial government will eliminate 582 positions, although the actual job loss will be significantly less. We will manage the associated job losses with sensitivity and compassion through the use of early retirement, job-sharing, and other measures.

Mr. Speaker, people told us to reduce the cost of government at all levels and we have responded. We have worked hard to cut administration, eliminate duplication and overlap, and find ways to deliver services better. We believe all levels of government have to consider these kinds of common-sense changes to make tax dollars go further.

Mr. Speaker, this government is pleased that the federal government is responding to the request of western provinces to study the creation of a national tax collection agency to coordinate the collection of federal and provincial taxes. Such an agency would reduce the cost of collecting taxes and further cut red tape for business.

As we prepare to enter the next century, municipal governments are also taking a good, hard look at their administrative structures. Saskatchewan's municipal governments were established in the early 1900s as part of a new and developing province. Times have changed, and yet there has been no fundamental change to the structure and responsibilities of municipal government.

In the meantime, taxpayers are demanding more relevant services, fairer taxation, and more efficient government. Mr. Speaker, we can maintain revenue-sharing grants at their 1995-96 level for 1996-97, as promised; however, because the province must pay a larger share of the costs for health, post-secondary education, and social services due to federal cuts, revenue-sharing grants will be reduced by \$20 million for 1997-98.

Beyond this, the province and municipalities must deal with a number of fundamental issues. The Minister of Municipal Government is looking forward to working with municipalities on future fiscal arrangements, provincial levies, and funding for key roads and infrastructure.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — While we realize our partners face some difficult choices, it is important to remember that sound fiscal management is a key to protecting core programs and services.

Mr. Speaker, sound financial management is already helping this province meet the fiscal realities of the 21st century. Through the cooperative efforts of Saskatchewan people this government balanced the budget in 1994-95.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — That was the first balanced budget in more than a decade.

Meanwhile, 1995-96 brought its own special challenges — forest fires, floods, and dramatic reductions in federal equalization payments. Despite these financial difficulties, I'm pleased to announce that we will again balance the budget in 1995.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — And our new four-year financial plan presents four more balanced budgets.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Sustainable balanced budgets — little more than a dream just a few years ago, once again the norm.

It's important to remind ourselves how we are going to balance our budgets in the future. It will not be through tax increases.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — It will not be by slashing our key social programs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — We will achieve our goal by restructuring and streamlining government to lower our operating costs.

This year we will reduce government spending by \$230 million compared to 1995-96. That means we will save more than \$600,000 a day, each and every day of the year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Saskatchewan people also asked us to cut costs by paying down the provincial debt and reducing interest charges. In 1995-96, interest payments totalled \$851 million. Just imagine, if we didn't have those interest costs we could eliminate the sales tax and still have money left over. So we have to get the interest costs down.

That's why the Government of Saskatchewan recently sold a significant portion of its ownership in Cameco Corporation. The net proceeds from selling Cameco shares will be used exclusively to pay down debt and reduce interest costs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — This and other measures will allow us to reduce the annual interest costs on government-purpose debt by \$100 million by 1999-2000.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, by the year 2000 the

province's debt will be \$2.4 billion lower than it was in 1995.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — This reduction will bring the total debt load from 68 per cent of the province's gross domestic product down to 44 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — No other provincial government has reduced its debt so far so fast.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, we are cutting government spending, we are balancing the budget, and we are paying down the debt while preserving the cornerstones of our quality of life.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — That's the Saskatchewan formula for security and prosperity now and into the new century. That's the formula that gives Saskatchewan people the freedom to make choices.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — You saw that freedom in action this year. Because we had already balanced the budget, Saskatchewan people could choose the best way to handle the federal funding cuts to our social programs. We had the freedom to choose to devote millions of dollars in new provincial funding to shield our vital services from federal cuts.

As we look ahead, our new four-year financial plan gives Saskatchewan people continued freedom to control their future and to make choices. There are trade-offs and we must decide upon these together. We have to decide whether to reduce taxes by making further spending reductions, or by paying down the debt more slowly or perhaps by selling other industrial assets as we did with our Cameco shares.

