

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today to present on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to enact legislation to completely ban the practice of night hunting in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks out in Liberty, Holdfast, Imperial, and Penzance.

**Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to enact legislation to completely ban the practice of night hunting in Saskatchewan.

The signatures on this petition are all from Melfort, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

And the people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Ogema, Scout Lake, Assiniboia, and all throughout the land. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Aldridge:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens concerned about the Plains hospital closure.

And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

And those who have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from

communities of Killdeer, Wood Mountain, Rockglen, just to name a few. I so present.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens — citizens gravely concerned about the rising increase in crime in our society.

The prayer reads:

To the Hon. Assemblies of Canada and Saskatchewan. The petition of the undersigned citizens of Canada humbly showeth: . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. I'll advise the hon. member that in presenting the petition, the only portion that is appropriate to present in the House when reporting the petition is the prayer itself. And I'll ask the hon. member to proceed immediately to that portion of her petition.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that the Parliament of Canada and the legislature of Saskatchewan enact legislation and policies to deal with the problem of youth crime.

The petition has been signed by citizens from Lake Lenore, Humboldt, Kelvington, Prince Albert, Leroy, Saskatchewan; Bruno, Saskatchewan and throughout east-central Saskatchewan. I so present.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to present petitions on behalf of the people of the south-west:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reach necessary agreements with other levels of government to fund the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway in Saskatchewan so that work can begin in 1998, and to set out a time frame for the ultimate completion of the project with or without federal assistance.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And these folks today are from Lancer and Portreeve, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McPherson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to bring petitions forward on behalf of people in their efforts in saving the Plains Health Centre here in Regina. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

The people that have signed these petitions, Mr. Speaker, it appears to be Assiniboia, Fife Lake, Lafleche areas of the province. I so present.

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Clerk:** — According to order, a petition regarding ongoing problems with young offenders, presented on March 10, have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 12(7) is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

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

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to cause the government to reach necessary agreements with other levels of government to fund the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway; and

Of citizens of the province petitioning the legislature to enact legislation and policies to deal with the problem of youth crime; and

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to act to save the Plains Health Centre; and

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to cause the government to work with aboriginal and Metis leaders in an effort to end the practice of night hunting.

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 8 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs: (1) what annual lease revenue does the province of Saskatchewan receive from all sources from the Primrose Air Weapons Range? (2) what additional revenue does the province of Saskatchewan receive from the Primrose Air Weapons Range over and above lease revenues?

What levels of monetary resources, as opposed to human resources, has the province of Saskatchewan committed in respect to the Primrose Air Weapons Range to the Canoe Lake First Nations? What levels of monetary resources, as opposed to human resources, has the province of Saskatchewan committed in respect to the Primrose Air Weapons Range to the Primrose Air Weapons Range negotiating committee which represents the Metis of the province?

And finally, Mr. Speaker, what current strategies and commitment does the province plan to initiate in the fiscal year 1998-1999 to assist in the efforts of the Metis people of the area affected by the Primrose Air Weapons Range? And further, the question, in the past year how many meetings have you personally attended with this committee?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I

shall on Friday next move the first reading of a Bill, the labour standards amendment Act, 1998, indexed minimum wage initial rate.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker; to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce a number of people that are here in the Assembly today, hoping to hear some good news from the government.

In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, we have Bonnie and John Stevenson, Diana Rockeye, Katherine and Casey Marquist, Debbie Roger, Randy Haynal, Darwin Appell; and Anita Powless, I'm sure, needs no introduction to the Minister of Health. Also, Mr. Speaker, joining us behind the bar in the Assembly today are Terri and Ken Sleeva and Kent and Laurel Brace. And I'd ask the Assembly to give them a warm welcome please.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Speaker, I as well would like to extend a special welcome to all of the individuals who have joined us this afternoon. Certainly the conditions you're dealing with are something that we're all concerned about, and I would be more than pleased as well to just sit down. We thank you for the times we've had to visit before, and again, members, would you join us in welcoming the individuals that have come here today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the other members of this House, Valerie Montgomery-Bull sitting in your gallery. She is the daughter of Helen Montgomery. Helen Montgomery was the caring mother and grandmother who opened her North Battleford home to two young offenders and was consequently murdered in December of last year.

Since that time Valerie has become an eloquent spokesman for the effort to bring about changes to the Young Offenders Act. Would you help me in welcoming her here to this House.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the caucus, and certainly my colleague from the North Battleford, I also want to take this opportunity to welcome these two very special ladies — Donna Challis and Valerie Montgomery-Bull, who travelled all the way from North Battleford to be with us today and certainly appreciate your visit. And I'll ask the members to once again congratulate them on visiting the Assembly and certainly making an effort to be here. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join the member opposite in welcoming Anita Powless and all of the folks who are here today in the Assembly.

As you know, Anita and I have had a very close working relationship over the last couple of months in working together

and accomplishing a number of issues that are important for MS (multiple sclerosis) patients across the province. And so I welcome Anita and look forward to that continued relationship.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

#### Farm Safety Week in Saskatchewan

**Mr. Langford:** — Mr. Speaker, on March 4, Agriculture and Food minister, Eric Upshall, and Labour minister, Bob Mitchell . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order, order. Now I'll have to remind the hon. member that . . . Order, order. I know it's early in the session and perhaps some of the hon. members have forgotten the rules of the Assembly, but the hon. member I know understands not to use the proper names of members, but the positions held in this House only, when speaking in the Assembly. And I'll recognize the hon. member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

**Mr. Langford:** — Mr. Speaker, on March 4 Agriculture and Food minister and Labour minister proclaimed the week of March 11 to 18, 1998 as Farm Safety Week in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan farm families seem to be increasingly aware of the potential hazard on farms and are taking precautions to prevent accidents. Farm accidents have declined steadily in Saskatchewan since 1994, both for adults and children. In 1994 there were 28 farm fatalities in Saskatchewan. Of those, seven were children or youth. In 1997 there were nine farm fatalities, and of those, only two were children.

There are three main reasons why the numbers have declined. They are: the production of three safety videos for children and youth by the Saskatchewan Safety Council; the creation of the farm safety team by the Saskatchewan Safety Council; and the farm safety calendar contest sponsored by Saskatchewan Labour.

The government knows a farm is a great place to grow up and live. We are trying to make it as safe as well as we could. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Review of Community Homes Program

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, the Minister of Social Services announced a review of the community homes program and I congratulate him for that. However I am concerned that the minister says that the tragedy in North Battleford which sparked this review will not be looked at.

Mr. Speaker, the question as to whether Mrs. Montgomery's home was an appropriate place for violent young offenders to serve their sentence is quite separate and apart from the issue of the guilt or innocence of the youths charged with her murder.

I'm upset that the minister says I'm misleading the province

when I say that Mrs. Montgomery's home wasn't properly licensed. I challenge him to produce the licence. I challenge him to say that the Montgomery home size met the requirements of two youth placements. I challenge him to tell us why the liability insurance required for custody homes wasn't in place. I challenge him to tell us what, if any, training and experience Mrs. Montgomery had to operate such a facility. I challenge the minister to say that the use of private homes for youth custody is related to anything more than cutting costs.

When the Liberals proposed using the Dundurn training centre for young offenders, the minister refused, saying it wasn't appropriate because it didn't have sufficient custody and supervision. Apparently the minister thinks the Dundurn army camp doesn't have the necessary security but Helen Montgomery's home did.

I am concerned that the minister says that Mrs. Montgomery was fully briefed about the youths in her care but declines to say whether that briefing included telling her that the Crown had opposed the transfer of one girl . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. The hon. member's time has expired.

#### Battlefords and District Citizens of the Year

**Mr. Jess:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple of weeks ago I took part in an event in North Battleford sponsored by the Lions Club, the Co-op, and the local paper. The event was the 30th annual Battlefords and District Citizen and Junior Citizen of the Year banquet.

The Citizen of the Year award went to . . . one of them went to a close friend of mine, John Welykochy. For 50 years, John's second job has been the betterment of his community. He's been involved in amateur hockey, his church, the Lions Club, the Legion, the library, and a host of other volunteer organizations.

Second, and just as important, I was happy to see a young high school student, Dana Pasutto, given the Junior Citizen of the Year Award. I was glad to see this because the citizenship does not kick in with our grey hair or the lack of it. You can make a difference at any age, and Dana has done that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Gift for Premier and Deputy Premier

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well this session has begun, and I expect it's going to be a long session. And for some members, it's going to seem a lot longer than for others. In particular, there's a couple of members opposite who are going to have a real long session. They're both kind of getting up in years and neither one of them has looked too happy lately. Of course I'm speaking about the Premier and the Deputy Premier.

Just a few weeks ago the Premier got beat up pretty good at a SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) convention. It made him kind of owly. So much so that one of

our respected journalists referred to him as a grumpy old man.

Of course the Deputy Premier hasn't been in a real good mood either lately. The Premier took away his little boy toy power company in Guyana; then he had to fire Jack Messer; and now he had to fess up to losing millions of dollars on Channel Lake — made him kind of grumpy too.

So actually we have a couple of grumpy old men running around government. I don't expect either one of these guys is going to get any happier in the next few weeks.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you know the Saskatchewan Party is always trying to spread sunshine wherever we go. So in order to help the Premier and Deputy Premier get over their foul moods and pass the time during the session, we all chipped in and got them a really funny video to watch — Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon in *Grumpy Old Men*. I'd like to present that to them now.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. The hon. member will recognize that exhibits are not appropriate to use in the House, and he'll recognize there has been precedent in this House, and I'll ask the page to return it to him. And he may want to take appropriate action, but not to use it as an exhibit in the House.

#### Saskatchewan Winter Games

**Mr. Renaud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To begin with I'd like to first welcome all the members back to the House for the third session of the twenty-third legislature, and including the member from Rosthern, Mr. Speaker. I notice he's gotten a little grayer over the summer, and grumpier, but certainly he's . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Now all hon. members will recognize that in statements by members they are not to be debated. The statements by members is an opportunity for members simply to make statements but not to be debated by others. And I think the hon. member for Carrot River Valley knows that he is very, very close to entering into the debate and I'm sure he'll want to continue this with his statement.

**Mr. Renaud:** — Mr. Speaker, what I really wanted to say was I want to congratulate the community of Nipawin on their outstanding job of hosting the 1998 Saskatchewan Winter Games.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Renaud:** — Nipawin is the smallest community to ever host the Winter Games. Hats off to the surrounding communities of Carrot River, Melfort, Tisdale, White Fox, Codette, Zenon Park, Aylsham, Choiceland — and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker — who provided their assistance to ensure the provincial Winter Games were a success.

More than 2,100 volunteers donated their time and expertise. These are individuals that make Saskatchewan such a special place to live. We can never say enough about the dedication volunteers make with their time and support in creating successful events like the Winter Games, Mr. Speaker.

The huge success in Nipawin speaks very well for the future of the Saskatchewan Winter Games. It's not the size of the heart that counts . . . or it is the size of the heart that counts, Mr. Speaker, not the size of the community.

And I know that with the athletes, the coaches, the officials, the volunteers, and all the corporate sponsors, Mr. Speaker, and even Wilbur the mascot, though the flame is out, the spirit is still burning in . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. The hon. member's times has expired. Statements by members will continue.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Primrose Lake Committee Seeks Compensation

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to pay tribute to a group of people from northern Saskatchewan that have been an example of perseverance and commitment. These people have come from all walks of life and have yet to see the fruits of their labour — very special people like Lawrence Yew of Canoe Lake; Alex Maurice and Victoria and Art McCallum of Beauval; Clement and Daniel Daigneault of Ile-a-la-Crosse, and the many people from Jans Bay and Cole Bay, have contributed a great amount of time, energy, and dollars.

This committee has worked hard for 48 months. Or if you'd like, 1,420 days. Or if you'd like, 34,080 hours of interviewing, research, and meetings. Above all else, this committee has given tons of patience towards seeking justice on a very important matter. And today I'd like to point out that the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range negotiating committee is more determined than ever to seek fair and equitable compensation towards settling their long-standing grievance in relation to the displacement of their families and communities in the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range in the early 1950s.

Mr. Speaker, that displacement has drastically affected the economic development and social fabric of the families, the communities, and the entire region to this day. We'll hear more on this matter as the session progresses. And the only hope that I have is that all 58 MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) in this Assembly will work as hard as the committee in resolving this matter. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Youth Ambassador at Winter Olympics

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Nagano Winter Olympics were the most successful in Canadian history. Saskatchewan influence, thanks to athletes like Sandra Schmirler, whose prairie roots are in the town of Biggar in the constituency of Rosetown-Biggar, played a very significant role in Canada's success at these Olympic games.

We've heard the many good stories of the Olympic experience from all the participants. But it was not just the athletes who were able to enjoy this experience, but fans as well. Nineteen-year-old Devin Dubois from Rosetown was one such fan. But Devin was no ordinary fan; he was one of seven people

chosen from a field of 158 applicants by the Canadian Olympic Association to be a youth ambassador for Canada.

Olympic experience is nothing new to the Dubois family. Devin's father, Marcel Dubois, was the coach of the Canadian trap shooting team who competed at the '96 Olympics in Atlanta. Devin wouldn't trade his Olympic experience for anything. In fact it only strengthened his desire to compete himself in the Olympics — a desire which may soon become a reality. Devin is currently ranked 12th overall in the world in trap shooting. He hopes to compete in Sydney in the 2000 Summer Games.

I'd like to offer both my congratulations and extend my best wishes to Devin on the road to Sydney. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Sale of Channel Lake

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, where do we begin? Where do we begin to deal with the NDP (New Democratic Party) incompetence, negligence, and plain stupidity that cost Saskatchewan taxpayers \$10 million?

I guess we should start with the \$5 million you lost because your people didn't read the contract. They didn't read a multimillion dollar contract. I guess that's what the NDP due diligence we've been all hearing about is about. They didn't read the contract.

You know, Mr. Minister, you couldn't make up a story like that, it's just too ridiculous. Mr. Minister, you haven't identified who didn't read the contract. Who signed the contract? Will you release a copy of the contract with the signatures attached? Who are these people, and have they been fired?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — As I mentioned the other day to the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, obviously the circumstances that occurred around Channel Lake were unfortunate, and I have explained to the House in great detail the circumstance surrounding the arrangement.

The member wants to know who is involved in the signing of the contract and the negotiating of the contract. You'll find the names in the report and I believe it's on page 7 of the Deloitte Touche report. Read it and you'll find out the members of the management staff who were involved in the Channel Lake project.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Mr. Minister, back in 1992, with much fanfare, your government picked NDP campaign manager Jack Messer to head up SaskPower. Your hand-picked NDP henchman lost Saskatchewan taxpayers millions of dollars because he couldn't read a contract. And now you're actually thinking of giving him severance. Unbelievable! You're going to give him more money from taxpayers to reward him for the millions he just lost.

