

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a new petition to present today:

To the Hon. Assembly of Saskatchewan in legislature assembled, the petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly showeth that the residents of the province of Saskatchewan are entitled to all the facts surrounding SaskPower's \$10 million loss in the Channel Lake fiasco; and Jack Messer was the president of SaskPower at the time of the Channel Lake fiasco; and was subsequently terminated from his position because of Channel Lake's; and Jack Messer has been given 300,000 in severance by the Government of Saskatchewan without all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco being known to the people of Saskatchewan; and the only method to discover all the facts around the Channel Lake fiasco is a fully independent public inquiry.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

These petitions come from the Carnduff, Alameda, Weyburn, Oxbow, Rocanville, Alida, Kenosee Lake areas, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

The Speaker: — Before proceeding with petitions I would like to remind all hon. members that the only portion of the petition that's appropriate to present when reading petitions into the record in the House is the prayer itself. This is sometimes difficult for the Chair to know without seeing the petition, but it may very well have been that the hon. member was in error. And I'm sure that if that's the case he'll guide himself accordingly in future.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present on behalf of Saskatchewan residents. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

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

The communities involved, Mr. Speaker, are Oxbow and Redvers.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition, and I read the prayer:

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 work can begin in 1998, and to set out a time frame for the ultimate completion on the project.

And these are signed from people from Eastend, Ravenscrag, and that area of Saskatchewan. I so present.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan residents. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

The people that have signed this, Mr. Speaker, are from Parkside, Shellbrook, Canwood, and Redvers, in that area.

Thank you.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition to present today.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to cancel any severance payments to Jack Messer and to immediately call an independent public inquiry to find all the facts surrounding the Channel Lake fiasco.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The people that have signed this petition are from Regina and Melfort.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition as well this afternoon to present. The prayer is as follows:

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 work can begin in 1998, and to set out a time frame for the ultimate completion of the project.

I am pleased to present the petition on their behalf, these people coming from Eastend and Shaunavon areas of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan, and the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon.

Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains hospital 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.

The people on this petition are primarily from southern Saskatchewan in the Assiniboia district. I so present.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present a petition which has been signed by my constituents in North Battleford:

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also present a petition:

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 signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Alida, they're from Marlene, they're from Carnduff, they're from Redvers, they're also from Glen Ewen, Saskatchewan, and Fertile, Saskatchewan, and I so present, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too 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 has been signed by the good folks in Watrous and Simpson and Young, which of course is in the Minister of Agriculture's constituency, and also in Imperial,

which is in mine. I so present.

The Speaker: — Before recognizing the next hon. member presenting petitions, I'll want to remind the hon. member who just presented petitions that petitions are to be presented in the way that is not involving presentation of debate but in a straightforward manner.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions from a number of people in the province that would like the reinstatement of the underground electrification program and natural gas program, and the petition reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize that all people in Saskatchewan expect to be treated equally, and that the Government of Saskatchewan should equalize services to all people and provide for underground power lines and natural gas for all rural people at the original rate.

The presenters, Mr. Speaker, are from the Humboldt, Muenster, and St. Gregor area of the province. I so present.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to present several thousand more names received over the weekend. The prayer reads as follows:

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 work can begin in 1998, and to set out a time frame for the ultimate completion of the project, with or without federal assistance.

Now most of these come from the Hazlet and Swift Current area, Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy to present them today.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of citizens petitioning the Assembly to fund the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway; and

Petitions to deal with the problem of youth crime;

Petitions to save the Plains Health Centre; and

Petitions to completely ban the practice of night hunting.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, M. le président, cette semaine est la semaine nationale de francophonie. Je suis heureux de vous présenter ainsi qu'aux membres de l'assemblée, huit invités distingués.

Cette personnes nous honorons par leur présence. Louis Émond,

directeur général de l'ACFC (Association culturelle franco-canadienne); France Roussel, agente de recherche de l'ACFC; Etienne Alary, agent de liaison de l'ACFC; Gracia Bellerose, adjointe administrative de l'ACFC; Nicole Rioux, la secrétaire de l'ACFC; Jean Liboiron, directeur général de la commission culturelle fransaskoise; Robert Therrien, directeur général du conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan; Claire Belanger-Parker, agent de développement de l'ACFR.

Mesdames and Messieurs, veuillez vous lever pour saluer l'assemblée.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I'd like to introduce to you two very special people in the gallery, Carole Gantefoer and my grandson, Terill. I might be a little prejudiced but I happen to think he's the cutest little guy in the room.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I want to introduce guests in our gallery as well, all the way from Ile-a-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan. I'd like to welcome Jason Gardiner, who completed grade 12 last year and he also is working part time in a gas station back home.

And today he was in Regina here doing an interview with the Canadian Armed Forces, because that certainly is his long-term objective. And I would like to ask the members of the Assembly to welcome him on his very long trip to Regina, and we hope he comes here often. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join the Provincial Secretary in welcoming our guests with the ACFC and to the Assembly, and I hope they enjoy the proceedings today. And again I ask the members to welcome them here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Education Week

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I rise in the Assembly to recognize the beginning of Education Week. This is an important week, Mr. Speaker, because a quality education is the bedrock of a progressive society. An investment in education is an investment in our children; it is an investment in our future doctors, mechanics, politicians, artists, mothers and fathers.

Mr. Speaker, it is my fear that we see our quality education system slipping away from us. For the last seven years this government has done nothing to reverse the downward spiral of provincial education funding. My Saskatchewan Party colleagues and I meet with school boards and town councils on a regular basis. They are telling us that their local tax base is quickly drying up.

The Minister of Education speaks about the importance of cooperation between education partners. I could not agree with the minister more. But, Mr. Speaker, this will not happen until the Minister of Education begins leading by example. When the minister terminated the protocol agreement in December, she set back cooperative efforts between education partners 10 years. I would challenge the minister to do two things during this legislative session: (1) put the power of education decisions back in the hands of local representatives; and (2) commit to funding 60 rather than 40 per cent of education funding. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a former educator I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to mark the beginning of Education Week in Saskatchewan. The theme for this year is, Education — Sharing the Joy of Learning.

Our education system in Saskatchewan is committed to ensuring that all children, wherever they live or whatever challenges they face, have the opportunity to learn the basic skills and knowledge that are required to live happy and productive lives. Former premier and former Education minister, Woodrow Lloyd, once said that the function of education was to equip youth to be the kind of people who "can make the best of the present and who have the intelligence and the will to plan a better future."

Our Made in Saskatchewan core curriculum provides Saskatchewan children with the opportunity to learn both the basic, fundamental knowledge and the critical thinking skills they will need for success in the new millennium. I want to acknowledge our Education Week partners, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents, the Saskatchewan Association of School Councils, and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

The vital business of education is — and must always be — a partnership among government, teachers, trustees, administrators, support staff, parents, and communities. I want to thank our partners for their dedication and their hard work. Because only with their support that we have been able to build a world-class education system here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Letter of Apology

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today the president of the Saskatchewan Liberal Association, Mr. Rod MacDonald, announced that he delivered a letter of unconditional and sincere apology to Lynda Haverstock in consideration of the handling of the . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. The hon. member will recognize, of course, that in the course of discussion or debate in the House that the use of proper names is not permitted, and to be referring to members only by their position held within the Assembly. And I'll ask the hon. member to correct his error and proceed with his statement.

Mr. Osika: — I apologize, Mr. Speaker. A letter of unconditional and sincere apology to the member from Saskatoon Greystone in consideration of the handling of the cancellation of her membership and in consideration of the handling of the reinstatement of her membership in 1996.

This apology to the member was on behalf of all Liberals in Saskatchewan and was fully endorsed by the leader, the caucus, and executive of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party. There were no dissenters. Repairing a damaged relationship, Mr. Speaker, can be difficult to accomplish in private and even more so in public. It takes wisdom and courage from all involved to publicly acknowledge past mistakes.

The member from Saskatoon Greystone has graciously accepted this apology from the president on behalf of all Liberals. It is important for all to recognize that these past mistakes were not supported by the principles of Liberalism and Liberal values of tolerance, acceptance, and inclusion. The principles of Liberalism clearly state that Saskatchewan Liberals shall respect and support the dignity of each individual, and Saskatchewan Liberals shall encourage and protect the individual rights and well-being of all men, women, and children.

This is a great day for all Liberals in Saskatchewan who strongly believe and support the values that have always been a core component of this great party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

National Francophone Week

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to announce that the Premier has officially designated the week of March 15 to 21, National Francophone Week in Saskatchewan, and Friday, March 20, National Francophone Day.

Monsieur le président, je voudrais exprimer à la communauté francophone de la Saskatchewan nos plus sincères félicitations à l'occasion de la Semaine nationale de la francophonie.

Durant cette Semaine, les francophones, tout comme les francophiles, profitent de l'occasion pour célébrer ensemble la richesse de la langue et de la culture françaises.

Les célébrations de cette année se déroulent sous le thème; "Une francophonie internationale pleine de jeunesse!"

Ce thème s'adresse en partie aux élèves et aux professeurs. On a été bien avisé de reconnaître l'importance de la jeunesse et de l'éducation comme clés de l'avenir.

C'est par les liens personnels que nous créons et les expériences sociales et culturelles que nous vivons durant notre jeunesse, que nous développons notre identité d'adulte. Encourager les élèves et les professeurs à découvrir davantage la diversité qu'offre la francophonie canadienne et internationale se révèle un moyen très fructueux d'enrichir ces expériences.

On behalf of all my colleagues in the Assembly, au nom de tous mes collègues dans l'Assemblée, une bonne semaine aux tous les fransaskois et fransaskoises. Merci.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Liberal Party of Saskatchewan

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if it wasn't clear to us before that the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan was going nowhere it certainly is today. Not only have the people of Saskatchewan written off the third party so has the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, Sheila Copps.

On Friday, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party caucus office received a phone call from Sheila Copps's executive assistant asking for information on this NDP (New Democratic Party) government's cuts to health care. With the closure of 52 rural hospitals and the imminent closure of the Plains and long waiting-lists, this was certainly not a difficult thing to do.