Just as the government consulted Saskatchewan people about ways to manage federal funding cuts, we will also ask them how best to achieve tax reductions. But whatever choice we make, sound financial management will give us the freedom to choose our own course.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, this budget is about change and about the freedom to deal with change according to our Saskatchewan values. It prepares Saskatchewan for the new century by delivering on our promises. It builds prosperity and jobs for the future. It safeguards our health, post-secondary education, and social programs. It streamlines government to cut costs. And most importantly, it gives us and our children a unique privilege. It gives us all the financial freedom to decide and control our own future. That means Saskatchewan people

can look forward to the 21st century with a sense of confidence and security.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Confidence because their future promises more jobs, balanced budgets, reduced taxes, and less public debt. Security because the cornerstones of our quality of life — our health, education, and social programs — will be there for them, their children, and their grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan we have built a society where people and government work together to maintain our shared values of community, cooperation, and compassion. Our challenges will not divide us; our dreams must unite us.

Some governments believe that all they need to do to meet fiscal challenges is to get out of the way. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people believe the government can lead the way.

The 1996-97 budget prepares us for the 21st century in which Saskatchewan will continue to be the best province in the best country in the whole world, in which to live.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Premier:

That this Assembly do now resolve itself into the Committee of Finance.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in response to the address by the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, the blaming budget is now tabled before us. While this budget represents the priorities of this government, it doesn't represent the aims, hopes, needs, or the strong character of Saskatchewan people. Saskatchewan residents made their mark on this world through their strength of conviction, their courage, and their compassion.

The blaming budget before us today lacks conviction. It lacks courage. And it lacks compassion. Where Saskatchewan people seek to work hard and apply themselves to solving problems, this government chooses to blame. Where Saskatchewan people show concern for their neighbours, this government continues to ignore the plight of the jobless in this province. Where Saskatchewan people show pride in their rural roots, this government seeks to eliminate all that rural Saskatchewan values.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan were promised a new day dawning — a new day with new promise and new hope. On the farmers' fields that dot this province or on the fields of Rider green, we are a hopeful people in this Saskatchewan. We hold on tightly to this virtue. It sustains us just as it nurtured our ancestors before us.

The hope offered by the members opposite is, however, an empty one. The new day promised by the members opposite was a lot like waking up on the first official day of spring this

year — a whole new season according to the calendar, but more of the same icy, cold conditions that have given us the doldrums all winter.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — With this promised new day were to come many things, Mr. Speaker. The government promised jobs would be a number one priority and a number one goal. They promised stable funding for everything under the sun. They told us the worst of the storm was over, and their sunny plan may need adjustments but it would not be undone.

The jobless and the underemployed people of this province, however, wonder. Instead of waking up to brighter hopes for jobs, they wake up to hear that this government can't help them and that it's someone else's fault.

There's no new day dawning — just more of the same icy cold, slippery rhetoric we've heard for months. People deeply concerned about our health system awake to the same declining services and strong-arm tactics of the provincial Health department. Rural people arise to find this government once again lurking around like coyotes for a chance to prey on yet something else that they value.

Mr. Speaker, while this government blames, nothing changes for the people who really need help. Saskatchewan needs jobs. This will continue to be our most pressing need. So long as this government blames, nothing will be accomplished. No real human suffering will be eased and no light will shine into the lives of people who really need hope. For months we've heard this government blame someone else for every problem.

In fact, if we had a dollar for every time we heard the Finance minister say "federal cuts" this afternoon, I think we could have made quite a sizeable dent in our provincial debt. For months we've heard this government blame someone else for every problem. It's always easy to find a scapegoat; if not the previous government, then it's someone else.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you can't believe them when they say a new day has dawned, well it's just as difficult to believe them when they say someone else is to blame.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — While the members opposite and the Finance minister put in yet another Oscar-winning performance in the best role and supporting roles for blaming, they should remember what this place is supposed to be all about.

The Minister of Finance and her colleagues were given a renewed mandate to govern this past spring. They've been given a chance to do what few, if any, get to do. The voters of this province entrusted them with the powers needed to govern this province.