Mr. Minister, you shouldn't be paying Jack Messer, you should

be suing Jack Messer. Will you assure this House that Jack Messer will never receive one dime of severance? Will you assure this House that Jack Messer will never again work for the government? And will you consider legal action against Jack Messer for the recovery of the millions of taxpayers' dollars he lost through his negligence?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — First of all, Mr. Speaker, as the Deloitte Touche report confirms, that on the issue of the sale of assets of Channel Lake — and I just explain in very simple terms to the member again — this asset was purchased for \$25 million. During the lifetime of the project, \$12 million was paid back to SaskPower, and the asset was sold for 21 million including the \$6 million trading losses, and the Deloitte & Touche report confirms this. There was a net return of \$2 million to the people of Saskatchewan.

And if you read the report — if you read the report — you will understand it. And to the severance you talk about, I can tell you that this issue has been referred to Milt Fair who is the vice-president of the corporation, former CEO (chief executive officer) of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, for a solution to that issue.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gantefer:** — The NDP just lost the taxpayers \$10 million. I don't care if the new math that the minister is using says otherwise, it's \$10 million. Somebody has to pay for this and it shouldn't be the taxpayers — it should be the people responsible. The Minister of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) has the legal opinion of this whole matter but he refuses to release it. What are you hiding? Does it recommend civil action? Does it recommend criminal action? Who are you protecting?

My question is for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, will you launch a criminal investigation into the whole Channel Lake fiasco?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite again. If you read the report clearly you will see the circumstances are considerably different than what you are explaining here in the House today. Now that doesn't surprise me given your commitment to honesty with your own former Liberal members; so it doesn't surprise me at all that you would try to twist, try to twist the Deloitte & Touche report to your own political benefit. I understand that.

But having said that, I say again that when we got the report we did what I think was appropriate. We explained it to the Assembly, we tabled the reports, and I say to the members opposite that I would like it at least if they had the honesty and integrity to read the report and explain it fairly to the people of the province — because you're not doing that here today.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Mr. Minister, you're also playing with the facts on the Guyana deal. First you said there was \$800,000 that was spent on Guyana figuring out what everybody knew you

shouldn't do for a dollar. And then all of a sudden, whoops, it's now \$1.4 million. What's the real figure, Mr. Speaker? Are we going to have new numbers next week?

Mr. Minister, you paid a million dollars to lawyers and consultants to tell us not to invest in Guyana. Mr. Minister, who are these lawyers and consultants? Will you give us the breakdown? Who got rich off of this misguided adventure?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a little difficult to please the members opposite today, and speaking of grumpy old men, there's a few of them sitting over there today.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of the Guyana consultation and legal opinions that were required to do the due diligence on this project — which led us to make the decision not to go ahead with the investment — cost the company 1.3 million. The additional sum that you have here is in part, in large part, because of the cost that CIC had in the project as well.

I say again it's hard to please, because when we disclose the numbers, they still complain vehemently that the numbers aren't right.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Mr. Speaker, my final question is for the Premier. The former minister of SaskPower spoke at great length in the last session about due diligence: due diligence in Guyana; due diligence in Channel Lake; due diligence with all the activities of SaskPower. Due diligence in Guyana cost \$1.4 million. Due diligence in Channel Lake cost \$10 million.

Mr. Premier, if you're not going to hold the current minister of CIC responsible, will you dismiss the former minister in charge of SaskPower, the minister of due diligence?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — I want to begin, Mr. Speaker, by wishing the hon. member from Melfort well in his quest for the leadership of the Tory, the Tory Party.

Now just calm down. Calm down. I know you're very nervous. Calm down. I wish you all the very best in your pursuit of the leadership of the new Tory or old Tory Party. But let me give you a piece of untendered advice. A little less feigned outrage, I think would give more credibility to your questions and more credibility to your leadership race.

The answer to your question, simply put, is as the report indicates right here on page 30, the report of Deloitte Touche document. In summer the Sask board was clear in its direction and expectations respecting the Channel Lake investment but did not receive enough regular and substantive information to know about the dealings which the minister has fully described. That's his position.

They knew full well what the situation was as provided to them and acted on that information. In any event, there is a new minister in charge of Saskatchewan Power Corporation, and we

are on to now, having learned from the lessons of Channel Lake, turning the page and moving forward. Something which you and your Tory colleagues have never been able to do is to learn and turn the page and to grow from that.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Young Offenders Act Reform

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Minister, last Christmas Helen Montgomery, a 58-year-old widow living alone in North Battleford, decided to give something back to her community by taking two young people into her home.

Your department placed two young offenders with Helen and established her home as an open custody facility. But friends and family aren't even sure anyone from Social Services sat down with Helen to discuss the background of the young offenders or to warn her about possible dangers.

Mr. Minister, your department placed a young offender suffering from fetal alcohol syndrome who had been convicted of manslaughter into open custody in a home of a 58-year-old woman with polio. Mr. Minister, within two days Helen Montgomery was dead from multiple stab wounds inflicted by one of the young offenders your department placed in her home.

Mr. Minister, Helen's daughter, Valerie Montgomery Bull, is here in the legislature today. Will you commit to meet with her today to listen to her concerns? And, Mr. Minister, will you apologize to Valerie and her family for the devastation your department has inflicted in this case?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, to the member and to all members, that member and all members will recognize that we as elected members of this legislature must exercise much caution when we discuss the tragic events in the home in North Battleford. Because we all know that these are before the courts and I'm sure not any one of us in this room would want to jeopardize either the case for the prosecution or the case for the defence in this regard. And so I say, Mr. Speaker, that we need to be careful and guarded in our public comments.

In terms of the very narrow issue of the licensing of Mrs. Montgomery's home in North Battleford, all proper process and procedures were followed. Mrs. Montgomery's home was licensed entirely appropriately under both designation of the Young Offenders Act and under provincial regulation, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you're probably well aware of all the petitions that are being signed throughout Saskatchewan and across this country with reference to Young Offenders Act and what happened in North Battleford. And it took awhile but we are happy to see that the NDP government has finally joined with the Saskatchewan Party caucus and the vast majority of Saskatchewan people in recognizing the Young Offenders Act needs some serious reworking.

Mr. Minister, will you and the Minister of Justice commit today to join the Saskatchewan Party in a non-partisan trip to Ottawa to deliver the petitions of more than 25,000 Saskatchewan people? Will you and your colleague, the Minister of Justice, prove your commitment and will you sign that petition and join us in Ottawa to ensure the meaningful changes to the Young Offenders Act do take place?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, the commitment of this minister, the Minister of Justice, this Premier, and this government is very clear. We have proposed in considerable detail to the federal government those changes which we believe must be made to the Young Offenders Act. We have communicated that — our position is very clear — we have outlined the changes that we recommend. Changes which would bring a presumptive transfer to 14- and 15-year-olds charged with serious crime to adult court, changes in regard to the publication of names.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the Tory Party and the Liberal Party would stand in support of these changes which we recommend. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that they today make very clear, as we have, the kinds and specific changes that they would recommend to the Young Offenders Act.

Mr. Speaker, it's simply not good enough to call for changes without identifying those changes. We'd like to know where you stand on those specific changes. We invite you to join us in the changes that we have recommended.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Multiple Sclerosis Drugs

**Mr. McLane:** — Mr. Speaker, the hon. opposition has been approached by a number of victims of multiple sclerosis and who are also being victimized by this NDP government. People like Terri Sleva, Bonnie Stevenson, Darwin Appell, Kent Brace and others, who have joined us in the legislature today, have come here to try and bring some common sense to this issue.

The Minister of Health announced last fall that a board would be established to ensure MS patients who might benefit from Betaseron and Copaxone receive these drugs. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, one in four people who go before this board are being turned down. Others are simply not attempting because of the arbitrary criteria the board is following.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Health explain why he's robbing many MS victims, people like Terry Sleva, of the hope that they want, and that they deserve, and that you promised them.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, as you well know and to the member from Arm River and those folks that are here today, that this is a very difficult and a very emotional issue. And over the past four months we have deliberated in an open fashion with folks from the MS community to deal with the issue as to how best we might be able to provide two drugs that are on the market today to assist them with their lives.

And we've been able to complete that process, Mr. Speaker, in consultation with a broad range of individuals who've provided guidance for us. Because the reality of it is, is that the benefits of these two drugs are still being discussed in great detail and there's a great deal of conflicting information about the value of these drugs. However, in spite of all of that, in Saskatchewan today, we have two drugs insured of Betaseron and Copaxone. Only three other provinces in Canada of the 10 provinces and two territories that we have, have these drugs insured, Mr. Speaker. And we did that on the basis of providing some assistance and hope to those people. And we did it on the basis of establishing a panel that is consistent with those in the other four provinces.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Remember the throne speech, Mr. Speaker. Made in Saskatchewan, the Premier says. Mr. Minister, remember that when you're deciding and quoting in only three other provinces. This is Saskatchewan. Let's make it in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to give the minister an example of how to demonstrate how arbitrary and unfair the rules are. Kent Brace has joined us here in the legislature today. He has been rejected by the committee because he is unable to meet a requirement that he walk 100 metres without any assistance. Mr. Speaker, that's true. Kent is unable to walk 100 metres. But not because of MS, it's because he was partially paralyzed 40 years ago, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Minister, how can you possibly support criteria which is not only arbitrary but borders on discrimination?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, I have here the application form that MS patients use in making application for the use of Copaxone and/or Betaseron. This application form, Mr. Speaker, was developed by physicians and health professionals across the country. They weren't developed only by physicians or the Government of Saskatchewan, they were developed by physicians and professionals across the nation to help develop what kinds of criteria is valuable in assigning a drug for the benefit of individuals today.

I am insulted, Mr. Speaker, to think for a moment that individuals like Dr. Hader, who's dedicated his life to MS research and clinical work in this province, isn't capable of sitting on a panel of this nature. I'm insulted to learn that Dr. Andrew Kirk, who is a neurologist in this province and served on this committee and is a practising clinician in this province . . . I'm insulted to learn that Dr. J.K. Wood, who is a family physician in Saskatoon; Ms. Heiser, a clinical nurse; and Ray Bannister, a pharmacist in this province, are not capable of making decisions on behalf of Saskatchewan people. I'm insulted to learn that, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I can tell the minister that the people of Saskatchewan are insulted that you are forcing them to go through this process to retrieve the drug

anyway, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that an appeal process must be put in place until, as the Premier says, a Made in Saskatchewan solution is developed. We feel the solution is a creation of an independent body made up of care-givers, doctors, and neurologists who diagnose and treat MS patients on an ongoing basis. The present system under which the government-appointed body makes a decision based on arbitrary criteria is not working. You can see that; here's the proof. It's just not acceptable.

Mr. Minister, MS victims are hoping that you will put politics aside and adopt our Made in Saskatchewan solution to this problem. Mr. Minister, make that commitment to the people of Saskatchewan today, and the people that are sitting here on the floor.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, in the establishment of this committee we had a great deal of dialogue with Saskatchewan people, which included the MS Society. And the MS Society provided us with confidence and direction in establishing the committee that we have before us today, Mr. Speaker.

Now I read in the recent article of the *Leader-Post* in where Mr. Melenchuk is quoted as saying that we should set up a new committee of people who diagnose and treat MS patients. People who diagnose and treat MS patients every day, is what he says, and set up criteria that should be developed here in Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is criteria that's been developed in Saskatchewan. These are people who are practising medicine in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And here we have a Leader of the Third Party who is suggesting that his colleagues who practise medicine in the province of Saskatchewan are incapable of providing decisions on a daily basis for people who suffer from MS and attacks the very integrity of the individuals from whom he trained with and he practises with, Mr. Speaker. And I find that absolutely appalling.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Sale of Channel Lake

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the minister told us that the government had been fooled into losing about \$10 million on the stroke of a pen in Channel Lake. Well last April 10 the member from Regina South was trumpeting Channel Lake as one of the great successes of our Crown corporations. He told us that Channel Lake was proof that our Crown corps are being handled in a responsible and sensible manner.

My question, Mr. Speaker, if Channel Lake is one of our success stories, one of the examples of how our Crown corps are handled in a sensible and responsible manner, can he tell us how big a loss we will have to chalk up before he'll call it a failure.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, as the Deloitte Touche report explains to the member opposite, I want to make it clear that the Channel Lake company was purchased for \$25 million. During the lifetime it repaid \$12 million of that, which left \$13 million. The company were sold for 15, and even with the trading losses it still ends up as a net of 2 million to the people of Saskatchewan. Read the report, read the report — to the member from North Battleford — read the report and you'll see that.

As to whether or not the advice that we get on deals that everyone of them is good, obviously yesterday I said this was a difficult situation; one that we are sorry happened and wish that it hadn't. But when it comes to the operation of the Crowns, whether it's the sale of the Husky assets, which you, sir, and your party recommended that we sell for 7 cents on the dollar which would have meant hundreds of millions of dollars less — that was a good deal.

When it came to the advice we got on the sale of Cameco shares, they made hundreds of million dollars for the people of the province. Was Channel Lake a mistake? I agree, but there is no reason to believe that many men and women aren't doing a wonderful job in the Crowns for the people of the province.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hillson:** — All I know is that last December when I was trying to question you about the Channel Lake fiasco and you were stonewalling with the help of your Sask Party cohorts, you were making jokes, you were making jokes about it. You said over the sale: there couldn't have been a more open process.

Mr. Speaker, at that time the minister told us that Mr. Portugal, in working for Channel Lake, who did work on the negotiations, the company was sold. Mr. Portugal was then without work and the new company hired him. That's about as devious as the plot gets, he told us.

Mr. Speaker, that was a half truth at best. Will the minister now tell us that he knew when he made that statement that the whole plot was a great deal more devious than that Mr. Portugal had resigned? He had been fired because of the allegations now contained in this report. And you knew that the plot was a great deal more devious than what you told us.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, speaking of plot and the words, the cohorts in the Saskatchewan Party, I have here a document that says the opposition Liberal caucus members, by signing this statement, indicate their continuing loyalty and support to the cause of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party and the opposition. Now where are half of those cohorts today? They're sitting over in the old Conservative Party. Don't tie us to your cohorts in the Saskatchewan Party. The member who was asking about Channel Lake earlier — those are your buddies.