But what we found funny, Mr. Speaker, was that they didn't think to call the Liberal caucus office. Then again, I guess they know just as well as everyone else that the Liberal caucus has no interest in criticizing the NDP government. They are far too busy serving as an opposition to the official opposition, the Saskatchewan Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Z99 Fund-raiser

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For two consecutive years I've stood in this Assembly and urged all members and all people to take part in the annual Z99 radiothon, and I've said C.C. and Lori are at it again, raising money for a community cause by staying on the air for many, many consecutive hours.

I'm embarrassed to admit that due to the flu last week I missed one of the best community-spirited acts of the year and I missed the opportunity to boost the cause in a more timely way.

So after the fact, I'm happy to announce that they were at it again last Thursday and Friday at the Cornwall Centre. Actually it wasn't they, it was just C.C. this year. Lori is on maternity leave with her new baby son. C.C. was on the air for 35 consecutive hours, raising money for a life-saver package for the neonatal intensive care unit at the General Hospital. He raised \$47,797, which just proves again how effective the radiothon is and how generous the people of Regina and Saskatchewan are.

To the Z, C.C., and every person and company that donated, thank you. To Lori, congratulations on the greatest of life's miracles, your new son.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Jean Charest and the Liberal Party

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, regardless whether they want to be Tories or Tories in disguise, finally one of them has it right. Yes, Jean Charest is finally doing the sensible thing and thinking of coming to work for the Liberals.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, back in 1991 when the NDP took power, the Premier quipped that he would give us the best Liberal government we've ever had. Clearly, unlike Charest, it's been a long personal dream of this Premier to be a Liberal Premier.

Well, Mr. Speaker, his chance has finally come to get it right. Despite my criticisms, I think the Premier would make a fine Quebec Liberal premier. His uncanny abilities to blame everything on the feds would undoubtedly attract some votes. Aside from saving Canada, the Premier's departure would create a leadership race that would be more entertaining than the phone booth mail room affair the Tories are now holding.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier need only say the word and I'll get him a plane ticket to Quebec City — one way, of course. Maybe some of his colleagues would chip in and maybe write him a letter of recommendation or perhaps upgrade his plane ticket to first class.

Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

SaskPower President's Severance Package

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Mr. Premier, it's been 72 hours since you paid off your old buddy, Jack Messer, with a 300,000 good-bye gift. Mr. Premier, it is clear that the only people in Saskatchewan who support paying Jack Messer 300,000 in severance for messing up are you and Jack Messer. It's time to stop playing games with Saskatchewan taxpayers. It's time to admit what everybody knows — you fired Jack Messer because he was incompetent; you fired Jack Messer because he lost \$5 million by signing a contract he didn't read.

Mr. Premier, will you come clean today and admit that you fired Jack Messer because he was incompetent and will you immediately cancel Jack Messer's obscene \$300,000 severance package?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I want to repeat the comments that I made last week on several occasions to exactly the same question — that the issue here is a legal one, not a political one; and I understand why he continues along the political lines that he is trying to wrap this issue up. But I thought the editorial in Saturday's *Leader-Post* was telling where it said, Mr. Premier, "Little choice on severance." And I would urge the member to read the paragraph at the end of the editorial which says:

Dismissal for cause is a ticklish situation and lawyers will tell you that an argument over competence is extremely difficult to win.

And I say to the member opposite that at the end of the day, when Mr. Milt Fair, along with legal counsel, went through the files, they believed this was in the best interest of the

corporation to pay the severance package that was awarded.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your own lawyers are telling you that Jack Messer was terminated — terminated. That means he was fired. To suggest otherwise is an insult to the intelligence of every person in this province. There was no mutual agreement between you and your buddy, Jack Messer. You fired him plain and simple because he was incompetent and you had more than enough cause to.

Then you paid him \$300,000 in hush money to go away and shut up so he wouldn't start pointing fingers at other members of your government. Mr. Minister, will you do the right thing and call off Jack Messer's \$300,000 goodbye party?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to say the member opposite that the issue here is an arrangement made between . . . is an agreement reached between the vice-president of the Power Corporation, the Vice-Chair of the Power Corporation, with legal counsel, between SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation) and the individual you mentioned, Mr. Messer, dealing with the severance package that you talk about.

I want to say to you, sir, that this is in fact a legal issue. And if you would just get your mind around that. And I understand why you want to make it a political issue. But the fact of the matter is that in this case, in this case as it relates to the agreement reached between Power and Mr. Messer, it's fair and equitable. And I say to you, try to understand that he has rights as well, and the agreement reached is one that was done in consultation between Mr. Milt Fair and the legal counsel.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister to get his mind around the fact that taxpayers in Saskatchewan have rights too, and they're outraged by this kind of action on behalf of your government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Jack Messer risked a hundred million dollars of taxpayers' money gambling in the natural gas options market without the authority or the permission of the SaskPower board. He lost \$8 million of the taxpayers' money on 104 unauthorized natural gas arbitrage deals. He lost \$5 million because he refused to read a contract.

Will you pull your heads out of the sand and stop payment of Jack Messer's \$300,000 parting gift and fire the former minister responsible for SaskPower for letting this whole sorry mess occur? Will you do that today, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I want to say to the member opposite, who is very much involved in a big-time leadership campaign, I would really urge you to read the documents — to read the documents and understand what is in the documents

and the definition of some of the language included in the document as it relates to Channel Lake.

I said last Tuesday, I said last Tuesday in a lengthy statement to the House, that we had problems with Channel Lake. We apologized for them and we said that they shouldn't have happened. We tabled documents.

And what I would like to say to you, sir, is what day, now that you have joined the new Conservative Party, are you going to accept your share of responsibility for the \$15 billion that you and your new friends ran up over the last 10 years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Examination of Channel Lake

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member from Melfort is indeed involved in a leadership race and his chances are going up correspondingly as the Deputy Premier's are going down, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, this whole Channel Lake fiasco is stinking out the place. The taxpayers of Saskatchewan are millions . . . are out millions of dollars, and the best they can do is pay off their buddy, Jack Messer, with \$300,000 of hush money.

Mr. Premier, get real. The people of Saskatchewan need to know exactly what happened with the Channel Lake disaster, and you haven't even begun to tell the story. Passing the file off to the NDP's-dominated Public Accounts Committee is nothing short of sweeping the whole mess under the rug.

The only way to get to the bottom of the Channel Lake deal is a full public inquiry. Will you commit today to support the Saskatchewan Party's call for a full public inquiry into the Channel Lake debacle?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I know that the member from Souris-Cannington is supporting our friend who is running for the leadership and that he is working very difficult . . . but I would urge you — after the results of the P.A. (Prince Albert) meeting where you had 30 people out for three ridings — you have to work a little bit harder if you're going to get him elected leader.

But I want to say to you as it relates to the auditor, if you would read my statement from last week you would find that on page 9 I indicated that a copy of the material I tabled today has been provided to the Provincial Auditor. And the auditor will review the operations and sale of Channel Lake in the normal course of his duties.

And fourthly, I indicated the auditor's report on this issue will be considered in detail by the Public Accounts Committee. Officials from Crown Investments Corporation and SaskPower will make themselves available before the committee.

Now I say to you, why don't you avail yourself to the opportunity of reading the material that I gave you last week. I'm not sure you have. I'm not sure you have, because the misleading questions that you're asking here would indicate something quite different.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't understand why the Premier won't rise to answer these questions; it's his buddy that they're defending.

Mr. Premier, what are you hiding? If you are so confident that your government has no skeletons sunk in Channel Lake's closet, then it's time to come out. Hold a full public inquiry; let's get to the bottom of what actually happened at Channel Lake.

Who signed the final Channel Lake contract that lost the taxpayers an additional \$5 million? What was Jack Messer's role in the operation and sale of Channel Lake? Why was Lawrence Portigal fired from Channel Lake in December of 1996 and then put back in charge of the sale of the company a couple of weeks later? Mr. Premier, will you get off your high political horse and answer some of the questions and support the Saskatchewan Party's motion for a full public inquiry into Channel Lake?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to reiterate to the member opposite that when he talks about skeletons he would know a lot about them, coming from that particular caucus. I want to say as well, sir, that we have tabled in this House a document by Deloitte & Touche, which goes into excruciating detail the record of Channel Lake. And I say again, it was a difficult arrangement and one, I say again, that we were not proud of.

Having said that, sir, I want you too to avail yourself to the opportunity — if you are on the Public Accounts Committee — to be there, to ask the tough questions. We'll make people available and we'll get to the bottom of all of the issues that you feel free to ask. And I say that my officials will be there, both from CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) and from Power, to answer any and all questions that you put.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, hopefully this time the Premier will answer. Again I direct my question to him because I've got a couple of dirty shirts and I was wondering if he could pick them up to take them up next time he gets taken to the cleaners.

Mr. Premier, the whole Channel Lake thing has you and your NDP friends squirming like fish out of water, sucking air, and dying fast. If you're so confident there's nothing hidden at the bottom of Channel Lake, why don't you support a full public inquiry? Why not let a judge and some truly independent commissioners decide?

Mr. Premier, let's drain Channel Lake and see if there are any bottom feeders besides Jack Messer left. Will you stop

protecting your old buddy Jack Messer and support a full public inquiry into the Channel Lake disaster?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many times they're going to ask the question, but I'll give you the same response. We did a review of the Channel Lake experience. We went into great detail in explaining it here in the House last week. We tabled the documents. We made it clear, as I said on page 9 of my statement, that we have referred it to the Provincial Auditor; that it would be dealt with by Public Accounts where you can come and answer any and all . . . ask any and all questions and expect answers.

But to you, sir, I want to make it clear that if you're sincere, come to the committee, ask the questions, and I'm sure you'll be very pleased that the responses are in order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Health Information Network

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An order in council confirmed today that the NDP have officially approved the spending of 38 million tax dollars on the development of Saskatchewan Health Information Network. But this government has not addressed a number of concerns. Among other things, they have yet to resolve key privacy issues. They have yet to explain that health districts which are already cut to the financial bone will be expected to pick up part of the tab.