They entrusted them to keep their word and uphold the honour and fight to restore hope to a great province. Do the job you've been given, I say to the members opposite; help the people who

trusted you with the job of making their lives brighter.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — This is your chance. Don't live to regret that you wasted time blaming when you could have been helping to ease the trials of those in need.

Mr. Speaker, each and every day across this province, volunteers, neighbours and friends rise to meet these challenges. When things get difficult, the strength and character of Saskatchewan people shows itself in the way we help each other. I urge this government to follow the example set daily by thousands of Saskatchewan people and just get down to the job of dealing with this province's problems.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Don't miss your chance to make all of our lives a little brighter. While this government blames the problems faced by Saskatchewan people on others, people are growing more and more sceptical of these statements. Last year the Minister of Finance stood in this House and promised the people of Saskatchewan that the number of jobs would grow by .9 per cent.

Not only did the minister make such a modest promise but she went on to brag that this promise was much more modest than the forecast offered by major banks. Well a year later, the results are in. We now find that this government failed to even live up to this all-too-modest promise on job creation. According to *Sask Trends Monitor*, our job growth was a paltry .7 per cent.

This government promises that its goal is 4,000 extra jobs every year. That works out to be job growth of almost .9 per cent. Well, Mr. Speaker, this government failed to meet its target so far, and they gave no new hope that they will be in any better position to create an environment for job growth in Saskatchewan in today's budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — This budget simply rehashes past promises made by this government, promises that continue to fail to produce the jobs that we need.

Mr. Speaker, there's more to this government's sorry record on job creation. In a recent report, *Sask Trends Monitor* also warns that the industries which provided the modest job growth last year have slowed in the latter part of 1995, so Saskatchewan needs, and I quote, "a new engine for 1996".

Well, Mr. Speaker, no new engine was offered here today; no light for the jobless people of this province. People open the paper and what do they see, Mr. Speaker? They see companies like Estevan Brick closing, Wascana Energy shipping jobs off to Alberta, joined by the likes of Ford Credit. Spar in Swift Current and many others are having trouble keeping jobs while large multinationals slash jobs even though they're profitable.

While the rest of the country rolls ahead creating jobs faster than us, our government sits here and wastes its time blaming instead of solving the problem. This is the legacy that the members opposite will have to bear if they remain on this present course. They can look back years after politics with an empty feeling of knowing they chose to blame instead of taking positive action.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite will undoubtedly do what they will with figures. I prefer to hope that they will devote their time to people rather than numbers. They can stifle the economy of its true job growth and still be able to say they created some jobs, but it won't ease any of the real suffering that remains.

Sure this government can give a few more dollars away and get anyone to create some marginal, temporary work. It won't, however, change the fact that there are almost as many people who are underemployed as there are people without jobs in Saskatchewan. Almost 70,000 people in this province either can't find work or can't find enough work to support themselves. Most of the underemployed people are young, or young and female. That, Mr. Speaker, is a shameful tragedy that was not dealt with today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Another problem not dealt with here today is that almost a generation of young people, in their family formation years, have been lost from rural Saskatchewan. The very people who will build and maintain rural communities are gone. This government's response, Mr. Speaker, is threats of amalgamation and more cuts to services and jobs in rural areas.

This is a shameful way to treat rural areas, especially considering that they, in the resource sector, provided the backbone of this government's all-too-modest job growth.

To summarize one young farmer: one good season after years of hard times does not make a boom. I wonder for a moment if the Minister of Finance has considered how a sector like agriculture will continue to bear the burdens placed on it if grasshoppers, wheat midge, black diamond moths, or armyworms invade our fields once again this summer.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I'm going to ask for the cooperation of all members. I do consider it entirely inappropriate that members of the Assembly will be interacting with guests in the Assembly while debate is taking place. And I'll ask members to take their seats and for the hon. member for Thunder Creek to proceed.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, The members opposite know why we don't have the jobs we need in this province. They know that we need these jobs in order to secure our treasured social programs. The more jobs there are, the more taxpayers there will be. With job growth in Saskatchewan we will be able to provide the programs that we value.