As to the issue of Channel Lake, I say to the member opposite: the statement that I made in the House speaks for itself. We made it very clear that we wish that the circumstances were different with Channel Lake, that we lacked information. The Deloitte & Touche summary speak to the issue of lack of information that we had. I wish the member would simply read the document and try to understand it, because he would be



greatly informed as to where he's working from in his notes today.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hillson:** — Well the problem isn't over. The problem isn't . . . The hemorrhaging continues. SaskPower has agreed to buy all its natural gas for its generating stations from Lawrence Portugal's new company for the next 10 years.

Why have we blundered into this 10-year contract? How much is that going to cost us? Why are we going to enrich a private Alberta oil and gas company, rather than buy from SaskEnergy? How much is this exclusive contract going to cost the people of Saskatchewan over 10 years?

You told us a couple of weeks ago that Millar Western is hemorrhaging badly. How much are we going to haemorrhage over this? Tell us about what the full bleed is going to be.

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite refers to the 10-year contract, again not a new piece of information obviously, because it's referred to a number of times in the Deloitte & Touche report. But all of the indications are from the officials at CIC that the 10-year contract was signed for a reasonable amount.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member on his feet?

**Mr. McLane:** — Mr. Speaker, pursuant to rule 46, I seek leave of the Assembly to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity.

**The Speaker:** — Before orders of the day, the hon. member for Arm River has indicated his desire to introduce a motion for debate that he believes to be of urgent and pressing necessity.

I'll ask the hon. member to, very, very briefly, to inform the House as to the reason he feels that the House should set aside its business to entertain the motion, and then to advise the House of the nature of the motion he wishes to introduce. The hon. member for Arm River.

#### MOTION UNDER RULE 46

##### Reform of the Exception Drug Plan for treating Multiple Sclerosis

**Mr. McLane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I could, just by reading the motion, would give the House a hint of what it's all about.

That this Assembly call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to reform the exception drug plan for medication used in treating multiple sclerosis, namely Betaseron and Copaxone, firstly by allowing for trial periods of usage followed by review to consider whether the drug is effective in particular cases;

Secondly, by removing the arbitrary barriers faced by patients in their application for the drug, such as the

requirement that a patient must be able to walk 100 metres in order to qualify;

Thirdly, by putting in place an appeal process so that patients who are initially turned down for the drugs may appeal to an independent review body; and

Fourthly, by adding to the formulary the second generation of Betaseron, known as Betaseron 1A, which has been approved by Health Canada and which is more refined than the original Betaseron and has fewer side effects.

Mr. Speaker, I think the reason that it's important — of course I could go on at some length — however, I think with the people that we have sitting here today is self-explanatory why there needs to be an inquiry into this issue.

**The Speaker:** — The hon. member for Arm River has advised the House as to his request to set aside the House's normal business to entertain the motion, and he has advised the House of the motion he wishes to introduce. Leave is required. Is leave granted?

Leave not granted.

#### SPECIAL ORDER

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in reply to the throne speech, the third time I have done so in this legislature.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome all members back to the House. Judging from our short time together in December, I know this session will be filled with lively debate on the many issues facing Saskatchewan. And I look forward to taking part in many of those debates with members opposite.

I want to also take this opportunity to welcome our new pages for this session, Barton Draper, Pamela Kovacs, Angela Smalley, Jason Trost, and Cara Renkas. I am sure your experiences over the next four or five months will prove both enlightening and valuable in your future lives. Welcome to the legislature.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to issue a special greeting to many people in Saskatchewan but especially those in the Canora-Pelly constituency. With the expansion of the legislative communication channels through satellite, through cable, many communities in Saskatchewan are accessing the legislative channel for the first time. I know many communities in Canora-Pelly are doing so. And to those people who are watching the legislative channel for the first time, I want to — on behalf of the official opposition — wish them enjoyable time

watching.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to congratulate you for your efforts in terms of conducting an education process around Saskatchewan. My constituency, two communities of Preeceville and Sturgis, had the opportunity last fall — students in grade 10, 11, and 12 — had the opportunity to hear your remarks and comments about how the democratic system works in Saskatchewan. And I want to thank you for that. And I want to encourage you to continue on that process because I think our young people in Saskatchewan need to know more about how this place works and how the province functions, and I want to thank you for them.

Mr. Speaker, since we met here last spring, much has changed. This is the first full session with the Saskatchewan Party filling the role of the official opposition. And I'm honoured to carry the title of opposition leader into this session. It's a title that I know comes with enormous responsibility to the people of this province and it's a job that I take very seriously.

As I've said, Mr. Speaker, much has changed with the look of the legislature since our last session. I'm not speaking of the long-overdue refurbishing project that is now under way. I'm also talking about the members inside this Chamber who collectively decided that the old way of doing things was no longer adequate. I think I'd be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I didn't speak very briefly today about the new and improved official opposition. I know it's of keen interest to the members opposite.

The eight of us who put our political careers on the line and decided to leave our former caucuses did so with an idea of creating something new on the political landscape in this province. Those of us who decided to set aside our minor differences and come together did so because we know the challenges facing Saskatchewan now and in the future. These challenges have to be met by people who are willing to look past artificial political labels that are meaningless in this day and age and instead focus on finding solutions to Saskatchewan's problems.

Those of us who have come together under the Saskatchewan Party banner have done so because we believe that ideas are more important than the old-style political labels that have kept centre and right of centre political parties divided for too long — plus denying the majority of Saskatchewan voters their say too often in the past.

Those of us who saw wisdom in this finally decided that it was more productive to stop looking at the minor areas where we differed and instead look at the major areas where we agreed. Once again it was simply putting ideas ahead of old-style and artificial political leg room, Mr. Speaker. While others continue to cling to weak labels, we stand strongly on the foundation of ideas, principles, and clear policies.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves as the official opposition, and every member in this new opposition knows that the people of Saskatchewan are watching us closely.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, order. I apologize for interrupting the hon. member, but if I could ask the

Sergeant-at-Arms to have the cameras removed from the door. I find it distracting to debate in the House.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, camera shy as I am.

There might even be one or two who do not support the actions we took in creating this new political vehicle in Saskatchewan. It's up to members on this side of the House to show the people of Saskatchewan that we do offer a clear and realistic alternative to the government opposite.

And in these early months of the life of the Saskatchewan Party, I am hopeful that we have begun doing that. Because to be an effective opposition, a party must do more than simply criticize anything and everything the government does. When we agree with the government, we'll say so. And when we don't, we'll say so as well.

(1430)

But we'll also tell the people how a Saskatchewan Party government would do things differently. In order to be a credible . . . in order to be credible, an opposition must tell the people what they'll do differently if they were entrusted by the people to form a government. And even though this new party is still very young, I think we have done that very, very well.

Prior to the opening of the session, the Saskatchewan Party opposition laid out a detailed and comprehensive package that we plan to bring into this House during this session. In fact we called it our alternative throne speech. This package includes upwards of 30 private member Bills we plan to introduce during this session — the most ever brought forward by an opposition party.

And thank goodness, Mr. Speaker, because listening to the throne speech on Monday, it quickly became clear that the members opposite have nothing fresh to offer the people of Saskatchewan in terms of ideas. It seems they are content to simply ignore the problems that are on the horizon for Saskatchewan — just pretend that they're not there.

Earlier this week with the media, Mr. Speaker, I used the *Titanic* as an analogy. And anybody who has seen the movie knows that for two hours you sit there watching and hoping that the captain of the ship will wake up soon enough to steer clear of the iceberg. But of course that doesn't happen. In the end, in the end you know the ship is heading straight for the iceberg and all you can do is sit there watching helplessly.

And I see similarities right in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We have the captain of the ship blithely sailing through the water oblivious to the icebergs that are threatening this province. And those of us who can see the iceberg coming over the horizon can warn him as much and as loudly as we want. If he refuses to listen, there's very little that can be done. At least until the next election, when the captain's job performance is up for evaluation.

Mr. Speaker, there are many enormous issues facing this province over the next few years. And I really didn't hear anything in the throne speech that makes me believe this government is ready to react to the pressures facing us.

On the contrary, the actions of the government opposite over the course of the last while indicate to me that the NDP has grown further and further out of touch with the concerns of the Saskatchewan people — concerns over oppressive taxation; concerns over the lack of quality, good-paying jobs and opportunities in Saskatchewan; concerns over lessening health care and education services in Saskatchewan; concerns over an overburdened and deteriorating transportation infrastructure; concerns over Crown corporations which are operating in an increasingly arrogant manner.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the hazards facing Saskatchewan, and there's absolutely nothing in this throne speech that indicates to the Saskatchewan public that the government is willing or able to come up with innovative initiatives to deal with them.

We hear more of the same. The captain of the ship is saying, steady as she goes. And the icebergs are getting very, very near. And our young people are heading for the lifeboats, moving to other provinces as quickly as they can. Because that's where they continue to find opportunities. That's where they find it possible to start their careers and their lives. It's the same old story, Mr. Speaker. We educate them here and send them away.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. Now I recognize that all hon. members have some messages in their heart that they'd like to bring to the attention of the Assembly, but I would encourage them to do it at the appropriate time when entering into debate. It is difficult to hear the Leader of the Opposition's remarks in the debate. And I would ask all hon. members to accord to him the courtesy of allowing his remarks to be heard. The hon. member, the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I was indicating, many people are educated here in Saskatchewan and we send them away. So the members opposite can say more people are working in Saskatchewan than ever before. But that gets us nowhere if most of the jobs created in Saskatchewan involve a paper hat and a mop. This is a long-term problem in our province. As for young people, they continue to go.

It sets up a situation where our population is rapidly ageing. Without the quality, high-paying jobs available here in Saskatchewan, our youth continue to leave. And our ability to pay all of our bills with a shrinking tax base will become impossible. It's an unsustainable situation, Mr. Speaker.

And yet I heard nothing in the throne speech that even acknowledges that this is a very real problem facing Saskatchewan. The government can pretend all it wants that this problem doesn't exist. That doesn't make it true though.

If our tax base keeps shrinking, how are we going to be able to sustain essential services even to the existing inadequate levels? If we don't do anything to encourage our young people to stay or to encourage high-skilled labourers to come to Saskatchewan, who is going to foot the bill for the services the government should be providing? If we don't encourage entrepreneurs to set up shop here in Saskatchewan, how are we going to employ our own people?

We need to encourage these people to come to our province and

to stay. And you can't do that when you have the highest tax burden in the country. You can't do that when the province right next door has the lowest tax burden. And you certainly can't do that when both of our neighbours have just cut their personal income taxes. And is there any indication of tax relief in the throne speech, Mr. Speaker? Absolutely not.

At the same time, over the last year, all we've heard from the members opposite is how well the province is doing, how our province has never enjoyed such economic times. How the government is taking in more money than ever before. But what those members fail to realize is that just because the government is doing well, it doesn't mean the people of this province are doing well.

Just because the government is rolling in money, thanks to its high taxation policy and a fair amount of luck, it means very little if the people aren't allowed to enjoy the benefit. It means very little to the family of four with an income of \$30,000 a year. This family pays about \$1,900 in income taxes to the province every year. In Alberta, their income tax bill would be just \$470. That gap is just too wide to even pretend that Saskatchewan is competitive.

Last year we saw a bit of progress on the taxation front — or at least what passes for progress in this province. Last year we saw the government reduce the provincial sales tax to the level where it was when the NDP came to power in 1991. And they praised themselves to no end.

We heard about their new-found belief that yes indeed, tax reduction does result in job creation. But then what did they do? They took every penny of this modest tax relief back in the form of SaskEnergy increases; in the form of SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) increases; in the form of SaskTel increases. And they're even getting more creative about it, Mr. Speaker.

Now they're tacking on another dollar a month onto everyone's phone bill — supposedly to pay for the province-wide 911 service. But two years ago, this same government said the 911 service would be paid for out of the VLT (video lottery terminal) revenues that the NDP decided could not be entrusted to the hands of the municipalities. Now that promise has been broken too and it's going to cost Saskatchewan residents another \$8 million a year.

And it just goes on and on, Mr. Speaker. They put the money in one pocket and take it out of the other. It's almost an addiction for the NDP — the more taxes they collect, the more they want, the more the need. Because it is the view of the NDP that the government knows how to spend the people's money better than the people themselves do.

Well that's not the view of the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. We say it's time to break the addiction. We are at the end of the road when it comes to governments overtaxing its residents. Now is the time to give something back and that's what we'll be fighting for during this session, Mr. Speaker — to share the wealth with the people who have put up with so much tax pain for the last seven years.

They say they want to invest in families. Of course all this

means to the NDP is creating yet another expensive government program with ill-defined goals and probably less than tangible results. Why not simply invest in families by reducing their tax burden? People can figure out how to spend their own money. They don't need the government doing it for them.

Government, lest we forget, is here to provide the essentials: health care, education, highways, and safe communities. That's what people expect for their taxes but that's not what they're getting, Mr. Speaker. While the people are paying higher taxes than ever before, they've watched their health care services scaled back, including the imminent closure of the Plains Health Centre in Regina, a hospital that serves residents in communities throughout the whole of the southern part of Saskatchewan.

They've watched . . . The schools have begun to close in communities, not because there isn't enough students, but because there isn't enough money. The people of Saskatchewan have watched as their highways have continued to deteriorate, and all they hear from this government is a promise to continue highway construction at currently inadequate levels for another decade. The government calls this a commitment, Mr. Speaker; the people of Saskatchewan do not.

So the members opposite must understand if the people of this province are slightly baffled. They pay more in taxes than ever before but continue to watch their essential services weaken. And the people have become even more confused when they watch how the government operates the Crown corporations. In the last few months the concern over this government's handling of the Crowns has grown even more acute.

While people in Saskatchewan are struggling to make ends meet under the enormous tax burden this government has put on them, they had to watch while the minister of CIC waltzed around Guyana like he owned the place. And thank goodness for the pressure put on him by the Saskatchewan people and the official opposition, because he might well have owned the place if he had his way.

As soon as the Guyana deal was announced last year, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province began telling the members opposite that they had no business taking Saskatchewan taxpayers' money to this foreign country when there were so many issues on the agenda here at home. While the Saskatchewan public faced one tax increase after another in the form of higher utility bills, there was SaskPower thinking it was wise to risk \$30 million on a broken-down power company in a politically unstable South American country.

If this isn't the epitome of a government that is grown out of touch, I don't know what is. But would the government listen to the people on this one? No, not soon enough at least. They went on their merry way, refusing to tell the people of this province anything about the Guyana deal. In fact the only way we were able to get any information about it at all, was from the Guyanese government and the Guyanese media. Open and accountable government, Mr. Speaker? I dare say not.

It's a shame that the government was too arrogant to listen to the people of Saskatchewan in those early days of the Guyana venture, because if they had they might have saved a pile of

money.