Saskatchewan Medical Association agrees, writing in its February newsletter: "A subcommittee urged the board to protest the undue haste with which this proposed legislation is being pursued."

Mr. Minister, please explain why you're diving head first into this project without first providing the taxpayers, the health districts, our doctors, with answers to these very important questions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to the member opposite, I appreciate the question because he's correct in stating that in the province of Saskatchewan within the next 18 months, we're going to have an information system that will provide a whole host of issues that will ensure that we have a higher and better quality care of service in the province. The member is correct about that.

And as the member talks about a consultation process, we're currently now on our second round of consultation, which will include a whole host of stakeholders: which are the Saskatchewan Medical Association, which are the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses in the province — and on our last process of consultations have received full support — and consult of each of these professional groups, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Speaker, a review of the master services agreement states quite clearly that the form SHIN (Saskatchewan Health Services Network) will take in its final

form is not yet known and offers a serious note of caution. The document reads that:

The district consultation process will not be completed until SHIN is significantly into the project and has spent a significant amount of money. Now by that time, SHIN will have made several irrevocable decisions regarding technology, software, etc.

Mr. Minister, millions of valuable tax dollars are being spent on technology and software which in the end may not be suitable for the project. Doesn't it make sense that you would design a system knowing what privacy considerations must be addressed before you start? Are we looking at another NST, another Channel Lake, another Guyana, or another Jack Messer? Are the people of Saskatchewan looking at their valuable tax dollars going down the tube once again with one of your ill-fated projects?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how the member wants this. The member either wants this with the Government of Saskatchewan and the ministry developing the policy and the regulations as to how SHIN should run, or the member opposite wants the full consultation with the people of the province.

The choice we've suggested and taken is that we're going to have a full consultation with the people of the province. And we've taken — as I've said to you now — on our second series of opportunities to find out from people who are working within the system, from the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, and the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, from the college of surgeons and physicians, from the Saskatchewan Medical Association, from the Saskatchewan health association. We're talking to each of those people and as we're going to design the new, the new model in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be patterned after what their interests are. And as we come into the Legislative Assembly over the next couple of months to talk about the privacy issue, the member can discuss with this House, and I can provide for him, the details of the consultations with all of those stakeholders.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Examination of Channel Lake

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Public Accounts Committee is the oldest committee in the parliamentary system. It is the ancient watchdog of the public purse. Yet the NDP used their majority to stonewall and prevent the committee from doing its job.

I'm pleased to hear they are now prepared to let Public Accounts look into the Channel Lake fiasco but I still want to know when. Is it going to be years from now or next week? Are we going to be allowed to subpoena witnesses, specifically Messer and Portigal, and will it have a full, complete mandate or will we be boxed in with a bunch of little rules to prevent a full airing of what went on?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I want to answer the question on behalf of the government and say to the member opposite that it is our view, as the Deputy Premier has said, that

the Public Accounts Committee is the appropriate place in which to deal with this matter promptly and thoroughly — promptly and thoroughly — on top of all the documents which have been tabled.

We think that this should start within about two weeks upon the completion of the budget debate. The Provincial Auditor's report should be dealt with without delay. The ministers responsible is prepared to attend; CIC officials; Power officials are prepared to attend; and I've consulted with the Vice-Chair of Public Accounts, who informed me that it's his view — and I agree — that both Mr. Messer and Mr. Portugal should be invited to appear before the committee. It's appropriate that this be done; and that I understand that the Deputy Chair will be writing to the Tory or the Saskatchewan Party Chair of the Public Accounts Committee almost immediately to get on with the job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, may I personal say thank you to the Premier. I think this is a positive response that will move this issue along and allow the committee to do its historic job.

Mr. Speaker, in 1995, in 1995 SaskPower reported that Channel Lake was worth \$31.6 million yet it was sold for 15 million. That's about three times the cost of GigaText and half the reported value.

How can the minister tell us that doesn't represent a loss to the people of Saskatchewan? How can he say that selling something for less than half its book value — less than half its reported worth — is a good deal for the people of Saskatchewan? How can he say that the man who engineered that deal is deserving of a quarter-million-dollar golden handshake?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I say again to the member opposite that, as you know, Channel Lake was purchased for \$25 million. At the time of the sale there was an appraisal done that said the company was worth approximately \$20 million. I say as well that there was \$12 million repaid on the loan that was used to purchase Channel Lake.

And as the assistant provincial auditor indicated, that even by his calculations, by our calculations — only the Saskatchewan Party is offbeat on this note — money was made on the deal; money was made on the deal when you look at the overall profits made and what the sale price and the purchase price was.

So this is an important issue that you will want to raise when we take it to the Public Accounts Committee. All of the answers will be given, and I'm sure that you, sir, will find that this will be an experience that will be helpful in finding out the answers that you need.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Medical Research Funding

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My

question is to the Premier or his designate. Last week the Alberta government committed \$26.7 million in new funding to support 47 researchers over the next three to five years in medical research. This is a 35 per cent increase over last year's funding.

Mr. Premier, your government provided less money in bridge funding for medical research than you are paying Jack Messer to lose taxpayers' money. How can you justify your priorities to the people of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in this province this government takes a very serious . . . takes very seriously the importance of medical research. Over the last six years in this province we've increased medical research in the province of Saskatchewan by more than 46 per cent. Over that same period of time, Mr. Speaker, the federal government has reduced the medical research grants to this country by over \$3 million.

Just recently in this province, Mr. Speaker, there were 28 projects that didn't get approved. And the reason why they didn't get approved is because the Medical Research Council had reduced its funding by better than \$3 million.

Our government decided that we would try to support that and just recently made an announcement, in fact on Friday, of an additional \$200,000 to ensure that eight projects in this province would be able to have a future and will be able to benefit the health of Saskatchewan citizens, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, the very best comparison on the issue of health research funding is between Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Manitoba has 4 per cent of Canada's population and receives 4 per cent of funding from the MRC (Medical Research Council). Saskatchewan has 3.4 per cent of Canada's population and receives 1.3 per cent of MRC funding — for one reason, Mr. Speaker, and that is because the provincial government does not pull up its end in contributions.

My question to the minister is, explain to the citizens of Saskatchewan why it is you think that the Manitoba government can do this; why it is that it has so much of a greater commitment to medical research funding than your government, sir.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite . . . and she has had a significant voice on this piece for some time now, and she and I have met and had a discussion with the Saskatoon folks regarding the need for us to increase the amount of medical research funding that we have in Saskatchewan.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, is that the way in which the medical research funding is allocated in Canada, is that small universities like ours are in fact inhibited by it. What we need to see, Mr. Speaker, is that we need to see a change in the formula. We're purporting that we see a change in the formula so that smaller universities like Saskatchewan's in the future will have an opportunity to compete equally with the larger universities.

When the member asks specifically what the difference is between Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the real difference is in Manitoba they've got Lloyd Axworthy; in Saskatchewan we've got Mr. Goodale.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, let's get down to real facts this afternoon. One hundred and seventy-three Alberta-based medical researchers and 245 scientists-in-training receive financial support from their province next door in Alberta. Now I've been wondering just how many Saskatchewan-based medical researchers and scientists-in-training receive provincial funding here.

And I ask the minister to table those numbers, as well as how much they receive specifically from his government, and table them for the members of this Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to table that information for the member opposite. I can provide for her some of that information off the top.

In terms of medical research funding to the province, of which the province currently supports, Mr. Speaker, of the \$4.4 million, 2.1 of that million goes to support Health SURC (Health Services Utilization and Research Commission) itself, which is today doing a \$1 million grant to carry out several pieces of research projects in the province; 1.2 million goes to the department of psychiatry, College of Medicine, to fund neuropsychiatry applied research projects which we're announcing on Friday; 563,000 to Saskatchewan cancer association; 250,000 to the centre of agriculture and medicine; and 250,000 additional money to Health SURC to assist them with the research work that they do for MRC; and 126,000, Mr. Speaker, to the College of Medicine to provide bridge funding last year; this year providing another \$200,000 to further enhance the amount of research work which we do in the province.

That's Saskatchewan's portion, Mr. Speaker, today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — There is one real fact in all of Canada, and that is that there is only one province in all of this nation that does more poorly than the province of Saskatchewan in supporting medical research. That province, Mr. Speaker, has actually significantly proportionately increased its percentage of funding in medical research compared to the province of Saskatchewan.

I would like for the minister to stand in his place and defend — defend — the fact that we are 9 out of 10 in this country and that they should not be ashamed of that fact.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the real facts are is that in this province we have not cut health funding by one penny at the same time as the federal government has been reducing its funding. And part of the problem that we have with the Medical Research Council is that we've seen reduced funding by the

federal government to the Medical Research Council.

If we see additional funding into the future and to the . . . into the Medical Research Council, Mr. Speaker, we will see enhanced projects in this province and across the nation. This is the only province in Canada, Mr. Speaker, where we've back-filled every penny in health. Those are the real facts, Mr. Speaker. Those are the real facts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would respectfully request leave to make a statement of a personal nature.

Leave granted.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Resignation of MLA for Saskatoon Eastview

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and special thanks to Mr. Premier and leaders of the opposition parties and to all hon. members.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with mixed emotions and a real sense of sadness. This is my last opportunity to speak in the House but I also rise with great pride at being able to do so. And I've never taken the fact that we can speak here openly for granted, and so I might just take a few extra minutes to reflect some of those thoughts, if I could.

Mr. Speaker . . . boy this is the toughest thing I've had to say since my first speech. Mr. Speaker, through you I'd like to advise that I'm announcing my resignation as the member for Saskatoon Eastview. I will be consulting with the Clerk in terms of winding down my office, so I don't know the exact date yet, but it will be sure in the next few days. So this is my last day in the Assembly.

I wanted to announce it here because I wanted to speak obviously to hon. members first, and speak directly to Saskatoon Eastview constituents.