In their recent *Partnership for Growth* paper the Minister of Finance committed to reviewing the tax system by 1997 to see

how it affects job creation and economic growth in this province. The goal of this is, and I quote, "to introduce a long-term plan to ensure the tax system promotes productive investment and greater job creation". While, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of this province, I will say to the government they might as well save the need for this review.

The reason why we have a weaker economy than our neighbours is because this government is stifling it with taxes and regulations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1515)

Mr. Aldridge: — In the budget here today we see this government is projected to take in another \$100 million more in tax revenue from us without even raising the tax rates. Well, Mr. Speaker, that includes another 62 million in personal income tax. That won't be there to help create jobs. To add insult to injury, those tax dollars are all too often being wasted.

Since 1991 revenues from taxes in this province sky-rocketed. This government now collects 33 per cent more revenue from taxes than it did five years ago.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan wouldn't waste their time blaming if their incomes had grown by 33 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — This, Mr. Speaker, this doesn't include windfalls from areas like utility charges. It's simple, but unfortunately this blaming budget was proof that this government still doesn't understand. They can give tax give-aways to big corporations, but it's the mom-and-pop shops in this province that will create most of the jobs. They won't lay off their employees just because the profit margin is getting a little smaller. If they're making a profit, they'll stay here and provide meaningful jobs and some dignity for their employees. Unfortunately this government stole that profit margin with taxes, regulations, and utility charges. And with it, the jobs.

While they blame and cry poor, this province continues to waste money on misguided priorities. They expand the size of cabinet. They build a casino with millions in cost overruns, allowing the total bill to hit \$37 million. They provide breaks to some of the wealthiest corporations in the country, including chartered banks with billion dollar profits. They close a hospital like the Plains, even though they know they will have to renovate the building at a significant cost anyhow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, this government continues to jaunt around the world on trade trips, just like the Tories before them. This government said the ministers get the trips and the taxpayers get the bill. As I said before, the only thing that's changed is, the cab pulls up in front of the minister's 7,000 square-foot mansion on its way to the airport, instead of some humble bungalow.

We find we have executives of Crown corporations travelling on junkets to Chile to see people they could've met in Alberta instead.

This government invests in hundreds of VLTs instead of in its nurses. It gives out-of-province gamblers \$80 just to come to the casino. It has deep pockets to hire health care consultants, but nothing to help districts keep their nurses. What results, are nurses who are more stressed, who now take up the number one spot for compensation claims.

The waste just doesn't seem to end. They have money for \$30,000 TV addresses. They have money for wasteful review of utility rates even though they already know what sort of rates they will impose on all of us: \$600,000-plus wasted at SaskPower, and another 50,000 at SaskEnergy, and still another \$100,000 high-tech consultation process for the budget.

While they waste money on this, the largesse doesn't end for their friends. Political staff are tucked away in our Crown corporations. While regular employees work hard at SaskPower and SaskTel with little if any wage increase, this government thinks nothing of compensating Don Ching for doing nothing. It thinks nothing of giving Jack Messer a raise and more holidays. It thinks nothing of giving another NDP party worker, Carole Bryant, a fat job at SaskPower and an even fatter raise to boot.

Mr. Speaker, the new day dawned giving some the high life. For the rest of us, it's only the dawning of a new day of disappointment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, while we see this government give us a blaming budget today, they continue to do things like this. This sort of waste is not part of the new day dawning. It's not going to bring any hope to the people who need a job. The members opposite were entrusted with the task of making the lives of Saskatchewan people a little brighter.

They may have helped brighten the lives of their appointees, big banks, or out-of-province gamblers, but they've done little for average Saskatchewan people. The blaming budget unfortunately offers no improvement.

Mr. Speaker, before adjourning debate, on behalf of Saskatchewan people, I urge the members opposite to do what they were sent to do — get to the priorities of Saskatchewan people: priorities like jobs, maintaining our health system and our rural communities. Help bring that new day dawn about and end the wasteful, icy, and slippery politicking that continues to grip this province.

In closing, I will have much more to say, Mr. Speaker, but I would move adjournment of the debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

Resumption of Budget Debate

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — I move, seconded by the Premier:

That debate on the motion that this Assembly do now resolve itself into the Committee of Finance be resumed on Friday, March 29, 1996.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

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