Even though the NDP was finally pressured to say no to Jack Messer and his Guyana dream, it wasn't scuttled before the government blew at least \$1 million — or so we thought. That's the only amount that we knew about because the government refused to tell the people of Saskatchewan the full extent of SaskPower's and CIC's expenditures in South America.

Never mind that this is supposedly a public company, one of our family of Crown corporations. Never mind that this government keeps telling the people that they own these corporations. Yesterday we noted in a second release a document that stated that the estimate was no longer 800,000; it in fact was now \$1.4 million. I wonder what the next statement will indicate — a statement of account, Mr. Speaker.

(1445)

It's the height of arrogance. No-one in the province of Saskatchewan can trust the government any longer. But unfortunately it's what people have come to expect from this government and the Crown corporations.

People no longer feel the special bond to these companies that they might once have at one time. They no longer feel the Crowns are in place to protect the access to affordable, high-quality service for all Saskatchewan residents. The people feel that the Crowns have become nothing more than taxing authorities for this government. A source of quick cash — quick cash.

Service is secondary to profits for the Crowns. And all Crowns now take this attitude. Should this be the role for our Crowns, Mr. Speaker? I don't think so, and neither do the people of Saskatchewan.

With embarrassments like the Guyana fiasco, the NST debacle, and the Channel Lake deal, which grows murkier and murkier with each passing day, the people are beginning to see the family of Crown corporations as a very dysfunctional family indeed.

It'll take a lot more than dumping the Jack Messers of the world to rehabilitate the image of these Crowns in the eyes of the public. The arrogance that permeates the Crowns stems directly from the arrogance that so personifies the current government.

For this reason, the Crown corporations will be a major focus for the Saskatchewan Party opposition, especially since it's this government's stated goal that Crowns will continue undertaking more foreign adventures even after the Guyana disaster.

In fact just one Crown, SaskTel, has stated it hopes to invest \$200 million of Saskatchewan people's money around the globe over the next five years. Something seems to be wrong here, Mr. Speaker.

I don't think anybody would have a problem with one of these companies doing all the horse-trading they wanted around the world, if they were private companies. And every Guyana deal, every NST fiasco would be simply between the company and its shareholders. But these aren't private companies.

These Crowns do have a responsibility to the people of Saskatchewan, and they are failing that responsibility miserably. As long as they remain Crowns their priorities have got to be here at home to provide services to our own people. That, after all, is what they were set up to do. They weren't set up so the Minister of CIC can play international jet-setter. They weren't set up so that government could wring every last nickel out of the Saskatchewan public. But over the course of the last few years, that's exactly what they've become, Mr. Speaker.

And we don't think that this should be the case; so three of our private members' Bills take this into account. The first will prohibit foreign investments by Crown corporations, period. They either make it here or they don't make it at all.

Another of our private members' Bills is a simple requirement that the Crown corporations be upfront with the people of Saskatchewan. It's a simple requirement that whenever a Crown corporation loses more than \$100,000 on a single transaction, it report that loss to the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations within 60 days. Is this really too much to ask, Mr. Speaker? I don't think so, but I suspect the members opposite might think such openness may be a problem for them. Imagine if they had to actually be honest with the people instead of trying to sweep things like NST and Channel Lake under the carpet.

Finally, a third Bill of ours will create a long-overdue, much-needed utility rate review committee. Saskatchewan is the only jurisdiction in North America that doesn't have a review body like this. The current process is nothing but a farce, a rubber stamp for the cabinet. Well the people deserve better. And we'll try to give it to them. They've suffered through rate hike after rate hike without any effective say. This review panel will give them that say.

Mr. Speaker, the people will no longer stand for Crowns that do as they please. They will not stand for Crowns that lose three-quarters of a million dollars simply by forgetting to send out bills to its customers. And the people will not stand for a government that has mismanaged the Crowns to this extent.

Something has got to change and quickly. And I urge — no I dare — the members opposite to seriously consider these Bills, consider what they're saying.

Mr. Speaker, another major focus of our legislative package will be on health care and returning some of the decision-making ability to the people of Saskatchewan — decision-making that was centralized in the minister's office during the last five years. While we have several health-care-related Bills, Mr. Speaker, one of the most important is one that calls for a top-to-bottom review of the system as it currently stands.

1998 marks the fifth anniversary of the NDP's health care reform policies. Is it unreasonable that after five years we stop and take a look at what's working well and what isn't? This seems to be a reasonable course of action after such massive changes that were introduced in 1993. It's simply meant to build on the current strengths of the system and do something about the weaknesses. So unless the government believes it has something to hide, I can't see why the members opposite would

have any objection to conducting such a review.

Our other Bills will do away with government appointees on health boards and give the health board . . . the boards themselves more authority to spend their budgets on the services they believe essential.

We will also be pushing for the establishment of a health care ombudsman — a sympathetic ear for Saskatchewan residents who are up against the faceless bureaucracy of the Department of Health. And I dare say, Mr. Speaker, we saw an example of that here today in the legislature with the Betaseron and the Copaxone problem, and the fact that people in this province are unable to turn to someone to appeal their decisions. Judging from the calls that continue to come in to our office regarding the health care system, we know this is a service that is badly needed in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this fall marks the end of the road for the Plains Health Centre — a facility that has served the people of southern Saskatchewan so well for so many years.

But this government has decided that their concerns don't matter, and they arrogantly force the Regina District Health Board to close it simply by withholding the necessary funds needed to operate it. I hope, I pray, that the government sees the light and changes its mind between now and this fall. But once again, I don't hold out much hope that they will.

In fact in the throne speech the government makes a blatant reference to Regina's two facilities. Mr. Speaker, the Plains is more than just the third Regina hospital. In fact, it is a Saskatchewan hospital, and one that has grown even more important after the government has closed down so many health care services in rural Saskatchewan.

But will they listen? I seriously doubt it. They are hell-bent on closing the hospital despite what the people think. It's typical of this government's actions for the last seven years, Mr. Speaker. Arrogant to the core.

Mr. Speaker, another issue that has become a prime concern for the people of this province is crime. For over two years now the opposition parties have been raising this matter with the Justice minister and the Premier. And in each of the last two sessions they have scoffed at suggestions that crime — and in particular, youth crime — is a real problem in Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that the government polling must have told them they were dead wrong, because suddenly now in this throne speech the government is saying it is concerned with the problem after all.

Last year there wasn't a single word in the throne speech about crime. Twelve months ago we had a Justice minister stating that crime in our province wasn't really anything to be concerned about. Now we see a section devoted to what the government plans to do about this supposed non-problem.

And, Mr. Speaker, I hope the members opposite are being honest when they say they are now concerned about the problem of worsening crime in Saskatchewan. I hope they mean what they say. But realistically, how can we really believe

them, that they have this new-found commitment, when for the past few years they've refused to even acknowledge a problem exists? I feel the government, reading its polling, has decided to simply pay some lip-service to the issue of crime. I hope I'm wrong, but I fear I'm right.

Mr. Speaker, time does not allow me to get into each and every detail that is of concern to the people of Saskatchewan.

But I want to make a couple final observations before moving an amendment to the government motion. Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last year, or even the last two years, we have heard nothing from the government except how good things are now in Saskatchewan. Over and over again we've heard how, supposedly thanks to their astute management, the province has turned the corner. The pain was worth it we were told; a new day has dawned.

But then the government found it had a real problem on its hands because the people began to believe them. They began to say that with this new day the people should get something in return for their sacrifices of the last seven years. Municipalities began to ask for some of their funding back. Communities began asking for some of their health care services back. School boards began asking that the government now pick up an increased portion of the education bill. And most of all, taxpayers began demanding that they may be allowed to keep a little more of their pay cheques for themselves.

And suddenly the government's tune has changed. Whereas a new day had dawned not too long ago, as soon as the people began to expect a dividend for their years of pain the Premier says, things aren't as good as you think; things aren't as good as we would have had you believe. We aren't rolling in dough. That's the new line from the government. And once again the members opposite will have to forgive the people of Saskatchewan for being more than a little confused.

We have just come through a period when the government has taken in more in taxation than ever before in the history of Saskatchewan. We have just been through a period of record high natural resource output in Saskatchewan. We have just been through a period of low interest rates, which have reduced our debt servicing charges. We continue, we continue to take in over \$130 million in VLT revenues — money that simply wasn't part of the equation six years ago. And yet even after all this the government cries poor. And the people are wondering if after all these positive economic factors that we've seen in the last few years, how come this government just manages to squeak by.

What happens? What happens, Mr. Speaker, when the resource sector weakens, as it is doing now? What happens when the agricultural sector goes through a down phase. What happens when the interest rates begin to rise? It's just a little troubling, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, questions like these need fresh ideas — fresh approaches. They require a government that is at least willing to consider doing things differently, perhaps even doing things that were unheard of a few years ago. Mr. Speaker, the policies of the '70s, '80s, and even the '90s will not be adequate as we move very rapidly towards the 21st century.

And in this throne speech, the government has not given the people of Saskatchewan any sense of a new vision or new ideas to meet the challenges that are coming over the horizon. For that reason I move an amendment to the government motion, Mr. Speaker.

That the following words be added to the end of the motion:

But regret the lack of new vision and direction of the government and calls on the government to change this course through meaningful consultation with Saskatchewan people and through a re-examination of the real priorities of taxpayers; and further, calls on the government to adopt the policies of grass roots voters as reflected in the policies of the Saskatchewan Party.

Motion is seconded by my colleague, the member for Cannington. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(1500)

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I'll ask the hon. members who are engaged in a debate across the floor to cease and desist.

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to enter this debate, this debate this afternoon on behalf of the Liberal opposition and on behalf of the people of North Battleford.

First of all, as the newest member of this Assembly I want to say that, well my first year as MLA has had as many ups and downs as many people with long political careers. I continue to be proud to represent the people of North Battleford. And I continue to believe that to be chosen by one's fellow citizens to speak for them in this Assembly is one of the highest honours which can be bestowed in a democracy.

Mr. Speaker, like many Canadians I enjoyed watching the recent Winter Olympics. I was especially proud to see Fiona Smith of North Battleford playing for the Canadian women's hockey team. I know all members will want to join with me in congratulating our women's hockey team on their success.

While watching the Winter Olympics, I learned a whole new vocabulary from the snowboarding event. And in that vein I want to assure this House that we in the Liberal opposition are like, totally stoped and ready for air this session.

Mr. Speaker, I share the honour of representing the Battlefords in this House with my friend from Battleford-Cut Knife. Recently at the urging of local New Democrats who were concerned that I am heard far more frequently than she, a news release appeared over her name, accusing me of not doing a good job of representing the Battlefords.

The news release puzzled our local media because my name was spelled H-I-L-S-E-N. Certainly the member for Battleford-Cut Knife knows perfectly good and well how to spell my name. I can only assume that some NDP staff person

took it upon herself, or himself, to write the article and put the member's name to it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Highways . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order.

**An Hon. Member:** — Ignorance prevails, Jack.

**Mr. Hillson:** — Yes. Mr. Speaker, the S-E-N ending I understand is Danish; as to my family we're Swedish, so that is indeed a sensitive point.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Highways for meeting with members of the North Battleford City Council and myself to discuss the eastern entrance to our city. There is a convergence of several roads at different angles at our entrance. The situation is confusing even to those of us who live there; for visitors to our city it is dangerous. We have had fatalities there in each of the past two years. We are asking for the Minister of Highways to move Highway 40 so that it enters the Yellowhead outside the city. This would remove some of the congestion and eliminate a very badly configured intersection. We look forward to a positive response from the minister about this project in the near future.

Speaking of bridges, Mr. Speaker, members will recall that the bridge over the North Saskatchewan at Borden was recently twinned. A former councillor of the city of Saskatoon, Morris Cherneskey, suggested that the new bridge be named after World War II hero, Peter Dmytruk, who was raised in the vicinity of the bridge. Mr. Dmytruk is remembered in France as Pierre Le Canadien, where he is credited with saving the village where he worked for the French Résistance. His work in France cost him his life. Unfortunately, although he is remembered as a hero in France, we have nearly forgotten him in Canada.

I thought Morris Cherneskey had an excellent suggestion for naming the bridge in honour of Peter Dmytruk, and I said so. The member for Redberry disagreed, as is his right. However, he went on to say that my coming out in favour of naming the bridge in honour of Peter Dmytruk was aggravating. Mr. Speaker, I find it unfortunate that, while other countries such as our American friends honour their heroes, we do not. Here an MLA can openly say that it is aggravating to suggest that we recognize someone killed in the defence of this country and of freedom. I hope that the member for Redberry will think better of it and retract his statement.

Mr. Speaker, may I offer my congratulations to one of the more talented members of this Assembly, the hon. member for Saskatoon Eastview, who of course last year produced his first album, entitled *Stuff that Works*, and has donated the proceeds from his album and CD (compact disc) to crisis services. I enjoyed the album from the member and I'm looking forward to his Christmas album, which I understand is to be entitled *The Pringle Jingle*. I further understand that the Minister of Crown Investments, not to be outdone, will also soon have out for us his own first album, which is to be entitled *The Channel Lake Cha-Cha*, or *Stuff that Doesn't Work*.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my Liberal colleagues, I want to say that we are proud of the long tradition of our party and of the

contributions it has made to the development of this province and of this nation.

As we read the history of Canada and of Saskatchewan, we see again and again that the Liberal Party has been in the forefront in building a country which is strong and prosperous and just.

The other traditional party in our country is the Conservatives. History tells us that the term "Tory" is an ancient Gaelic word meaning robber. Well, Mr. Speaker, never was it more appropriately applied than here in Saskatchewan. However, what happened was that the people of the province came to realize the full scope of what had been done to them by the former Conservative government, and that party was, of course, in need of a name change.

So now we have what is called the Saskatchewan Party. This is the Tory Party under the witness protection program.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hillson:** — Whether this new party will last long enough to make any mark on our history remains a question. Whether — if it does make its mark — that mark will be any more reputable than that of its predecessor is an even bigger question.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what are some of the issues that the Liberal opposition will be raising during the coming session. I would like to discuss two issues. I'm sure my colleagues and friends will have other pressing issues that they will be discussing in the coming debate.

First of all, as the member for North Battleford, I will be demanding answers as to what went wrong with the province's young offender custody program. Christmas in the Battlefords was shattered by the news that the provincial government has designated the small home of a 58-year-old woman as a custody facility for young offenders. Into that home were placed two youths serving terms for violent offences, one for manslaughter.

Mr. Speaker, not only was Mrs. Montgomery a polio victim, she had received virtually no training, and had little background or no work experience for running a youth custody facility. The preparation and backup she received was woefully and tragically inadequate.