I've been honoured to have been elected three times in Saskatoon Eastview, and that is a great honour, Mr. Speaker. This wasn't my achievement. It was the achievement of the team around me, and I know hon. members appreciate that none of us are here on our own. We're here because of the team back home and we're here because our constituents place faith in us. And so I'm very honoured to have been here 10 years. I'm very proud of it.

It's been a special privilege, Mr. Speaker, as all hon. members know, to represent your neighbours from all walks of life and with varying cultures, and this is the rich mix of Saskatchewan which we're all proud of.

I want to say thanks to Saskatoon Eastview residents for your confidence, for your support and kindness, and for the ideas and the advice and the frankness with which my constituents have

come to me. To all residents of Saskatoon Eastview, I wish you happiness, a sense of peace, and may your families' future be healthy in all respects.

It's very hard to put into words what being here representing you has meant for me. I hope and believe that the residents of Saskatoon Eastview will understand that I have not made this decision lightly, but for me personally, it's time to move on. I've tried to serve with a sense of integrity, with sensitivity. I think I've tried to work hard, and hopefully I've listened and been helpful, and responded as I was able to. At least I like to believe that I've tried to do that anyway.

I'm moving to a new challenge, Mr. Speaker, which is still in my social work capacity, the social work of my background. I'm proud of that. And this is a career move for me, and my new employer will be making the announcement tomorrow about this time or around noon, as to what that position will be.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the outreach and for your promotion of the importance of this democratic institution, as all members have commented on in their throne speeches. And you've made a tremendous contribution which we're all proud of.

Mr. Premier, thanks for your hard work, your friendship, and for the confidence and support that you've shown in me. And best wishes in your important role, which everyone recognizes in the Assembly.

To my caucus colleagues here, my friends, we've been through some tough times together, some good times together, but they were united times together, which I'm very proud of. We've had some fun — some at my expense, some at yours. But we have lifelong friendships and memories.

To all members, the members opposite, my thanks for your friendship. You're valued colleagues. Both current members, and both past and present, that I've had the privilege of serving with, you're all wonderful and dear friends. And I thank you for that.

Mr. Speaker, in my 10 years there has not been a member whom I did not like, and I hope that the feeling has been mutual. All colleagues, I'd like to say to all colleagues, through you, Mr. Speaker, that I respect how hard each and every individual in here works and everyone's passion for their beliefs, and for their active participation in this important process.

Isn't it marvellous, Mr. Speaker, that we can have passionate debates; we can disagree, but we can still be good, personal friends? And this is very special to me. This isn't possible in much of the world today — where friendships transcend partisanship. Yet for all of us, politics is profoundly serious. The stakes are high. And we all feel that's because the issues are important — we have something to say about the issues — and because we believe in what we are doing.

Since I am leaving, let me confess that I don't have all the answers. I know that the member from Arm River will be surprised that I say this, because last week I was telling him that I did. But I don't even know half the questions if truth be

known.

But I believe I have some of the answers and I believe everyone here has some of the answers; and I have some partial answers. And importantly, I do know some of the important questions.

But together, collectively, because we are a reflection of Saskatchewan people, we put it together in a way that they do anywhere else in Canada, or perhaps the world. And I'm very proud of that because much of what we do is by agreement and consensus. In my 10 years here, Mr. Speaker, I would say that 85 or more per cent of what we do in this Assembly is done by agreement. And I try and say that whenever I am out around the province because that's very important.

I know we need to focus on the areas of difference. But when I was the minister of Social Services, just my own personal experience as minister, minister for Seniors issues, every single piece of legislation, every new Bill, and every amendment, was done by all-party support — 16 or 17 of those opportunities. And I think that is the experience of many of the ministers, past and present governments.

(1430)

And I know the child advocate Bill that I had the pleasure of taking through the Assembly had all-party support from start to finish. And I think that the process . . . that included the process, and we all endorsed the selection, which was very, very impartial. So we worked together and I say that's the Saskatchewan way. Mr. Speaker, I believe it is our responsibility — and I know all members agree — to continue to promote this outstanding Saskatchewan tradition.

I want to say thank you to many individuals in communities from across the province who worked closely with me, especially when I was minister, because there were more opportunities in that position. And all of us know, because we travel the province, that every member here has family members in a larger family who care about us and what we're doing in our respective movements across the province.

So it's been a great experience to know that you can go to Assiniboia or Meadow Lake or Outlook or anywhere you want and you'll find a place to stay. And we can all say that, and I think that again is a reflection of the kindness of Saskatchewan people.

To each member and your families, to your executives, to your teams and everybody around you, I want to say thanks for their contributions and their dedication to your efforts. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to each member that my life is richer because of you and I've learned from every member here. I've learned something from every member in this Assembly, and I appreciate that.

To our Clerk, Gwenn Ronyk, Greg Putz, and Meta Woods, thanks for the great job that you do; our Sergeant-at-Arms and all of your staff. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to start naming departments because I'll miss some, but I want to say thank you to all staff in the Legislative Assembly. I have friends in every part, every single part of this institution, and I know that every other member does as well — dear friends, dear staff members

who do so much.

All legislative staff are our family down here. When you're away from home for four or five months a year, you get very lonely, people here become part of your family. This is our home away from home, and the important thing is that they are all professionals. No matter where they are here, they do an excellent job.

I'd like to say thanks to all caucus staffs in the buildings, to all the ministers' offices and their staffs, to the public service of Saskatchewan. I've been there for 10 years myself before this 10 years, so it was a real privilege to serve in the public service, and it was a real privilege to work with the public service from this position.

I'd like to as well say thank you very much to my constituency assistant, Janine Rafoss, and to previous constituency assistants. They were always there. Janine keeps me somewhat organized. Not easy, but all the assistants make a very critical contribution to the public service — not only mine, but certainly mine — everyone else's as well. And Janine is a wonderful friend and I appreciate the work that she's done.

Last but not least I want to say thanks to my darling wife, Gwen, and to our sons, Dean, Darren, and Joanne, and to all of our families.

And, Mr. Premier, you'll know this because you're a good country music fan. Sammy Kershaw has a number one hit, or he has maybe four or five by now — but *Light of My Life*, and that's a pretty song. It's a great message. And Gwen, Darren, Dean, Joanne, you're the light of my life.

For over eleven and a half years, since I started down this path, you've always been there. And I'd like to say that I'm sorry about the special occasions and the milestones that I've missed along the way — important school functions. But most of all, thanks for your understanding and your love. And above all — and this is a family responsibility, and they always went above and beyond the call. So thank you hardly seems adequate, but thank you.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, best wishes to you and your loving family, and to all members of the Assembly and your loving families.

This institution is very important. I know that you hold it dearly, and what we have is very precious. We have political stability here. Let's remind each other of this from time to time. We are the guardians of this tradition during the fleeting moments that we spend here.

I've never gotten over the sense of awe, and I really feel it now, of being here, the privilege of being here and being able to speak. If this province is a bit better, Mr. Speaker, when . . . a bit better place to live when we move on from this Assembly, then I'll be pretty happy. I think that is the best we can hope for.

Mr. Speaker, hon. members, there's a very famous Saskatchewan singer who is sort of on the horizon. He's got a new album out. It's called *Stuff that Works*.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: — Now the singer is not important in this story I'm going to tell. He needs a little help too, but he's not important. But this title song is important, the title, *Stuff that Works*.

And we chose the title *Stuff that Works* for a good reason, Mr. Speaker. It's a wonderful song with a loving and a caring message. And what is stuff that works? Well stuff that works is stuff that has feeling; stuff that works are things that we reach for when we fall; stuff that works are special friends and loving partners; and stuff that works is stuff that holds up.

Now, Mr. Speaker, and members, this institution is stuff that works. It endures. We throw words, not stones. Saskatchewan traditions of cooperation and companion is stuff that works.

All of you hon. members as friends, and staff, the Assembly here, and my good friends back in Saskatoon Eastview, you're stuff that works. And friends are always there when the chips are down and that's what friendship is all about; and that's what the song says.

Our farms, our villages, our towns, our cities, our RMs (rural municipality) are stuff that works. Our great province and country is stuff that works.

So I know that all members of the Assembly appreciate that and are grateful for that.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say again, thanks for this opportunity. Sorry to spend so much time, but I appreciate everyone listening. God bless each member and each constituent and all the staff here. And also, thanks to the media. They're doing an important job in this important endeavour that we're involved in.

So God bless everyone and may the spirit be with you and your families. Thanks and goodbye.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave of the Assembly to take a short recess in view of the statement that's just been made to allow all members to express their appreciation to the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Leave granted.

The House recessed for a period of time.

The Speaker: — The House will come to order.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With leave, just to briefly respond to the member's statement.

Leave granted.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members. It's at times like this that it is difficult to express one's thoughts;

when a colleague, a legislative member and a friend, decides to move on. This can be at times, as we all know, a pretty difficult and a pretty challenging job, and I think that you, Mr. Member, have served in a very honourable capacity and an hon. member for a long time.

I think you have served with great integrity and you've always, what I've enjoyed is, respected everyone's thoughts and everyone's opinions in the House. I've enjoyed over the years your great wit, and you're a fun guy to be around. I have to admit that, Bob.

You've served, I think, our province in a great capacity; and he's not that bad of a country singer when it comes right down it, Mr. Speaker. *Stuff that Works*, I think, is a great tribute to yourself and to Saskatchewan and I think it expresses your love for this great province that we all love so much. I think you've always put Saskatchewan first, your constituents first, and that's something that is difficult to do at some times.

Bob, we on this side of the House want to wish you very well in your future endeavours. We will indeed, as all members will, miss you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to ask leave to address in response to the member's statement.

Leave granted.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, my colleagues. I haven't known the member from Saskatoon Eastview all that long . . .

An Hon. Member: — Well he's a good guy.

Mr. Osika: — Well I'll have to take the member's word for it, but I've discovered for myself that here is a member . . . And today we saw a great deal of sincerity in what the member has told us and I'm sure everyone has recognized whom he's represented. Eleven years, Mr. Speaker, to now, I can only think about how difficult it must be to say farewell to that portion of a lifetime that one dedicates to represent, to have the honour to represent, people of a constituency. And the people have given you that honour, Mr. Member, on three different occasions. You have a great deal to be proud of.

You have served — and I've seen you here in the legislature — with pride, with dignity, tempered with humility that each and every one of us should recognize the need for entertaining in our debates when we discuss our philosophical differences and offer opinions. But again, with the mutual respect that's so necessary for us to be able to address all the issues on behalf of people we represent in this democratic process.

I want to also congratulate you, wish you the sincere best of luck in your future endeavours. I was thinking for a moment you might have been announcing that you were taking leave to go on a world tour with your new-found friends in the singing business. But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the title of the album that the member has put out reflects what the member himself . . . *Stuff That Works*. It's the type of integrity, sincerity,

dignity and humility, that that member has displayed in this legislature, that he's stuff that works as well. I want to congratulate him in his future endeavours.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With leave, to make just a few closing comments.

Leave granted.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a difficult day for all of us, particularly on the government side. What we're losing today is one of our most decent, honest, and hard-working MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly). Also he's the person who as a minister, achieved a lot for our province.

He was minister of Social Services, which I know, because I'm within that post, is a very difficult post. And he was one of the people who helped push along the Child Benefit, which of course is this very important national program to ensure that all children in this province have an equal opportunity.

He was also to us on the government side, a great friend. He was always organizing hockey tournaments or singing groups or in every act that he displayed over the last 11 years, he was a team player. And I think finally, as Bob said himself, he's a family man, who has been dedicated to his family, to his wife and his two sons. And politics is not always easy to combine that, but he did combine that.

So he's made a tremendous contribution to this province, to this legislature, to our party, and we're going to miss him but we wish him all the very best in his new career. Thanks, Bob.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Hon. members will recognize that this afternoon has represented some small deviation from normal procedure.

We recognize that the Chair hasn't intervened when referred to the hon. member for Eastview by his proper name, and I hope you do not take that as a precedent to be repeated, but to simply — on behalf of all members here to the hon. member for Saskatoon-Eastview — acknowledge that the words that have been said here by others are words of commendation, not words of eulogy, and that we wish you well and thank you for your service to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some 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, and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. Krawetz.

Mr. Johnson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take, first of all, this opportunity to say to the member from Saskatoon Eastview that I'm sorry to see him leave. But to his new employer, I believe that the Assembly's loss will certainly be their gain and I'm sure that he will perform the task that he has set out to do in a very able manner. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say it's been great to know you for the six years, six and a half years, as a fellow caucus member.

Mr. Speaker, the constituency of Shellbrook-Spiritwood has, in the last year, had the opportunity of having two of the communities, both Shellbrook and Spiritwood, come on line for the carrying of the House. So both of the people in both of these communities can now view what is taking place in the House. And I'd like to welcome them as new members to the TV audience for the Legislative Assembly in Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: — You're going to have to . . . (inaudible) . . . now.

Mr. Johnson: — Yes, that's one of the things that's going to have to happen. I will have to spend more time speaking. That will save you some time.

The one . . . the situation, Mr. Speaker, regarding the motion for the throne speech, I am in full support of. And if that were not the case, when the member from Regina Wascana Plains moved the motion, her remarks most certainly would have brought me onside. And just to make certain of that, I have to indicate that the seconder did an excellent job as well in bringing the items of the debate to my attention and convincing me to support it.

The members of the Assembly, I'd just like to point out to them that this winter in the area along the boreal fringe has been rather a mild winter. There's been rather a light snowfall. And that, I was going to say, has the potential of — although it's been a very beautiful winter and a nice place to live in under that thing — it has the potential of bringing about problems in the seasons to follow. Because one of the things that it does is it leaves less snow and less moisture in the forest. And if we happen to have a dry spring then we're into a fire season like we've had before — 1995 was one of the years where there was some fairly extensive fires and it started out somewhat in the same manner as this.

I had thought of this, and no sooner had this came to my attention then I received a news release that indicated where the people in the province of Saskatchewan could expect flooding to occur. And in looking at the map, the area that I'm talking about, the expectation of flooding is a way below normal for that particular area.

Mr. Speaker, the budget speech indicated that we were in the process of expanding the job market, and that employment in the province of Saskatchewan was increasing, and that we were working to continue that increase. I have here some statistics from the labour force statistics, and I'd like to just bring the House's attention to them.

There were 468,000 persons employed in Saskatchewan during February '98, and this is an increase of some 14,000 over the same number of people that were employed in the province of Saskatchewan during the year in 1997, in February 1997. And

this, Mr. Speaker, is a very large increase, year over year, and shouldn't be expected to occur in every year. But it is an indication that some of the programs and policies that this government has implemented over the last six and a half years are beginning to bear fruit.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech also indicated that we were moving along with the implementation of our new health system. And I'd like to read just a little bit from the speech.

With most of the hard work of reform behind us, my government will work with its many partners to move health care forward.

And, Mr. Speaker, governance was one of the main things that was changed in the health delivery system.

And I know that we have been successful in establishing a new governing structure in health care. The reason that I know that we're successful in doing that is that one of the constituencies that borders the Shellbrook-Spiritwood constituency — and there are nine — the member for the constituency of Rosthern indicated in a report to the *Valley News* what I think he didn't realize, but I take as recognizing that we have been successful in implementing the new governing structure. And I'd like to just read a few of his comments.

We have been under Saskatchewan's new health system for only a few short years. These new health district boards are working fairly well in some areas and are a disaster in others.

Well we have to give him some leeway; as a member of the opposition, he couldn't be all support.

(1500)

A little further on he says:

As users of the system, we find it hard to know where to bring our beefs or bouquets. The process of having some elected representatives on the board and some government appointees makes the boards feel partially responsible to their appointers and partially responsible to us, the electors. Because a slim majority are elected, we need to treat this board just as we do other boards we elect. If we are happy with snow clearing, we call our RM or the town elected person. If we are unhappy with what happens at school, we call our school board person. We need to do the same with the new health boards.

Mr. Speaker, in writing this and putting it forward in an article that he does, I say he is saying to the Government of Saskatchewan that the health care program has been implemented, it is effective, and it is the right way to go. And now we have the support of the opposition on doing that, because he says that that's the way to use it.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other issues affecting the constituency of Shellbrook-Spiritwood is rail line abandonment and transportation problems that relate from that. And I'd like to point out that in the area of rail line abandonment, the Minister of Highways and Transportation has asked the Ottawa

government . . . or is calling on Ottawa to ensure that branch line rationalization plans are halted until the Estey review establishes new rules that provide a fair opportunity for short-line development. It makes no sense to be reviewing a system that is being dismantled while the review is taking place.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is actually the case. In the Shellbrook-Spiritwood constituency the line between Shellbrook and P.A. (Prince Albert) disappeared so fast that people in the area didn't even realize that it had been . . . that it was gone until after the tracks were lifted. And that left them no opportunity to put into place any consultation or decision to maintain that line.

Mr. Speaker, in health we brought about a change. And I see in this budget speech and in the years to come that we're going to implement a major, significant change in social services. And this change will bring about things that I think are very . . . that are needed in a number of ways.

The main thing that we have . . . the main problem that we have today in providing social service and in maintaining the working ethic in the economy is that we have a very wide valley between social recipients and those that are working. But if you end up on one side of the valley or the other, it is a long fall when you go from being an employee with an income to social assistance, and it is an awful long jump to make it back the other way.

And it is this valley that we must look at and change so that people can move away from social assistance into providing themselves with their own income with ease, and not having to make that gigantic leap.

Mr. Speaker, before I end I'd just like to say a few words on the environment and how it impacts on us as a society. We as a society, I believe are on a destructive course with our present environmental views, policies, and programs. Whether these activities are being performed by a non-government or a government agency, the end result is that we're not achieving what we need to achieve.

I believe this because the operating concept is one of protection — protect this or protect that — rather than a policy and an operating concept that is to manage and thereby achieve benefits, not only for the people that are living here but benefits for the environment as well.

If you study and follow the protection circuit you will find out that in more cases than not, it is based on some moral issue rather than an environmental reason, and you can look at different things in different papers as the articles come out.

And I'd like to just take and give a little . . . In *The Globe and Mail* on Saturday, March 7 there's a little article on the prospects looming for the tiny burrowing owl. And this is the case of an owl that was spotted in Texas and had a band from Saskatchewan. The owl had lived, apparently, on mice and beetles in a culvert among sorghum and corn fields. Forty other burrowing owls are in the area. Ironically, the grass at a nearby wildlife refuge was too long for this owl, the size of a robin.

Three or four of the owls lived in pastures, as they do in

Canada, but pastures are few in south Texas. The indication that I bring to the Assembly here today is the fact that in protecting the wildlife area in the States from all activity on it, in essence set it up so that it was no longer an environmentally beneficial place for animals or birds, in this case the burrowing owl.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the throne speech and the direction that we're heading is one that will be beneficial to all in this province, and I will be supporting the motion and not the amendment when the vote comes. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Murrell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me begin by saying what a pleasure it is to see all my colleagues on both sides of the House and to have this opportunity to support the throne speech but not the amendment.

I would also like to take this moment to wish my colleague from Saskatoon Eastview all the best. I will miss his insight, his compassion, and his humour. And I have enjoyed sitting on committees with him and have learned much from his wisdom.

Mr. Speaker, as this Assembly knows, I have the good fortune to represent the people of Battleford-Cut Knife constituency — people who, like their forefathers, are true pioneers, striving to build and invest in their families, their communities, and in their province. This is an opportune time for me to highlight and acknowledge the initiatives of people from my area — people like those from the Neilburg community.

Mr. Speaker, in the midst of this scenic town was an unsightly gully. But the good people of Neilburg, through hard work and determination and with community spirit, worked to build a park with trees, a playground, a gazebo, and a walking path. This park today is enjoyed by all ages and it's certainly a worthwhile contribution to their community.