She kept the youths' records and cleaning solvents from her kitchen under lock and key as she had been told. But she had not been told that when operating a custody facility it is important that knives . . .

**The Speaker:** — Why is the hon. member on his feet?

**Mr. Langford:** — I'd like to ask leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Langford:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, we've got the RM (rural municipality) of Buckland in here. They are in for a SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention and they are

going to be meeting with the minister of SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management) and the Justice minister.

In your chambers, Mr. Speaker, is the reeve from the RM of Buckland, Lawrence Viala; and councillor, Wes Stubbs; councillor, Sid Zdrill; and administrator, Lorne Marshall. So everyone please welcome them here.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mrs. Montgomery had not been told that when operating a custody facility, it is imperative to keep knives and other potential weapons under lock and key. Although she was told a youth worker would be available to provide backup on a regular basis, when one youth was sent to her home, it was by way of Mrs. Montgomery herself going to the bus depot to pick up the girl unaided.

The Minister of Social Services claims that Mrs. Montgomery was fully briefed about the girls she was receiving. He has not indicated whether that full briefing included telling her the Crown had opposed the transfer of one of the girls into open custody on the grounds that she was a danger to society.

When I checked the regulations I found that the only regulation under Residential Services Act which makes specific reference to youth custody homes, was not the regulation under which Mrs. Montgomery was registered. There are two regulations. Only one makes reference to youth custody homes. This was not the regulation under which Mrs. Montgomery was licensed. Instead she was registered under apparently the more general regulation for private homes, which include group homes for the elderly and the mentally challenged.

(1515)

I think it is self-evident, Mr. Speaker, that the needs of the mentally handicapped and the requirements for running a custody facility for violent youths are very different. If the Montgomery home had been licensed under the proper regulation there would have been a board of directors. There would have been programs and security regulations in place.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that the regulations under which Mrs. Montgomery was supposedly licensed make no reference to young offenders custody is to me a clear indication that it was not the original intention of the government to use private homes as custody facilities. The fact that the Minister of Social Services never uses the term custody facility, but instead prefers the term community service home, clearly shows that he still doesn't appreciate the difference between a group home for the elderly and mentally challenged, and a resident, and a custody

centre.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Liberal opposition proposed that the Dundurn training centre could be used for open custody. The intention was that with the help of the Corps of Commissionaires, there would be a program which would include education, addictions counselling, work placement, and a form of basic training.

Incredibly, when the Minister of Social Services heard about our proposal he turned it down. He said in a letter that Camp Dundurn did not provide and I quote, "the level of custody which in our assessment was required to meet public safety concerns, and provide the supervision required for youth who may not voluntarily remain at the facility."

Mr. Speaker, sadly I say, this is how crazy and illogical our young offender custody program has gotten. The minister says that the Dundurn training centre doesn't provide sufficient security but apparently private homes, and Helen Montgomery's home in particular, did provide that security and that supervision that he sees as necessary and inadequate at the former army camp at Dundurn.

The minister says that I'm misleading the public when I say that Helen Montgomery's home wasn't properly licensed, but he hasn't produced a copy of the licence. He hasn't told us that the home met square footage requirements for two youths. He hasn't told us what was done about training or security. He hasn't told us why the home didn't have the \$1 million liability insurance that custody homes are supposed to have. The minister will have to take responsibility for this terrible breakdown in government administration.

Mr. Speaker, asking the federal government to change the Young Offenders Act will not do any good if this province continues to arbitrarily designate private homes such as Helen Montgomery's as custody facilities.

I'm very pleased that the minister has now ordered an external review of the community homes program. Initially, he said that he thought an internal, behind-closed-doors review would be good enough. I'm pleased that he's responded to our demands for a more open process.

I do, however, continue to have some concerns. The minister still seems comfortable lumping young offender custody facilities in with homes serving the mentally challenged. The essential point that custody facilities are a separate type of facility with very specialized needs still seems to be lost on the government.

Although the minister says that the Montgomery tragedy led to the review of the community homes, he says the Montgomery home will not be included in the review. The reason given is that there are outstanding criminal charges.

Mr. Speaker, the question of whether Helen Montgomery's home was an appropriate place for violent young offenders to serve their time in custody is quite separate from the question of the guilt or innocence of the youths charged with her murder.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear His Honour say in his



speech that the government is now interested in investing in people. This is a switch from last year when investing in third-world countries was the major preoccupation.

We now know that this government has mismanaged our Crown corporations. While raising utility rates at home, we were losing money on a cable company in Chicago, an electrical company in Guyana, and gas futures contracts in Alberta.

If we want to know what our Crowns are up to, we have to do a search at the Alberta corporations branch or read the *Georgetown Times*.

Mr. Speaker, the fundamental question is: do our Crown corporations exist to provide service to the people of Saskatchewan at reasonable rates? Or do we have the Crown utilities so they can raise money in Saskatchewan from Saskatchewan residents to invest in risky ventures around the world.

Mr. Speaker, there are still many unanswered questions about Channel Lake. I do, however, congratulate the minister for his statement in this House yesterday, in his frank admission that this whole fiasco was mismanaged or not managed at all. He did not once say that it was Ottawa's fault.

Finally, the provincial government has the moral fortitude to stand up and say we lost money through our incompetence and our lack of due diligence. They didn't even try to say that their failure to properly discharge their responsibilities to the people of Saskatchewan was the fault of the federal government.

Last year we were told that Channel Lake was one of the Crown's successes. It was proof the people's investments were being responsibly and sensibly handled. Well, Mr. Speaker, if Channel Lake is one of the success stories, what will the failures look like?

We may yet find out. Two weeks ago the minister said in Meadow Lake that Millar Western was hemorrhaging badly. What did he mean by that?

Mr. Speaker, the Premier recently said the government should not be in business. That's not what the government is meant for or good at.

Well this government is certainly proving the truth of the Premier's statements. Is it asking too much to say that this government should get back to health, to roads, to schools?

A government consumed with foreign investments is a government which has lost interest in its real mission. A plane for the cabinet becomes more important than the Plains Health Centre. A cable company in Chicago becomes more pressing than the buildings at the University of Saskatchewan with their collapsing roofs. Running casinos becomes more important than running schools and hospitals and fixing roads. An electrical company in Guyana becomes more important than keeping electrical rates low for Saskatchewan residents.

In that regard, Mr. Speaker, the former president of SaskPower wrote to me to say that I needn't be concerned with Guyana because all of the profits would be repatriated to Saskatchewan.

Well my question now is: where are all the losses going? We all know that the losses are also, in Mr. Messer's phrase, going to be repatriated to Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan ratepayers and taxpayers.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Premier was critical of the federal government for its spending money on post-secondary education. Unfortunately we know that we in Saskatchewan have the least educated workforce in Canada. We know that we have tremendous numbers of aboriginal youths who will soon be coming of age. They must receive the education and training they need to ensure that they will be able to integrate into the workforce and the economy.

These are challenges we must address for the good of our young people and for the good of our province. In view of the attitude displayed by the Premier in this House yesterday, all I can say is, thank heavens the federal government takes its responsibilities to our students more seriously than does the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province know that their government's priorities are not their own, personal priorities. They want a return to basics. They want a government which believes in providing services to its people. They want a government which believes in this province and its people, whose cabinet ministers are seen more often in North Battleford and Nipawin and Estevan than in Georgetown, Guyana; Santiago, Chile; or Montevideo, Uruguay.

Mr. Speaker, dare we to hope that this government has learned its lesson? Dare we to hope that this province and its people are indeed the new-found priority of the NDP? Dare we to hope that risky foreign adventures in heavily indebted, third-world countries are a thing of the past? Dare we to hope that the NDP will not use fed-bashing to hide its lack of responsible action? Dare we to hope that this chastened government is not only older but wiser?

Mr. Speaker, the appearance of the government members yesterday, looking smug and self-congratulatory despite the revelations of mismanagement we listened to, does not sound encouraging. But I'm pleased to say that I am by nature an optimistic person. Optimism is at the basis of Liberal thought, Mr. Speaker. Optimism is what built this country, this province, and this party, and optimism is what will keep Saskatchewan and the Liberal Party growing and building in the 21st century. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a great pleasure to rise and reply to the Speech from the Throne in this astute Assembly in the greatest province in the best country. And now if we could only move the legislature to my constituency of Swift Current, we could truly say we were in the best spot in the whole world.

I would personally like to welcome all of you to this special place, Swift Current. Pioneers of medicare, pioneers of 911 rural service, smallest city to support not only a western junior hockey franchise but a championship franchise as well. Excellent recreation places. A super place to visit, but even a

superior place to live. Beautiful parks. But most important of all, an innovative, caring, compassionate people.

I would like to welcome back my colleagues from the session last year. But, Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to recognize a few of the members opposite. Oh, perhaps that is because of the change to Tory blue from Liberal red. Somehow it just doesn't seem to suit them. Oh well, Mr. Speaker, bedroom politics, of which the hopeful leader is so tired of, especially in the dead of the night, creates strange bedfellows.

Mr. Speaker, allow me a few minutes to congratulate you on your outreach program. Your commitment to this Assembly and the concepts of democracy are beyond question. And you must be commended on your enthusiasm, dedication, and devotion to not only explaining how our system operates, but also on being a true champion of democracy.

Last year I referred to you as the keeper of the keys of the quorum in this House and the guardian of the recess bell. And you performed these tasks with great wisdom and understanding.

This year I would prefer to recognize your contribution to the fostering of democracy in this great province. If I may phrase your admonition to all the people you address: we must never take democracy for granted. And just as important, we must play an active part. Both elements are so vital.

We must exercise our franchise but exercise it wisely, as the greatest dangers to democracy are ignorance and apathy. Though we are practitioners of democracy in this House, it is the people who will ensure that democracy will prevail.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your dedication and your enthusiasm to this great cause.

But, Mr. Speaker . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wall:** — However, Mr. Speaker, I cannot go so far as the student who described the tricorn hat you wear as the trinity. You may be, you may be virtuous, honest, and sincere, but we in this Assembly know that you are not an angel.

Mr. Speaker, what an inspiring Speech from the Throne. The people spoke to us and we listened. We will place people first and will assist small businesses in creating jobs. We will place people first with our emphasis on health, education, and social services.

Contrast this with the federal Liberals, who will respond to the needs of the people but not until the new millennium. In the meantime, big corporations will continue to eliminate jobs and make absurd profits at the expense of the common person.

Mr. Speaker, on March 1, 1998 the federal Finance minister was defending the Liberal budget on an open-line radio show. He claimed that the new scholarship fund to be instituted in 2000 would create opportunities for all Canadians. What he failed to mention is that Saskatchewan's share of the new venture will be approximately \$10 million a year.

In the meantime, the transfer payments for education have been slashed by 40 to \$50 million each and every year. Then he wonders why the provinces are less than enthusiastic about this plan. We promise to cut you by 40 million. Now we will only cut you by 30 million. Thus we're giving you an additional sum of 10 million — marvellous man.

Mr. Speaker, we often hear the Saskatchewan Party — oops, sorry — Tories, by any other name, decry the medicare system and speak in favour and advocate a two-tier system. They howled incessantly about waiting-lists, poor service, and inadequate funding. They and their Liberal cronies, led by Dr. Gloom and Doom, pray on the misfortunes of the people and paint a gloomy, dark picture of a system which is admired throughout the world and by those who have had to use the system.

Poll after poll have shown of those who have been in the system, 80 to 87 per cent rate the service as good to excellent. That's 80 to 87 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Not too shabby a response. Listening to the Tories and Liberals wail you would think the health system was in utter chaos.

(1530)

Mr. Speaker, as this Assembly knows, medicare was started on a trial basis in south-west Saskatchewan and then expanded to the rest of the province. It was completely funded by the provincial government. Then when the federal government introduced a national medicare program the funding was shared on a 50/50 basis. National standards were established and enforced. Today, thanks to the savage slashes by the Liberals to block transfers, only 13 per cent is financed by the national government.

Now the sad part about this is that now some of the provincial jurisdictions are seriously contemplating opting out of the national program and instituting two-tier or even private insurance. Well this, Mr. Speaker, this may be attractive to some individuals, especially those with deep pockets, but it will never be acceptable to the majority of the people.

Keith Bossaer, an insurance agent from North Battleford, who I'm sure the member from North Battleford has consulted with, recently spent four weeks in Texas. While there he made some inquiries with regards to all types of insurance and one of the things he looked at was health insurance. Here are his findings — I hope the opposition is listening carefully.

A typical family of four could expect to pay premiums anywhere from 300 to \$750 per month with the \$500 deductible and still be responsible for 10 per cent of the cost. The deductibles for major surgery could easily run up to 10,000 or more. He asked the question: where would you rather live? I think it's self-explanatory.

**An Hon. Member:** — No wonder all the people from Texas are moving here.

**Mr. Wall:** — That's right. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, my constituency is in the heart of the former health region no. 1. The pioneers of the south-west recognized the need for a comprehensive medical scheme and, against all odds, organized

and instituted a system which was to be a model, first, for Saskatchewan and then for the nation.

Not only these people but all the people of Saskatchewan know which political party introduced medicare, and they will never forget which party used every conceivable method available to prevent its inception. That was the Liberal party. A shameful legacy.

Mr. Speaker, our medicare system is not perfect. Of course we do not have all the answers, but we do have faith in the people of Saskatchewan. Let me cite an example.

There is a problem across this whole nation of a doctor shortage. This holds true for the Swift Current area. True to the pioneering spirit so evident in this region, a public meeting was organized on Thursday, March 5, to determine how this problem could be addressed. They came, 170 to 200 strong, not to whine and lay blame on either the health board, the doctors, or the government, but to offer suggestions how they — not the doctors alone, not the health board alone and not the government alone but all the people working together cooperatively — could arrive at solutions.

I was very proud to be a part of that meeting, and I know that through their deliberations, wisdom and determination, these people of the south-west will once again become a model for the rest of the country. A special thank you to Dr. Radford, a family physician in Swift Current, and to Drew Lockhart, the CEO of the Swift Current Health District, for organizing this public meeting.

The only negative aspect of this whole evening, Mr. Speaker, was the comment of the member for Moosomin who, posing as the health critic of the Tory Party, hinted that the hospital in Swift Current would close because of the shortage of doctors caused by the underfunding by this provincial government. A deathly silence fell over the whole meeting and nobody — and I mean nobody — believed this statement for one minute.

Mr. Speaker, if this is a listing to the people, grassroots party, the only party . . . part which is valid is the dark underground roots of this unholy alliance spawned in the depths of the night.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, medicare is alive and doing well in Swift Current and in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as stated in the throne speech, our government will be redesigning the social assistance program and creating new programs and opportunities for individuals, children, and families. In July 1988, the Department of Social Services will be introducing Saskatchewan Child Benefit. This benefit will work to reduce barriers to independence and reduce poverty. There will be a basic allowance for all children who qualify and will include supplementary health coverage including drugs, dental, optometric, and others.

Mr. Speaker, another important aspect of the social assistance program will be the Saskatchewan employment supplement. As you know, Mr. Speaker, there are many barriers to work presently built in Saskatchewan's social assistance system. The

new Saskatchewan employment supplement will work to reduce these barriers for children and families and, in effect, will begin tearing down the welfare wall for these families.

As a result of these and other programs, Saskatchewan's social safety net will change significantly over the next few years. Saskatchewan is moving towards a system that provides greater support for educational training and employment opportunities.

These programs will have the long-term impact on improving the health and well-being of Saskatchewan children, reducing cycles of dependence and building a stronger, healthier society.

Mr. Speaker, this government is to be commended for this initiative. Child poverty is a blight in this country. This government tackles the problem head-on. But other governments and political parties believe that tax cuts alone will solve this problem.

Mr. Speaker, here are some startling facts. Between 1989 and 1995, child poverty has grown by approximately 7 per cent in Saskatchewan. And this is a horrible record, but compare this to the tax-free — so-called — oil-rich Tory Alberta where child poverty has risen by 34 per cent and to Harris's Ontario where the rise is an unspeakable 99 per cent.

Yes, this government cares for the children. Yes, it is compassionate for the needs of the young. And yes, we will provide our children with opportunities to learn, to become independent citizens of this great province.

What would the Tories do? Well if they are the same ilk as their Tory cousins in Ontario — and we have no reason to believe otherwise — they would slash funding to these programs, and then they would privatize social assistance programs allowing private companies — especially American companies — to profit in the millions of dollars at the expense of the poorest of the poor.

As we speak, the minister of Ontario is negotiating the privatization of social assistance and profits to the company will exceed \$100,000,000 — a vicious attack on the poorest of the poor.

And what of our Liberal friends? Well they say perhaps it is best that we have no policy because then we can shift in whatever direction the public seems to want to go. The member from Regina Wascana Plains suggested yesterday that the new Tory Party be renamed the Panamanian party. I have another name but we won't mention that one. Given the Liberals' admitted lack of principle, I think they too should change their name to NIP for the new — no, sorry, — no ideology party. They have no ideology.

Liberals and Tories should work with us, help us to overcome this blight in this rich nation of ours. Mr. Speaker, child poverty is not our vision of the future. This is not going to occur in Saskatchewan because the people of Saskatchewan are a caring, compassionate people who truly believe in being their brother's helper.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on economic activity in this province and refer to certain areas in

my constituency. In my constituency it is becoming a problem to obtain qualified workers for all the needs of the system. Although there are many programs in place, there still is a shortage.

In fact, a seminar was held just recently in Swift Current to determine how to attract and train workers to fill these needs. At Urban Recyclers, manufacturers of eggplants, they are working around the clock to keep up to their sales.

Dura Products, who are involved with oil field equipment, has difficulty trying to maintain a reserve of supplies. In fact, they are quite a few months behind. REM, the agricultural manufacturing firm, has expanded to twice its size. Benallack manufacturing, which makes pressurized boilers and oil field pumping equipment, is taxed — pardon the pun — to the limit and exports many of its products to Alberta. He says he will compete with Alberta at any time and he does.

Pratt Motors, a General Motors dealership, opened a brand new service centre, a state of the art. Patterson grain handles millions of bushels of grain this year. Bapco, manufacturers of grain augers, is expanding. The Horseshoe motel is undergoing extensive renovations. The Best Western Inn is doubling its operation. The list goes on. Pemico oil is becoming a major player in the oil patch along with Renaissance.

A great incentive for oil exploration was the creation of a new tier for the medium-heavy crude which is found in this area. Pasta Dura Canada Incorporated recently signed an agreement with Penn Company Construction to design the plant and buildings that are required to house Pasta Dura's milling and pasta manufacturing equipment. Swift Current is the location of two high-throughput grain-handling facilities, and another one is planned.

Mr. Speaker, all this economic activity speaks well for my constituency but also for all of Saskatchewan.

The opposition often whines that the policy of this government discourages economic activity. Well let me cite what the people from Wascana Energy stated to me on an oil field tour. When I asked why they were willing to invest millions in the oil patch, their response was simply this: there is a strong, reliable government in Regina which when it gives their word, they can rely on it. This state keeps their word.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(1545)

**Mr. Wall:** — This is a government that listens to the people, to the business world, and as a result the economic outlook for this province is indeed very bright.

The opposition speaks about all the Crowns. Well, Mr. Speaker, the member from Estevan yesterday spoke very eloquently about the Crowns. Continuing in that vein, we hear a lot of talk from the opposition about privatizing our Crowns. They obviously forget that the majority of the people of this province are adamant that they, through this government, retain ownership of the Crowns. And why wouldn't they?

These Crowns whose rates are very comparative to other provinces are the lowest or second lowest in various categories. But what is so important is that the profits which are about the same, or comparable to privately owned corporations in other provinces, basically remain within the province either as a dividend to the people or used for capital expenditures needed to provide services to Saskatchewan residents in the future. The profits do not flow out to — as the Premier often states — New York, London, or Zürich.

Mr. Speaker, in simple language so that there can be no doubt, I would like to say a few words about how the dividends and the taxation works with regards to the Crown corporations.

The Crown corporations pay about half of their profits to the Crown Investments Corporation, which we of course call CIC, as a dividend. This represents a normal rate of return on the money that CIC has invested on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan and these Crown corporations.

CIC uses this money to continue to fund the remaining costs of the Devine Tory megaproject investments. This drain of money has been slowly but steadily declining as a result of the negotiations of many of these deals.

The remainder of the Crown dividends is turned over to the governments to help pay for health, education, and highways. And it is only reasonable that we receive some of that return.

Mr. Speaker, why would we privatize the Crowns? The Tories and Liberals would privatize the Crowns so that their cronies in the big corporations would reap the profits from these Crowns and siphon them off to Zürich, London, New York, and not a penny stays in this province.

We say no to this privatization and will oppose any and all attempts to privatize them. Much criticism has been heard recently from the Tories and the Liberals regarding foreign investments by the Crowns. Well the net result is that our Crowns, unless they invest in foreign investments, will see a steady decline in revenues from its Saskatchewan home base.

Is this why the Tories and the Liberals scream loudly about foreign investments? Do they wish the Crowns to become such a liability that the people will insist on privatization? No, they wouldn't have that type of a plan. I'm sure they wouldn't.

Only one question we have. Why is it a good investment for the individual to take his hard-earned dollars and through a mutual fund invest in foreign businesses, while it is a bad investment for Crowns to do the same thing? Crown corporations have to expand.

**An Hon. Member:** — Because you lose money.

**Mr. Wall:** — If the Crowns were to listen to the terrible Tories and the limping Liberals, we would only be hastening the financial crisis of the Crowns.

It is true as the member opposite mentions, that some of the Crown ventures have lost money. It's also a fact that some of the Crowns have been very active in foreign investment. There have been successes and a few failures, but overall these

ventures have returned over \$100 million net in profit to the people of this province — not to the money barons of Zürich, London, and New York.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wall:** — This is one of the reasons why we will not . . . why we must invest in foreign investments.

Where were the Tories, the Liberals, when these success stories occurred? Hiding their heads in the sand as they refused to acknowledge the good things of this province. The Crowns must invest, and though there are no ironclad guarantees of success — in fact some may flop — we must give the Crowns the resources they need to invest in foreign ventures.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is a province that relies heavily on trade. Because of this, it is absolutely essential that a solid transportation system is in place. Saskatchewan has a network of roads, which you've heard so many times will encircle the equator four and a half times.

We also used to have a fairly extensive railroad network to carry our profits to market. But now thanks to the elimination of the Crow rate, the deregulation of railway rates, and the abandonment of rail lines — all thanks to the protector of large corporations, the federal Liberals — a tremendous stress has been placed on our transportation system.

This government recognized this problem and announced in the 1997 budget — this information is for the Liberal and Tory members who seem to have forgotten this minor policy — that we would invest \$2.5 billion over the next 10 years for highways, 2.5 billion, an average of \$250 million a year for the next 10 years. Not enough by the Tories. Not enough by the Liberals. Negotiate with our federal cousins. They have a highway policy. Well, Mr. Speaker, to give credit where credit is due, yes, they do have a highway policy. The problem is that is not national, not by any stretch of the imagination.

As we all know the recent federal budget held not one thin dime for the national highways in western Canada. Saskatchewan's federal minister warned us not to count on any cash from Ottawa to help twin the Trans-Canada, forgetting, as do its provincial Liberal brothers, that we also have plans to twin the Yellowhead from Battleford to Lloydminster. Fighting for our interest, as always, is our minister in charge of rail line abandonment and highway attrition.

We in Saskatchewan can rightly complain that there appears to be federal money for the New Brunswick portion of the Trans-Canada — 32 million given by Minister Young. So "Chairman Young's Maritime Road Development Corporation" can build and then charge a toll on the section of the highway. The Liberals also need to explain why 98 per cent — about 500 million — is spent in eastern Canada.

Twinning the No. 1 Highway is high priority in my constituency and this government has committed that the Trans-Canada will be twinned probably without help from Ottawa. The Yellowhead will be twinned without the help from the member for North Battleford. Planning for both projects is well underway and they will be completed in due course. They

will be completed on time, within budget, with no deletion of other necessary programs nor serious deterioration or distortion of the highway building economy.

Mr. Speaker, a warm welcome to the present for the Liberals. In their petition, they are urging what is already happening, and true of course, they are defending their federal cousins.

Mr. Speaker, I have touched on a few points with regards to the Speech from the Throne. Other members more eloquent than I will talk on other issues. I want to close, Mr. Speaker, by reaffirming something that I said last year during the debate. I am proud to be a politician. I am honoured to be a public participant in our democratic process which is as Churchill said — and, Mr. Speaker, you'll realize this — the worse system of government in the world except for all the other kinds.

I am more than willing to put my beliefs, my principles, and my party's policies up for public scrutiny in this or any other forum. We are human, yes. We make mistakes, certainly. And some of us fall pretty far from grace. And when we betray the public trust the response must be swift and severe. But I reject the idea that there is a disease which we contract at the drop of the writ.

However, Mr. Speaker, I also recognize why the people of Saskatchewan would have more cynicism toward a politician as a result of the back-room politics which occurred during the last year. However, I have great trust in this government and greater faith in the people of Saskatchewan, and I am proud to show my support to this government's Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, I would be proud to show my support to this government's throne speech. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Murray:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleague from Swift Current has certainly given us a very animated speech and this will be a very tough act for me to follow.

Well I am so pleased to be here, Mr. Speaker, and it's been my pleasure to be here for a fair number of years now and the magic is still there. It's still very exciting when I stand up. It's an honour to stand in this Chamber and represent the people of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley; it's an honour to be able to participate in this debate; it's an honour to be among such fine colleagues and be part of this parliamentary process that we all cherish.

I want to welcome you back to the Chair, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to see you there. I know you will conduct this House with a fair and just hand as you have in the past. And I know you are ever mindful of the traditions of parliamentary democracy. Yours is an honoured position.

I also want to congratulate you, as other members have before me, on the work you are doing with young people in this province. Now I have been privileged on two occasions to participate in your outreach programs — one in Lumsden when you visited the school there and one right here in this Chamber with MacNeill School. And I must say I was very impressed

and entertained, as I know the students were and the teachers as well. So I really want to commend you on your efforts to bring the work of the Legislative Assembly to the young people of Saskatchewan. Congratulations.

I also want to extend a warm welcome to the young men and women who are our pages this session. We appreciate you and your work. You are invaluable, not just to us as members but to the smooth functioning of this House.

I also want to welcome the Clerks at the Table and the Sergeant-at-Arms, as well as the commissionaires.

Now before I begin my brief remarks, I think thanks and congratulations are due to the mover of the throne speech, the member from Regina Wascana Plains, my former seat mate and special friend. What a terrific speech — wise words. She spoke of the challenges and the triumphs of the past, and she gave us words of hope and words of action for the future. Good words, easy to listen to, spoken with warmth and passion and humour.

And also to the member from Estevan, who seconded the motion, my current seat mate and good friend. A wonderful speech and a tough act to follow. Fine, inspiring words from both of you and my thanks and my congratulations.

Well as is traditional, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about my constituency and my constituents. I thank them particularly for staying in touch with me as well as they do. Now we do this through personal visits, mail, fax, phone, and even by e-mail, Mr. Speaker. They're sharing their views and I always appreciate that when they do, as I know all of us in this Chamber do.

I thank them also for their welcome when I stop by to visit them in their homes or their businesses. And I certainly appreciate their honesty.

Regina Qu'Appelle Valley is a very diverse constituency. Physically, it's very beautiful, encompassing, as it does, the north-west part of Regina and rural areas to the north, the west, and the east. The community of Lumsden to the north is situated in the gorgeous Qu'Appelle Valley. And Grand Coulee, located to the west, is located on the prairie — the prairie which is so well described by W. O. Mitchell, who recently died, in his book *Who Has Seen The Wind* when he says:

Here was the least common denominator of nature. The skeleton requirement simply of land and sky, Saskatchewan prairie.

And that's where Grand Coulee sits — right on the prairie. Many families make their living on that prairie, Mr. Speaker. They grow a variety of crops: oats, wheat, barley; they grow grain. They raise cattle, hogs, and horses. And right in the valley they grow a bountiful harvest of fruits and vegetables in their market gardens.

The constituency is growing, Mr. Speaker. Contractors are building new homes and businesses. We welcome new families every week and we regularly send out letters of congratulations to people beginning new businesses. And the businesses in our constituency are many and varied, from a small corner store to

the large Co-op in the Sherwood Village Mall; from restaurants offering a variety of cuisine to franchise operations. There are clothing stores and drug stores, hardware stores and gas stations, financial institutions, and a call centre. We have an active professional community — physicians, optometrists, therapists, chiropractors, lawyers, and dentists.

(1600)

And schools, Mr. Speaker, such great schools. We have 10 of them in our constituency. And they're all involved in many worthwhile activities — from environmental projects like Clean Cat, to safety programs involving safe riding, safe walking. They take part in fund-raisers and this year Winston Knoll raised money to adopt a family at Christmas time. They have competitions to gather food for the food bank and they often sponsor citizenship courts.