Individuals like Sid Palmer of Marsden recognized the opportunity of processing low-grade canola into pellets and opened the doors of the EXL in Lloydminster. This plant will benefit farmers throughout the province and North America. Companies such as CCS recognized an important environmental issue. The storage and handling of oil by-products and solids is an environmental concern for all partners involved. Canadian Crude Separators found the solution with an initiative that follows the four R's: reduce, reuse, recycle, and recover. By using the Unity Sifto salt plant's abandoned caverns, waste products from petroleum will be blended with the brine water from the caverns to slurry this solid waste. Once the mixture is blended, it will then be injected into the caverns and stored.

The town of Macklin, located one-half mile from the Alberta border, has become the fastest growing town in Saskatchewan. And with the determination of Jimmy Pollard, economic development officer for Border REDA (regional economic development authority), saw 17 new businesses open in the area in 1997.

In my remarks today I will be focusing on the achievements of our government, our communities, our people, and our province. When we began our second term we outlined a

six-point agenda, investing in people, and we are doing just that, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan we have our priorities right. We are investing in jobs. Our unemployment rate is consistently one of the lowest in Canada at 6.1 per cent, well below the national level of 9.3 per cent.

Our population is now about 1.025 million, showing constant growth since 1991. We are investing in education and training. In the 1997 budget 131 million was put towards the Saskatchewan training strategy, *Bridges to Employment*, a training strategy created to repair the federal government's abandonment of training programs — 47 million withdrawn from Saskatchewan over three years. That's our federal government. That's their abandonment of the training program.

Mr. Speaker, we are expanding the JobStart, Future Skills training program so that we create a skilled workforce. A pilot project in the city of P.A., or Prince Albert, has registered about 300 young people for the new, community-based Future Skills training program. From January of '97 to November of '97, 1,544 people were trained in 260 projects around the province. Jobs, Mr. Speaker, we're creating jobs.

In the community of Meadow Lake, Clearwater Forest Products is providing recognized training for 48 people as forklift, loader, feeder, scanner operators — long-term jobs, good-paying jobs. And, Mr. Speaker, we implemented the provincial training allowance, which provides income support for low-income adults to further their basic education. Educating and training people to fulfil meaningful jobs while maintaining health care and child benefit programs, thus encouraging independence. Projects which target those in need — low income women; young people; the chronically unemployed — and involved partnerships with community businesses, working together. Community-based initiatives at work.

Someone, when asked why is farming so tough today, responded: it all started back in '66 when they changed from pounds to dollars. That doubled my overdraft. Then they brought in kilograms instead of pounds. My cows' milk production dropped in half. After that they changed rain to millimetres and we haven't had an inch of rain since. If that wasn't enough, they brought in Celsius and we got frost in August. No wonder my wheat won't grow. Then they changed the acres to hectares and I ended up with only half the land I had. By this time I'd had enough and was ready to sell out. I put the property on the market and then they changed from miles to kilometres. Now I'm too far out of town for anyone to buy the place.

Rural areas are indeed facing changes, changes that are uncontrollable: globalization; deregulation; depopulation; the loss of the Crow; elevator closures; rail-line abandonment. But instead of being defeatist, the people of rural Saskatchewan are creative and innovative, diversifying the family farm and promoting area developments to keep rural Saskatchewan alive and well.

Last year I spoke of the north-west and Saskatchewan Wheat Pool terminals in Unity. Now the town of Wilkie, with community investment, is going to benefit from the spin-off of these two businesses with the opening of a pellet plant on May

1 of this year. Three people will be in management, with another three or four people in production.

Saskwest Pork Production in Evesham is a farrow-to-finish operation which opened last fall and is expecting its nearly 600 sows to start farrowing this week. The Manitou hog project in Neilburg started farrowing of its 2,600 sows and have had over 166 litters to date.

Entrepreneurs 2000 REDA Inc. from Rosetown provides research and consulting services to clients from the processing, manufacturing, retail, health care, service, hospitality, tourism, and public sectors.

Golden Grains Farm Co. Ltd. in the Dinsmore area was established by four farmers to add value to their barley. Jensun is a birdseed processor in the Mildred area. Community ventures, community driven, community based.

(1515)

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, business is growing in Saskatchewan. And growth in business means growth in the employment sector. With the announcement in November '97 by Saskatchewan's Agriculture minister of the 13.4 million Canada-Saskatchewan agri-food innovation fund, farmers will continue their creative trend in business. And as we all know, when the agriculture sector is growing, the rest of the province's economic sector grows too.

So we continue the upward trend in employment around the province — a trend that in May 1997 saw the number of people working in Saskatchewan surge to 476,000, an all-time high for the province.

Even more encouraging is the fact that full-time jobs are increasing. On a year-to-year . . . year-to-date basis, full-time employment is up 3.1 per cent, while part-time employment is down 2.6 per cent. In fact 94 per cent of all jobs created last year, Mr. Speaker, were full-time jobs.

We are investing in social policy reform, targeting funding to fight child poverty, and improving the Family Income Plan. Saskatchewan's action plan for children is a key part of the government's social policy and involves partnerships with the Justice department, Municipal Government, Health, Education, Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, the Women's Secretariat, and Social Services.

In the Battlefords, we have the Battlefords partnership, promoting violence-free communities, a continuation of the position of family violence services coordinator working in partnership with The Battlefords Sexual Assault Centre, Battleford's Tribal Council Human Services Corporation, Catholic Family Services, Battlefords Health District, Interval House, the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), Saskatchewan Justice, and Saskatchewan Social Services.

We provided 1.3 million to help community-based projects such as wellness in Manitou; Neilburg and their wellness for children project; the Unity Kidsport with youth in action; Wilkie and District parks and recreation with the community summer activity centre; and the Battlefords Concern for Youth with

summer outings.

We increased basic care rates to foster parents. Sometimes families have needs that make it necessary for a child to go into foster care. Foster parents have a special role as part of that team that supports families and their children through difficult times. Through difficult times, they work with and support the child's family until they are ready to have the child returned home.

We have set tougher penalties, including the authority to suspend drivers' licences, for people who refuse to meet child support payments, so that those who are most vulnerable will be protected.

The people of this province have indicated that health care is still a priority for them. And it remains a priority for this government. Today we spend \$128 more per person on medicare than our neighbour to the west, Alberta. And we do it without user fees or premiums.

We have forged a new partnership with the doctors of the province this year and believe that this will help achieve a more stable, secure, and accessible system. We are committed to working with all other health care workers to reach similar partnerships.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the best health care system in Canada. We have the best health care workers. We will move into the 21st century with the best health care facilities and continuing developments of the new Saskatchewan Health Information Network, thus providing the latest in online information.

Thursday the member from North Battleford was bent out of shape over a press release with a typo error. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that he is more concerned about his ego than with the contents of the press release.

The issue is the importance of twinning not only the Trans-Canada Highway but also the well-travelled Yellowhead. The Romanow government made its position on twinning very clear when it released its transportation strategy last spring. At that time the province committed to twin the Trans-Canada. The province's decision to twin our major highways within 15 years was made in balance with provincial needs in health care, education, social services, and the \$2 million a day we must pay in interest on the debt left to us.

An Hon. Member: — Where did that debt come from, I wonder?

Ms. Murrell: — It came to us by the former Conservative government.

The question in the mouths of many people: is Saskatchewan ready for all of this growth? Are we ready for the 21st century? So we asked a blue ribbon panel of business leaders these questions. The response — a loud, clear, and simple yes. We are ready. We are ready for the 21st century and we are ready for all this growth.

Due to the fiscal responsibility of this government,

Saskatchewan now has an A credit rating across the board. This credit rating provides greater opportunities for Saskatchewan people to market Saskatchewan products. And with the globalization of trade, we must have that opportunity. We have no choice. We must compete with markets beyond our own borders if we are to survive.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I stand in support of the throne speech for the third session of the twenty-third legislature and against the amendment. I am proud of the way in which this government works with the people of Saskatchewan. I am proud of the people of Saskatchewan, who recognize the need for growth, the need to change, to meet challenges for today and tomorrow. I am proud to represent the people of Battleford-Cut Knife, truly examples of the spirit of Saskatchewan.

There is still much to be done, but we as leaders can work in a cooperative and encouraging manner to ensure a secure future for all. Let us continue to invest in people so that people continue to invest in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is really a pleasure to be back for the third session of the twenty-third legislature, and I want to welcome all my colleagues on all sides of the House. And I look forward in working with everyone as we proceed to represent the people of Saskatchewan.

I want to welcome the Clerk and all the people that work for us and to thank them for the work they do. And I'm happy to be here with you, Mr. Speaker. I have had the great pleasure of having you in my constituency two years in a row. You've done wonderful work. People have really appreciated you coming and presenting a non-partisan view of what we do in our legislature. It has made it easier for me to go on follow-up trips and talk to people in the schools. I think you're doing great work.

I want to praise you for this because you're one of the first Speakers in a provincial House to go out and speak to people and to tell them about our system which you and I . . . That's one thing we hold in common — we respect our parliamentary democracy and will do things to work for it. And I want to thank you for doing that, for you doing that, Mr. Speaker.

I'm so proud to represent the people of Lloydminster. The constituency that I represent is on the proper side of the border, not on the right side of the border, Mr. Speaker. And I want to tell you that it's because of the good policies of our government that my constituency is doing as well as it is, and I will speak further to that.

But I just want to tell you something about the people that I represent, and I will be eternally grateful for the people of the Lloydminster constituency for giving me the opportunity to stand here and speak for them and represent them every day of the year. I have a constituency that is made up of very small "c" conservative people, but very progressive people.

In my constituency we are . . . we have people that are cattle

ranchers. We make up about 28 per cent of the cattle that is produced. We have a very fledgling but progressive game farming industry. People are doing very well. We have the traditional farming and the traditional crops. And farmers in my area are extremely industrious.

We have many small businesses. Also, because of the oil industry we have many service industries and small oil companies that have originated — and are owned right by Saskatchewan people — and originated right in the town that I live on . . . live in.