So I congratulate all of them, the teachers, the staff, and their students, on their programs and their involvement with their communities and their commitment to excellence in education.

Regina Qu'Appelle Valley has a vibrant cultural community, Mr. Speaker. We have nationally recognized writers, painters, sculptors, potters, and other artists, and they add much to the quality of our life here.

Now if you want to swim or play hockey, bowl, curl or play pool, you can do all that in our constituency too. You can walk or cycle in several parks, both large and small; and when the weather warms up a little, you can play golf at either of two very fine courses. All in all, a very fine constituency, Mr. Speaker. And as I said, one I'm very proud to represent.

Now the Speech from the Throne talks about investing in people. And it talks about how we are planning to do that. Members before me on this side of the House have spoken about investing in jobs, education and training, health care, and transportation, and about investing in families. Investing in families, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to quote from the throne speech:

My government will make it a priority this year to address issues that affect Saskatchewan families and especially Saskatchewan children.

And especially Saskatchewan children, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say a few words about social assistance redesign and the wonderful work that has been ongoing, that is being done in this province, and how that work will benefit Saskatchewan children.

Now everywhere I go, people have an opinion on welfare. Whether I'm visiting a coffee shop in Lumsden or watching a hockey game in Regina or visiting people in their homes or businesses, people often talk about welfare. And in Saskatchewan, social assistance — commonly referred to as welfare — is provided to families and individuals under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan. This is a program of last resort.

Benefits under the plan are provided to families and individuals who for various reasons, including disability, illness, low income, or unemployment, cannot meet basic living costs. They just can't pay the rent or provide nutritious meals for

themselves or their families.

Well we all know and recognize that our current welfare system is not perfect. It was designed in the 1960s and has fallen behind changes in the labour force. There are also parts of the current system which can in fact discourage people from working or pursuing independence. Changes need to be made.

As you may know, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is redesigning social assistance in the province and creating new programs and opportunities for individuals, children, and for families. As a society, we need to provide supports that help people become independent. We need to build opportunities instead of dependants. We need to help families move into and stay in the workforce. We need to change our system so that people are encouraged to work and are rewarded for their efforts.

We need also to actively address child and family poverty. And I am so proud, Mr. Speaker, so proud that Saskatchewan, through the leadership of our Premier, has played a major role. Our Premier has been most eloquent on social programs, on maintaining social programs at the national level, and our current Minister of Social Services, who continuously works with groups and agencies and the Department of Social Services towards these positive changes.

And I also want to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, the work of our former minister of Social Services in this area as well. This work, Mr. Speaker, has resulted in the first new social program in Canada in 30 years — 30 years, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Murray:** — I am talking about the National Child Benefit, an important element in a national strategy to combat child poverty. And Saskatchewan was there, Mr. Speaker, playing a leadership role.

Saskatchewan initiatives as part of the National Child Benefit will start in July. And let me just tell you briefly about three of those initiatives. The Saskatchewan Child Benefit will be a monthly allowance that will assist low income families with the cost of raising children. It will help parents remain in the workforce rather than falling onto social assistance because of their children's needs. Through this benefit we are building a strong, healthy society — a strong future, because we are investing in our children today.

Let me also say a few words about the family health benefits, also part of the social service redesign. We all know that healthy early childhood development has a long-term impact on a healthy, productive society. We have heard of the work of Dr. Fraser Mustard, and many of us are familiar with the work of the Perry preschool studies.

Children who are raised in a supportive environment with adequate housing and nutritious food, have a far, far better chance of developing into happy, productive members of society.

The family health benefits will help to improve the health of children in lower income families. The program will provide supplementary health benefits to those families to ensure that

they do not fall onto social assistance because of the health needs of their children. This program will help families on social assistance enter the workforce without losing child benefits. Again, Mr. Speaker, we are investing in our children today for a healthy future tomorrow.

May I just mention one more new initiative, Mr. Speaker. This is the Saskatchewan employment supplement. This supplement will prop up the wages and child maintenance payments of lower income parents. This means that families will be better off working than they would be on social assistance. This supplement will help parents with the child-related costs of going to work, and will support their decision to work. It will prevent parents in low income jobs from falling onto social assistance as a result of a family or household crisis. Again we are working to make the right choice for families.

Mr. Speaker, over time these new initiatives, these new programs are expected to reduce the number of people on social assistance and increase the number of families who are working themselves — who are supporting themselves, I'm sorry — through work. This will have a long-term impact on improving the health and well-being of Saskatchewan's children, reducing cycles of dependence and building a stronger, healthier society for the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there have been some, I think, defining moments for this government: getting our financial house in order and balancing the first budget; the amendments to the Human Rights Code; the victims of domestic violence legislation; and I think that this social services redesign will be another defining moment for this government, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Murray:** — Now, Mr. Speaker, before I close and since we have just recognized and celebrated International Women's Day, may I say a few words about the achievements of women in memory of a very dear and cherished friend who died nearly two years ago of cancer. I'm talking about Hannelore Frombach, and you will remember I spoke about her two years ago.

Hannelore had an enormous impact on my life. She was warm and friendly, energetic, highly intelligent, willing to try anything and so much fun. She adored her family and managed to show that every day even while she was studying for her masters degree in psychology and even while she was working full time outside the home. She believed so strongly in the ability of women to do anything they set their hearts on.

She is the woman I think of on International Women's Day. It is through her that I recognize and applaud the many efforts of women throughout history who have worked to attain justice and equality for themselves and their families.

Today as we commemorate the struggles of women all over the world and celebrate their accomplishments, we must also re-examine our directions and re-energize our efforts as we continue to work towards economic, social, and political equality for women. As a member of this government, I'm proud to be part of the ongoing process to achieve these goals.

Mr. Speaker, I have been so pleased to be able to take part in this debate, the debate on the Speech from the Throne. And before I sit down, I would like to read one more quote from the speech itself:

Our province is . . . strong as we look forward into the year to come . . .

We are a young and growing province, vigorous and poised to take our place as a leader of our country and an example to the world that there is strength in community . . .

As we chart our course into Saskatchewan's future, we must recognize that our landscapes change, and we cannot steer by even our most sturdy landmarks.

We must instead steer by the bright shining stars that have always been our truest guide: Our unvarying common values of compassion, common sense and community.

It is with great pride, Mr. Speaker, that I support the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Pringle:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise again this year to make my comments with regard to the Speech from the Throne; and how quickly a year passes. And, Mr. Speaker, we're a year older. I think we're a year further down the positive track; we're a year wiser.

And you look pretty good, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I know that you're not going to say that I'm engaging in a conversation when I'm complimenting you, but I really wanted to echo the comments of my colleagues, to say that I very much appreciated — as did the Hugh Cairns School — when you came out to spend some time with us.

As a matter of fact, they are still talking about that visit. And it was a very informative, as you recall, a very interested young group. You were very entertaining; you really left your mark there. So we appreciate that very much.

(1615)

I will echo the comments from the members as well, especially the member from Swift Current when he talked about your strong desire to promote democratic institutions and how precious you view that; so we appreciate that.

I want to also say hello to the constituents of Saskatoon Eastview. This is my 10th year here, and I'm very honoured to have represented the constituents of Saskatoon Eastview for that period of time. It's been a real pleasure. And also to say I know lots of seniors watch this program, and I had the pleasure over the last month of going into most of the senior centres, not only in Eastview but in Saskatoon, to do a number of songs and have some sing-alongs, in terms of kind of the MLA report, and they weren't very interested in the MLA report, they just wanted to sing. They had a great time and sold quite a few of our CDs and cassettes for crisis services, which I greatly appreciate.

So we had a great time, and as I say we talked a lot about very serious issues as well that people have. The issues that have been raised regarding the importance of jobs, or good economic activity, a strong health care system, investment in our young people regarding education, and of course the importance of continuing that balanced approach of tax reduction and money towards the Tory debt, which is still a legacy that people haven't forgotten about, is very much appreciated — the balanced approach that we're involved in.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank those in not only Saskatoon Eastview but in Saskatoon and area, that came out to a public meeting that I sponsored last night, and the Minister of Health was there, and I want to thank the people who stepped forth and raised some of the issues they did with their frankness and their passion and also their understanding that we're, I think, moving in the right direction; and the Minister of Health was very attentive and I think very responsive and in many cases reassuring. So it was a good public meeting. It was a very cool evening. I think we had about 70 people who came out, and I was very appreciative of that, and we had a great dialogue.

Mr. Speaker, as other members have alluded to, this is a very tough world in many ways. Certainly we are looking at global world changes. We're looking at these changes that impact on everyone. It is kind of cliché to say this perhaps, but global changes really do impact all of us and I think that many people are beginning to see it in a way that they haven't appreciated in the past. And in all of that, there's a fair amount of anxiety and uncertainty. I know that a lot of uncertainty and anxiety around the MAI (multilateral agreement on investment) and other global kinds of rearrangements that people see occurring before them . . .

Certainly I think there is also a sense of opportunity and certainly a sense of hope about some of the possibilities, and that's as it should be. And Saskatchewan people have a good feeling, a good reason to be hopeful about lots of the global changes, in that we certainly have the opportunity to increasingly market our products, which we are doing with great success as we come to understand other parts of the world and make the links that are important there. We obviously have lots of products that are needed around the world and our trade numbers are very impressive.

We also, of course, have lots of knowledge and expertise and skill, that is Saskatchewan people, to export. And I think our values of caring and compassion and our sense of community and our sense of co-op development is very much appreciated around the world.

So I think that from a Saskatchewan perspective, as we did in the Olympics, as every member in this House was proud to see that little Saskatchewan flag waving with the Canadian flag, it certainly is the kind of influence I think, that we can have on the world scene generally, and are having generally.

And just a few examples as to how we influence our world developments. We've had, as you know, legislators from South Africa here studying here and we've had people go over there as their democracy unfolds and I think that they are very appreciative of this model of parliamentary democracy. And I believe we've got a responsibility to work together and make



those kinds of contributions where we can.

We also know that in Taiwan they're very interested. Of all the models of health care they've looked at worldwide, they're very interested in the Saskatchewan model. And of course they recently invited the Minister of Health and officials to go and provide some information on what we are doing. Now they value that very much.

I know that bothers the opposition, to hear that health care is successful. It bothers them to hear good news and it bothers them to hear that somebody else is drawing and learning from our experiences. We are the pioneers in medicare and we have a responsibility to share that information to those who are developing their systems — and we can learn from them too. You always learn something from somebody else.

But my point being is that others are interested in the good things we're doing in health care.

We have people around from this province visiting countries right now in terms of our experience, fifty years or so of co-op development, our way of cooperating. And that's the expertise that we can provide, and we have some good models here. I know everyone in the House would agree with that. And the co-op movement is one of our three major engines of the economy, been very successful.

And so the throne speech, I think, builds on the kind of background as I've tried to sort of outline here. It basically yet speaks to or is an example or reflective of . . . or the United Nations says that this is about the best place in the world to live. That doesn't mean that we don't have some challenges and problems. Well for men it's about the best place to live; for women it's about the seventh best place. So we got work to do on that front and we recognize that.

I want to join with my colleague in thanking the mover, our colleague from Regina Wascana Plains, and the seconder, our colleague from Estevan. My home town is Carnduff, so we're kind of the south-east connection there, and along with the member from Souris Cannington, and I want to thank him for the positive contribution that he's made not only in his speech but since he's been a member of this Legislative Assembly. And I might say it's a refreshing kind of perspective to come out of Estevan. So it's great to have him here. Now Estevan has always been great — I'm talking about members.

Mr. Speaker, the theme of the throne speech, "Building on our Common Values", I think is very timely because that's what is the strength of Saskatchewan people — our common values — and as we look to a new millennium it even makes it more relevant, it seems to me, to kind of reaffirm what's important in Saskatchewan, in Canada, in terms of the values that have served Saskatchewan people so well.

I don't share the doom and gloom that I heard from the member from Canora and the member from North Battleford about Saskatchewan or about our future. I think Saskatchewan's a pretty good place to be, and it's interesting that one of the leaders for the Saskatchewan Party is talking about Saskatchewan being a place to be rather than to be from. Well if he has any hopes of becoming a leader of the new Conservative

Party, he's going to have to start getting his facts right because people are coming into Saskatchewan — they're not leaving any more.

I know that they were leaving in droves in the 1980s and most people still think they're leaving. They're now coming back. You can't get a hotel room, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you can't get a hotel room in Swift Current or Lloydminster or Meadow Lake or Estevan or Carnduff or Moosomin or Kindersley or Nipawin because things are booming across the province. You can't get a hotel room there, Mr. Speaker; so people are coming back and things are booming.

So it's not doom and gloom — it's not doom and gloom. Saskatchewan people, this party's going to have to be in step with Saskatchewan people. Saskatchewan people are optimistic, they're hopeful, they're creative, they're innovative, and that's not where this party of the 1940s is from. This is nothing more than the recycling of the 1940s party, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's our responsibility, I would submit, as members of the Legislative Assembly, to be hopeful and optimistic rather than to promote doom and gloom.

Mr. Speaker, we have the Leader of the Opposition speaking today, and the Leader of the Opposition is saying . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order, order. Now the Chair is having some difficulty being able to hear the words by the hon. member from Saskatoon Eastview. I recognize that there are other hon. members calling back and forth in the Assembly, members who have not yet put their remarks on the record. I'm sure that they'll want to do that at the appropriate time rather depriving us all from having them on the record right now. And we'll allow the hon. member from Saskatoon Eastview to be heard in the throne speech debate.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Mr. Speaker, when you start talking about the 1980s . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order.

**Mr. Pringle:** — I don't like talking about the 1980s either because they're very painful for all of us. When you start talking about the 1980s, the old new Conservative Party, they start getting defensive and interrupting and instead of getting up themselves . . . They had lots of time to get up themselves.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition was talking today about his doom and gloom message. And he's talking about the tax base shrinking in Saskatchewan. He's fundamentally, absolutely wrong about that. The tax base in Saskatchewan is growing because there are more people working today than ever in the history of our province. So the tax base is growing, not shrinking. He's absolutely wrong about that.

He talks about more people leaving than ever, the province. That's absolutely wrong, it's not true. For 13 quarters in a row we've had a net increase in population. That was the '80s when people were leaving. People are now coming back and they haven't picked that up yet.

He talks about . . . he worries about where we're going to get the revenues. Well we worry about that too. Well we're going to continue to get the revenues from good economic development and the expanded tax base. He should have been worrying, he and his colleagues, he and his Tory colleagues should have been worrying in the 1980s, when they racked up a \$15 billion debt, as to where the revenue was going to come from.

Now we're starting to pay that down, we're starting to pay that down . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, they're not too concerned about the details. But the thing is, 18 or so per cent of our revenue goes toward the Tory debt. Now this is the same crew that racked up the debt. Some of the same individuals are there. They can't escape that by changing their name.

This is the same crew. Imagine what we could do with 750 . . . \$757 million interest? Imagine what we could do with \$757 million on their interest payment that we don't have to work with. And that leader has the nerve to say where are we going to get the revenue from.

Well they should have thought about that a long time ago, Mr. Speaker, but we're going to do it anyway in spite of their doom and gloom. So they can't walk away from the debt. And Saskatchewan people are not going to be fooled by that change of name — it's the same old crew.

Mr. Speaker, they say the priorities are wrong. The Leader of the Opposition said that today. I want to know . . . I've been into all my senior centres, I had my public meeting last night, I met with my constituents at coffee row. I want to know how building on your common values of Saskatchewan people has the wrong priority.

I want to know from them, if they stand up, how investing in families — investing in children and young people and families and strengthening communities — I want to know how investing in jobs and education and training, how investing in health care and transportation within a fiscal system that's affordable, is the wrong priorities for Saskatchewan people.

Those are the priorities that Saskatchewan people feel very profound about. Those reflect the Saskatchewan priorities. And they say we have the wrong priorities. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know what their priorities are; where have they been? There's no question that the Prime Minister does not have the priorities that were reflected at the public meeting we had last night, because the Prime Minister of Canada — and I understand the Minister of Health doesn't even agree with him, Mr. Rock — the Prime Minister of Canada says there is no money in the federal budget because medicare in Canada is all right, it's okay, it's healthy.

And the provincial Liberals are saying that too. They're out of step with Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. My constituents do not agree with the Prime Minister that he can get off the hook by not putting more money into health care because it's healthy.

Health care in Saskatchewan is only healthy because we have put back every cent that the federal Liberals have cut and we've added about 107 million new dollars in the last two years. To

the degree that health care is healthy in this province, which I would submit is in the most healthy state in Canada, is healthy because of the money that we have replaced with the federal cuts and put new money in — 40 million last year, 57 million this year. Now that's the priorities that were reflected at the public meeting that I had last night.

(1630)

So how the Saskatchewan Liberal leader can say that he's standing up for Saskatchewan baffles me, Mr. Speaker. Now we don't expect the old, new Tory party . . . At least they're honest. At least they are honest. The Liberals say one thing when they are in opposition and then they do something different. And that's a matter of public record historically in Canada.

At least the Tories are honest. They believe in privatized medicine. They believe in profit medicine, for-profit medicine, medicare, and they believe in two-tier medicine. At least they're honest about that and I respect that. They're honest about that and I respect that. I respect that.

Saskatchewan people, I don't think . . . Also, as the Liberal leader says, he's going to fire all the elected health boards. I've talked to some people about that. They don't want the elected health boards fired. Who is he going to replace them with? The Liberal leader of Saskatchewan says he would replace the elected health boards — whom he'll fire if he ever had a chance, which he won't — that he's going to replace them with those who know best about health care.

And I think a lot of Saskatchewan people, his doctor friends perhaps, a lot of Saskatchewan people feel that is somewhat offensive. Because that's the approach we've used in education. That's the approach we're using with the REDAs (regional economic development authority). The local people who are close to their communities, who are part of their communities, know best what decisions reflect the best interests of their communities.

And that's the philosophy behind the elected health boards. And the Liberal leader wants to fire them, and I don't think he's going to have the chance. And that's one of the reasons he won't have a chance.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am proud of these six priorities as reflected in the throne speech. And I know that the budget, which is coming down shortly, will also reflect these priorities. But I don't agree with the opposition to say that these are the wrong priorities. I think these priorities are right on target, Mr. Speaker.

And the reason that they are is . . . Let's take a look at that. What makes people feel secure? Well people feel secure if they've got a job with an adequate salary, not a poverty-level salary that those people want. They always oppose a minimum wage increase. They always oppose any increases to social assistance rates. So they're not too concerned about that.

But what makes people secure is a good job with some meaningful work with adequate salaries and benefits. They fought the part-time benefits for part-time employees. They fought every progressive labour-related agenda item ever. And

that hasn't changed in a 100 years but they're fighting that today.

People feel secure if they've got good housing; if they've got some educational opportunities and a chance to participate meaningfully in the economy. They feel secure if they've got a good health care system.

Those are the kind of things. They feel secure if they're in support of communities and they're safe and either with compassionate friends. Strong families, strong communities, that's what makes people feel secure.

Now how you can say that a throne speech that focuses on . . . you could say we're going in the wrong direction or we need to improve here or there, but how you can say that the priorities are wrong when you're investing in jobs and families and communities, in health care and education and transportation, and live within your means; how you can say those are all the wrong priorities baffles me.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the point, investing in families, I want to, I want to commend my colleagues and Saskatchewan people, because basically we worked very hard with Saskatchewan communities and leaders and justice groups and so on to try and develop, to sort of redesign the social assistance system in a way that will be . . . profoundly impact in a positive way the standard of living. This is a longer-term process but there's some immediate things that will . . . there in the throne speech will have a medium impact but will profoundly impact in a positive way the standard of living of low income people.

The National Child Benefit which has been referred to — I won't go into that because it's been treated very thoroughly here today — but this is going to have a big impact on not only lifting people off social assistance but preventing those people from following down into that trap.

Also the employment support program will be revolutionary in Canada in terms of its features which will be enhancing, valuing, and supportive to low-income people rather than, sort of, kind of some of the negative implications or negative connotations to some of the social assistance programs that are now designed.

The supplementary health care benefits. We know that the low-income working poor worry because they don't have coverage for some of the benefits. There'll be some announcements around that.

The money related to your family needs in terms of your training opportunities is a program that's working well.

The 911 that was mentioned. And the changes to the Young Offenders Act, I think, will be changes that we can engage in some programmatic changes. This is federal legislation — which we need to remember.

I want to remind my good friend from Rosthern, whom I've got a lot of respect for, I've got a lot of respect for my colleague from Rosthern. Well I want to remind him — and I'm not sure that if he knows this — that in 1984 when we were moving from the Juvenile Delinquents Act to the Young Offenders Act,

I was at the public meetings. I remember this well. There were many people saying that the Young Offenders Act . . . the major flaw in the Young Offenders Act was that it obligated provinces. It demanded. It had in legislation that provinces had to develop jails for kids. That's a matter of public record; that is true.

It obligated provinces to do that, and it left optional the whole notion of developing community alternatives and other kinds of support programs. So provinces were required to build jails for kids, but the other services and approaches that actually worked were left optional.

Now we're talking about a Conservative government in Ottawa and one in Saskatchewan, and several Conservative governments in Canada. That Bill is a Conservative Bill. To the extent that that Bill was the wrong . . . It's got many good elements, but the extent that it didn't obligate the provinces to develop community alternatives was a Tory decision, federally, provincially. And social justice/corrections people were saying at the time that this won't work. And it won't work because provinces will build the jails and they won't develop those other services.

So what happened in Saskatchewan under the previous administration? — Mr. Devine's administration? I'll tell you what happened. We upgraded Kilburn Hall in Saskatoon and we doubled the size. We added more spaces to the North Battleford detention centre. We doubled Paul Dojack and upgraded it.

In other words, we expanded the size of the jails and did nothing else. Well okay, the Young Offenders Act was implemented in 19 . . . took effect in 1985. By 1986 all those new jails were full.

So what did the government of the day do? Well we got to build some more jails. And they opened in 1987 the North Battleford youth centre. By 1988 it was full. And they still didn't know what was going on here.

So my point being, 1991-92, we started to look at some alternative measures because all the jails were full, and that's the wrong approach. The system did not have the ability to discriminate between young people who are involved in violent, serious crimes, and those with petty theft and so on. They were all thrown in together.

Quebec was the only province — and I credit Quebec — Quebec was the only province, and this is a matter of public record, Quebec is the only province in Canada — most of the other provinces were Tory — that actually took a different approach and put services into the community and developed alternative measures to jail. Today we see that Quebec has the lowest rate of incarceration of young people in Canada because that's what works. That doesn't mean that young people weren't held accountable, but families were also supportive.

It took us to about 1989-90 to even get the previous administration to admit that poverty existed. And that's on public record in *Hansard*. As late as 1989 the minister of the families was saying that there was no poverty in Saskatchewan. The province of Quebec proved that the alternative approach in joint effort with the . . . Obviously the closed testing facilities

was the approach to use.

We've only started doing that over the last few years. The reason I mention this is to remind my friend from Rosthern that your approach which was lock more young people up and throw away the key was what you said in '84-85, and that's what you're saying today. That's what you're saying today. And that didn't work then and it won't work tomorrow.

The other thing is this is where in the social policy field we see mistakes that are made in one year show up 10 years later — 10 years later. It's obvious that the member from Saltcoats doesn't understand that. Human service mistakes made today take 7 to 10 years to correct, to show . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I hope that the member from Rosthern, Mr. Speaker, will have the courage to get up and talk about his vision, his view of why the Young Offenders Act hasn't worked. I have the right to share mine.

My view is it hasn't worked because the 1980 Tories federally and provincially built jails and did nothing else. And they all filled and they built another one; they filled, they built another one. That's all they did. And that was a miserable failure. So I wanted to set the record straight on that.

What young people need, Mr. Speaker, what I would submit, what young people need is the kind of supports that are reflected in the priorities in this throne speech. They need to live in safe, secure families and supportive communities and sort out the problems in the communities, and not lock them up and throw away the key.

Mr. Speaker, the action plan for children . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order, order. Now we're having hon. members shouting at one another from opposite sides of the Assembly, and I'll ask all hon. members to reserve their remarks and put them on the record and allow the hon. member for Eastview to continue with his debate.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, the priorities as reflected in the throne speech and the action plan for children are part of this in terms of the investing in families. Now again, I know . . . I've yet to hear one opposition member say ever that there is anything good in the action plan for children. I've yet to hear that.

Yet this approach is not perfect but this approach is an innovative approach in Canada, in North America. And it won an award last year as one of the most innovative initiatives to build and strengthen families and communities in all of North America not just Canada, because the Child Welfare League of America was the organization that supported the award.

And again in that action plan for children, and the reason it's . . . the reason it got the award and the reason it's supported is that it is an integrated approach between government departments and working with the community on prevention, on trying to look at issues holistically.

The issue of poverty for example, just to take one example. It's not just the responsibility of the Minister of Social Services. It's

the responsibility of the Minister of Economic Development, the Minister of Agriculture and Food, the Minister of Finance, the minister for Municipal Government, the minister of housing, the Women's Secretariat. Everybody has to have ownership.

Whether it's a youth issue or a housing issue or a poverty issue, every government department — the government as a whole — takes an interest. And that's the strength of the action plan for children. That's partly why it's been recognized across North America as the right direction to go in.

Also because it's community based . . . or community citizens decide on what their challenges are and they develop the strategies to address those challenges, because they know best.

It's an award winning approach because it promotes the emphasis on children, youth, and their families, and strengthening communities. And a partnership within communities and between the communities and their different levels of government: municipal, provincial, and federal.

And, Mr. Speaker, that . . . I'll just mention a few of these that in this current year that obviously members, all members, would agree are important initiatives. The northern housing initiative that I'm sure the member from Buffalo would appreciate.

The Children's Advocate, the successful mothers' support program, the early skills development program, the fetal alcohol syndrome strategy, the teen and young parent program, the child nutrition and development program — these are all initiatives and they're just a few examples that are making a difference in our community. And sometimes it takes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 years to see the impact of decisions we make.

(1645)

Now the member for Saltcoats said you've had seven years. Well that's the nature of investing in people and prevention. In investment, it takes sometimes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 years. Sometimes we see what happens after 10 years — the mistakes that were made with the Young Offenders Act in 1985.

We'll make some mistakes. That's fine, everybody makes mistakes. But what we all have an obligation to do is to at least offer some informed analysis of what's happening and try to come to grips with what we do about it to make corrections in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I think Saskatchewan people know who's on the right track. The Saskatchewan Party is not in step with my constituents as I see it. I wish them well, but I think they're . . . it's going to be, it's going to be a tough load to haul.

They're made up of — and people haven't forgotten this — they're made up . . . That party is made up, the official opposition is made up of people — and let's think about this — that party in here is made up of people who, first of all, were ashamed of their history and their name; they had to change it. And they're made up of people who were negotiating with their leader and saying that they're loyal to their leader on the one hand, and then negotiating with those who were ashamed to

have their names on the other. That's what that party is made up of. I think it's four and four, or something like that.

Our Saskatchewan people are not going to forget that because those that were ashamed of their name have left us with a \$15 billion debt. Those across the floor, those of the other party, while pledging allegiance to their leader, how can you trust them to run the province? You can't do that. Saskatchewan people are not going to do that. They don't even trust each other — they don't even trust each other so they are going nowhere. And I don't think Saskatchewan people are going to take a chance and that's true.

And we have one of the leadership candidates saying that his strength is team-building. Now this is a guy who is pledging his allegiance to one leader and stabbing him in the back and saying that his strength is team-building. Now I wish him luck in trying to sell that one.

The Liberals — they can't even run their own party, they can't even run their own party. And they're defending the federal government for taking \$5 billion over the last two years out of the human services package or health care loan — \$7 billion out of health care that the provincial Liberal leader is saying that that's okay. But that is not the priorities that we heard about last night, the Minister of Health and I, in Saskatoon.

So not only can the Liberals not run their own party, they're just simply supporting what Ottawa's doing and that's not good enough. And as I said earlier, the provincial Liberals, if they had the chance they'd be like the federal Liberals — they say one thing in opposition but do something else in government. Saskatchewan people have not forgotten that they've fought medicare tooth and nail. Saskatchewan people are aware that the provincial Liberals support two-tier medicine. The critics have been very forthright about that, very honest about that. Saskatchewan people know that they're defending Ottawa, and Saskatchewan people know that they would fire the elected health boards. You think the Saskatchewan people are going to take a chance on that crew? No, they're not.

So, Mr. Speaker, fortunately Saskatchewan people have long memories not short memories. So, Mr. Speaker, we'll let them try to outmanoeuvre each other and throw stones at each other. And we're going to continue through the throne speech and the budget speech reflecting the priorities of Saskatchewan people with Saskatchewan people, to go about the business of building a province, continuing to build a province that was in desperate straits in the 1980s.

We've turned the corner and I don't think we'll every go back to the old days. So, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be my pleasure to support the throne speech — and with pride. And now being near five o'clock, I move to adjourn this debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:49 p.m.



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