And I want to say that just two Saturdays ago, opened a beautiful facility of J&P Trucking in Maidstone, and this young entrepreneur and his wife have a fleet of 15 oil trucks and water trucks. They've purchased the old Maidstone hospital and have converted an old building into five beautiful suites and also have a fleet of offices that serves their company. This office was closed when our brand-new hospital was opened on the other side of town — a gorgeous new hospital that serves all of us in our town.

So my constituency is . . . I suppose I know all members feel this way about their constituencies, but it is an area that is . . . that I'm tremendously proud of. And when I travel across the province, I realize all the rest of you are proud of your areas. But you can't match the people from my area for progressiveness and for getting to it and doing the job, Mr. Member from Rosetown-Elrose. You may have — Rosetown-Biggar — you may have good people but mine are better. I'm sorry to say this.

I want to say that, that I'm very proud of the upgrader deal. I can remember when the federal government and the . . . and the Alberta government were selling their shares in the Husky Bi-Provincial upgrader, 7 cents on the dollar, and we bought. And we had enough foresight to put in \$43 million more into the deal. It wasn't a deal, with some people, was that popular. The Alberta government and federal government lost many millions of dollars.

We put some faith into the area. It gave us 1,200 spin-off jobs. The people of Lloydminster . . . of the city of Lloydminster have told me time and time again how grateful they were to the Saskatchewan government for having that faith. I mean, it was a mothball stage at that time.

But we had that faith in the industry and we put the money in. And this year we were able to sell our shares to our private partner, Husky, and they are going to continue some of the good work. They're going to actually increase the size of the upgrader — double its capacity — we heard the president speaking at a news conference. And that is working really well.

That upgrader was a deal . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I will try to continue, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. Order, order, order, All hon. members will, I know, with great enthusiasm want to put their records . . . remarks on the record. But right now the hon. member for Lloydminster is the one who has the floor. And I'll ask all hon. members to allow her to continue unabated in the debate.

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have some good news that we have cogeneration . . .

An Hon. Member: — Not more good news?

Ms. Stanger: — Yes, more good news. A cogeneration project that we will have with the Husky upgrader. SaskPower will be getting 210 megawatts of power from this deal. It uses, it uses waste from the upgrader so it's good for the environment. It provides us with a steady source of power, which is excellent also.

And I just want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . or Mr. Chair of Committees, I want to say that I'm proud to follow the member from Wascana Plains and the seconder from Estevan in this debate. They were excellent speeches. I was very proud to sit with people like this and the speeches that they gave were tremendous.

The throne speech charts a course for Saskatchewan's journey into a new year and beyond that into a new century and a new millennium. The throne speech announces that we will continue to build and prosper the Saskatchewan way by working together as a community by building on the values of our people, community, and by going along with the philosophy of equality, cooperation, compassion, and common sense — and the most important thing — by investing in people. People have always been the most important aspect of Saskatchewan. It is the people and their ingenuity that has built this province and made it great like it is.

(1530)

I just want to give you some economic snapshots because it gives an indication of what investing in people has done in this province. For the first 11 months last year, crude oil production was up by 12 per cent, gold sales climbed by 40 per cent, potash was up by 18 per cent, and forestry exports grew by 54.4 per cent. The provincial government's move to reduce royalties on oil and potash will help support further growth in 1998.

And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I was to an oilman's banquet on Friday night with my seat mate, the member from Meadow Lake, and there were 800 people present and they gave us a warm welcome because the folks are very pleased with royalty adjustments. And I want to thank my colleague, the Minister of Energy and Mines, who has worked very hard on this file.

I also want to say when I'm talking about . . . And as I'm talking and giving accolades, I have to say that I have to thank my colleague, the Minister of Finance, who has worked with the Minister of Energy and Mines on this file.

Okay. Now when we look at another aspect of economic snapshots — processing, food processing has led the way. Food processing showed the strongest growth of all the manufacturing sectors last year with an increase of 26.6 per cent in 1997 compared to 1996. And manufacturing shipments rose by 15.4 per cent overall during the same period.

Now statistics are great, but they don't really give people a feeling of what it is out there. So our food processing increased. What does that mean? So I decided to go the Department of

Agriculture and get some projects, some examples of projects, because it just tells you how innovative the people are and how we have been able to facilitate some of this growth.

Popowich Milling from Yorkton — it produces oat flour, granola, oat bran, oatmeal cereal, and rolled oats. Delsa Food Processors from Delisle — it produces mayonnaise, salads, prepared vegetables. Last Mountain Berry Farms, another example of food processing, is from Southey, Saskatchewan. And its products are jam and jellies and wholesale syrups. And the Riese's Canadian Lake Wild Rice, this is a food processing in La Ronge. And the products are wild rice and wild rice cereal, pancake mix and snacks.

Another example is right here in Regina, Western Pre-Bake Ltd. And the products are bakery products — bread, buns, doughnuts, cookies, muffins, and pastry.

And I want to say that I'm proud of these projects that we have been able to facilitate. But let's put it bluntly: the people themselves have been innovative, entrepreneurial, and they've gone ahead and taken the risk. And I want to congratulate them.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, to take the real throne speech by a real government, performed by a real political party representing real people, to take that document and compare it to the phoney platform hinted at by the punitive leader of the non-elected party. And you know who I'm talking about, Mr. Speaker.

The throne speech will never be delivered . . . their throne speech will never be delivered in this Assembly. The platform outlined by the Leader of the Tory opposition the other day, well let's put it this way, Mr. Chair of Committee, his speech was very interesting but was full of holes.

He said his party looks beyond political labels, and then he labels his party as being from the right. As if that was a surprise to me or anybody else in this House. His party is so far to the right that it's fallen off the edge and had to go around and climb back on again.

Then he said that the Tory Party is built on principles. He didn't say what the principles were, but as the member from Wascana Plains said, their actions provide their own rhetoric.

What about the principle of loyalty? Let me say to you, Mr. Chair of Committee, that loyalty is one of the most important aspects to my personal and public life. Loyalty is a thing that I stand by. The Leader of the Opposition didn't bother to offer a definition of the principle of loyalty.

How about the principle of honesty? Does crossing your fingers behind your back when you sign an oath cancel the oath? According to the member from Melfort-Tisdale, it does.

One of you, the current Liberal leader said to his previous caucus, one of you will betray me before the ink is dry. Is it I, leader? said the member from Kelvington-Wadena. Well the Liberal leader was wrong, but one — not one but four — of his followers used the same knives that they previously used on the previous leader.

A party built on principle? Give me a break, give me a break, Mr. Chair of Committees. And the platform. What is the platform? Let's just put it this way: our throne speech charts a path towards elimination of child poverty, a workable plan on which I will say more in a moment.

I just want to read some quotes from the throne speech because it was written so well. I thought that this throne speech was one of the best written throne speeches since I've been here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — And I just want to quote these because I think they bear repeating:

My Government will introduce amendments to *The Saskatchewan Assistance Act* to implement the **Building Independence - Investing in Families** strategy. Through this fundamental reform of welfare, we will be creating:

A new **Child Benefit**, starting July 1998, that will have both provincial and national components. This Child Benefit will be the first new national social program in 30 years;

And what it does is assist working families that don't have the income to do all of the things that they need. It will give them a hand up. I think it's a great program.

A new **Saskatchewan Employment Supplement;**

new supplementary **Family Health Benefits;**

and **training programs** that create bridges to employment for Saskatchewan people.

And as the throne speech says:

Our province will continue to act on our compassion for those who are genuinely in need. That is what friends and neighbours do in a community. We will also continue to work to ensure that no one takes undue advantage of friends and neighbours who have sincerely offered a helping hand.

And that's the balance always in Saskatchewan.

Investing in families and people is also about safe communities, Mr. Chair of Committees, and that is what we want — safe communities to live in. In fact, I have many constituents that have moved back and have said to me one of the things that they appreciate is that they still, in our town, can leave their door open when they go uptown. And that's the thing people really value is safe communities.

And the throne speech said, my government will continue to implement a provincial 911 system.

My government will implement **a number of other important initiatives** this session at the provincial level, in partnership with police officers and prosecutors, to help protect citizens from serious and violent offenders;

And some of these other initiatives are, for instance, an example of it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the victims services program. I think this is just a wonderful program. We have initiated it in 17 communities in Saskatchewan now, working with the RCMP, and the newest one was in Lloydminster, in our area. And it will service Lloydminster and Maidstone and Turtleford and many volunteers were involved. The Minister of Justice came down and he made a commitment of a yearly budget for these folks and they are very pleased with that. And let me tell you that we are working hand in hand with the RCMP in this province to create many good partnerships.

I was at a banquet Saturday night — 125th year of the RCMP — and we had distinguished visitors, Inspector Rebayka from Saskatoon and Inspector McIlrick from Regina. Both of these men have been in the RCMP 32 years and 25 years, and they both said that they started their careers in Saskatchewan. They are ending their careers in Saskatchewan and they said, of all the provinces that they have served in, and both the gentlemen at the table have served in nine provinces and two territories, they said that the people of Saskatchewan are the most supportive to the RCMP of any province. I was very surprised at that, but . . . I shouldn't say surprised, but it just added another thing to my list of what we are good at. And both of these gentlemen said that they were very happy to come back to Saskatchewan and serve here. They said it was a pleasure.

And the other thing that we have promised in the throne speech is to reform the young offenders system. And I want to say a few words about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to say a few words about reforming the young offender system which is mentioned in the throne speech.

First, I want to remind all of us that writing criminal law is a federal responsibility. Provincial justice systems function within that law and have only the force of persuasion at hand to change the law. Given that restriction, I believe it is responsible and necessary, if regrettable, that we are pressing at a national level for reform of the law concerning young offenders. It is a responsibility of all us to set . . . that people are safe in their communities and on their streets and in their homes. And we would be naïve to suggest that there are not dangerous offenders who happen to be young for whom the current law is inadequate. We are attempting to change that.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize and underline what other speakers on this side, including the Premier, have said. The change we are urging is not an assault on all children — 99.5 per cent of our kids are good kids, as the member from Wascana Plains said. They are our present joy and our future comfort.

According to the opposition, the way to handle the minuscule number of dangerous offenders would be to take all children in infancy and throw them in jail. We do not believe in vendetta against youth. As His Honour said, "Our watchword, in this area as in all others, is balance." The people of Saskatchewan expect us to maintain our common sense and our compassion. We intend to listen to them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in England in the 18th century, a hungry 12-year-old boy was hung because he stole a loaf of bread. We don't promise . . . we don't propose to return to those days.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me just say this: if we treat our young people today with the attitude favoured by members of the opposition, God help us when they . . . when we turn things over to them because no governments last for ever.

Mr. Speaker, I am a grandmother, a mother, and a former teacher. My children and most of my former students are out in the workforce. My grand kids will be there before I know it. So for fairly selfish reasons, I'm delighted to . . . with the focus of the throne speech and that is investing in education and the direction that the speech focuses on families and their needs and their concerns and their future.

I want to say here unequivocally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I support the public education system. I believe in my heart that I would not be standing here today if it wasn't for the public education system. And I can tell you that I came from a family that was not well off. They were hard-working people and I don't apologize for that, but they were not well off. There was no way that my parents could have afforded to send me to private schools or to a private university or to have paid that tuition fee.

(1545)

When I went to teachers' college, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had that time . . . the government of that time had just begun with student loans. And I was able to borrow \$900, paid for my tuition fee and my room and board and I went to teachers' college. Then I was able — because with one year training in those days you could get a job — and I was able to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, the government of that day was a CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) government. But I was able to, at that time, go back and teach for a year, save some money, and go back to university.

Let me say again, I can't emphasize enough how important a very strong public education is. When I think of some of my friends in the United States . . . And let me be frank here. Some of the schools are very good there but most of them are private schools, and if you do not have the \$5,000 tuition fee, the child cannot attend. And their public schools are crowded. The children are in classes of up to 45, and it is very scandalous.

I can tell you right now that if we do not, if we do not reaffirm our support for public education, some of the things will be happening in this province that are happening in Alberta. Again, I have many friends and relatives and colleagues in Alberta. And in the city of Calgary, it is scandalous some of the things that are happening. Because that government does have a lot more money than we do and they are cutting education to the point where a number of friends, who are by the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, supporters of our party, but they are sending their kids to public schools, scrimping and saving because the schools in their area have gotten down to such a level that they cannot in all conscience send their children there.

The government in that province has allowed a deterioration of the public school system. And I can tell you I hope I never see the day that that will happen here.

When I think of what the post-secondary situation is where we were cut 100 million and more to the post-secondary education

system, and we back-filled that 100 percent, and that then put a strain on our budget for the K to 12 system.

But we are determined and my children and my grandchildren, my children, all, all two of them — I only have two daughters, but both of them went to university, public school, elementary school, then high school, finished their university, one with two degrees, one with one. My sons-in-law also the same, and I hope to see my grandchildren do that.

My young . . . one of my grandchildren is in French immersion in this . . . in Regina. And I have to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, she won a contest, an oratory contest the other day and I'm very proud of Sonia because I think she's the chip off the old block.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — So education is very important to me, and post-secondary education is important. And this government will support a public education system.

I want to talk about the twinning of the highways — Highway 1 and 16. What really infuriates me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that Alberta, when they twinned their highways, 50 cents on every mile was paid by the federal government. Where was this province in the '80s when we could have at least twinned those highways on 50 cent dollars? Now we are having to do it on dollar for dollar.

The Alberta government, at least I have to say one thing for them: they might not be great advocates of education and health, but on infrastructure they've done very well over there. And at least they took advantage of the time when the federal government was giving 50 cent dollars.

What were we doing? What were we doing with our millions of . . . where were our millions of dollars going? I'd just like to know. At least if we have a highway — at least if we had two highways.

And now I hear these members going on and on and on. Well where were they in the '80s? Alberta was twinning their roads on 50 cent dollars. They don't have to . . . they don't have to put a dollar up for every dollar now. And here we are, not only left billions of dollars in debt, now we have to come up with a dollar for dollar to twin those highways. I can tell you that that is one of my priorities for my constituency.

We need two schools in Lloydminster, we need a new health centre in Turtleford, we need to have our highway twinned, and we need 306 rebuilt. And I will work very hard. I promise the people of Lloydminster that I have done and will do all I can to have that achieved even though there were a great deal of advantages that were passed by during the '80s, Mr. Speaker.

I really do believe that I've almost come to the end of my remarks, Mr. Speaker. And let me just say that again it's been a privilege to stand here to speak on the throne speech. I will be supporting the throne speech. I will not be supporting the amendment. And I look forward to hearing the rest of my colleagues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Chairman, it's indeed my pleasure to rise today on behalf of the people of my constituency in Arm River and certainly the people of the province of Saskatchewan to enter the debate over the Speech from the Throne. A smoke and mirrors speech, Mr. Speaker, from the Premier of Saskatchewan to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Premier quotes Shakespeare when he says the past is no guarantee of the future. And this is so true when it comes to health care in this province. The NDP pat themselves on the back, Mr. Speaker, when they say they created medicare in the past. But that is no guarantee for the future. And of course the NDP have proved that point with their irresponsible handling, Mr. Chair, of health reform in this province.

I'd like to point out a few examples of the outcomes of health care reform in this province, Mr. Chairman, and to use the member of Lloydminster's own words, some snapshots of the outcomes of some of the health care reform initiatives in this province.

Of course one of the huge issues that we have today of course, Mr. Chairman, is the closure of the Plains hospital dispute where over a hundred thousand people have let it be known that they're against the closure of that institution, Mr. Chairman. And what has the Premier done? Continued on the path.

Another result of an outcome, or a snapshot of health reform results is the lay-off of some 600 nurses in Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman — 600 nurses. Now those are the folks that provide front-line care to people in this province that most need it, the sick.

Another outcome, another snapshot, Mr. Chairman, is the creation of a two-tier system where we now have those who can afford to pay or those that belong to a private care plan and can get the service, and those that can't afford it and therefore do without.

We can talk about, Mr. Chairman, if you want to talk about Betaseron, for example, those drugs for the MS (multiple sclerosis) sufferers. Some people are now on the plan; some people were on the plan, were receiving it through a private plan through their business or place of work. There were some people that could afford it, but there's so many that can't afford it and were not able to get it.

Mr. Chairman, we've seen another outcome, another snapshot of the results of health reform, and that's the gutting of our drug plan. I can stand here for 15 minutes talking about numbers as to what has happened since 1991, since this government came to power, with our drug plan. We see today where we have many of our elderly people that are on fixed incomes rationing the drugs that the doctors are telling them that they need to use because they simply can't afford it. They go and get their dose which should last for a month and they make it last for two months, Mr. Chairman. Another example.

We've seen the creation of huge waiting-lists for people that

need life-and-death surgery, Mr. Chairman. We can only hope and pray that it doesn't happen to our family where we have a loved one that is seriously ill and can't get into the surgery they need. Can you imagine having a close relative, a close friend, loved one, waiting three or four months for cancer surgery or something along that line and the waiting-list won't allow it?

Another snapshot, as the member from Lloydminster talks about, Mr. Chairman, is the rationing of procedures to the doctors, that the doctors need to perform. And that has, of course, driven away many of our highly skilled specialists in this province because they are trained to practice, and when they are rationed, they'll not stay here.

Another snapshot, Mr. Chairman. We've seen the closure of dozens of facilities, hundreds and hundreds of beds across this province being closed. And certainly that has attributed to, in great measure, the massive waiting-lists that we have today. People have nowhere to go any more to recuperate, recover from surgery, respite, all those things, Mr. Chairman. The beds aren't there.

Another snapshot, Mr. Chairman, is the creation of an administrative nightmare in lieu of our front-line services. I talked about the 600-plus nurses that were laid off. And in its place we have three or four administrative assistants now talking about what should be done while the service is not being provided.

We have another snapshot, Mr. Chairman. We have a two-tier system between rural and urban. We see the people in rural Saskatchewan in a lot of cases not receiving the services that they need because they're not readily available. Our seniors, our elderly folks cannot travel to get them — 50, 60, 100 miles. And so we see a difference there.

We see the two-tier system of ambulances where the people in rural Saskatchewan that need the transporter paying for their ambulance.

Another snapshot, Mr. Chairman, is of course the piecemeal approach that this government has taken to attracting and maintaining our doctors in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on with this list, but I think that it speaks for itself and it does nothing more than give some credibility to the quote that the Premier used in his speech from Shakespeare in that the past is no guarantee of the future. If it's true, we keep hearing about it, Mr. Speaker, that the savers of medicare, the Tommy Douglas's of the past, that we're part of bringing in medicare. That was then, this is now. That was the CCF, this is the NDP. The past is no guarantee of the future. Just smoke and mirrors, Mr. Speaker, just smoke and mirrors.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk for a minute about our 911 system, or should I say the lack of a 911 system. One of the selling features that the Premier and the NDP used since the inception of health reform, was the fact that we would have a 911 system which would allow for emergency services particularly in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Well talk about is all we've got.

In rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we can talk about the piecemeal approach to a 911 system. And I'd like to use my

home town for example, Mr. Speaker, where in that town I live next to the ambulance hall. Now if this is progress, please tell me about it because if we need an ambulance, if I need an ambulance, I have to phone an 11-digit number in Regina to get the ambulance from next door to come and look after the problem that we have. Now tell me that's progress, Mr. Speaker. I don't think so.

Now before the ink was dry last month when the Premier announced the 911 system would be coming in, before the ink was dry he was already telling the taxpayers of this province that they would have to pay a dollar a month, Mr. Speaker, a dollar a month on their telephone bill to fund the 911 system. Now talk about taxation to the hilt, now here it is, Mr. Speaker. Backdoor taxation, smoke and mirrors, Mr. Speaker.

In his speech the Premier talked about investment in education and training, and I heard the member from Lloydminster talk about how proud she was of our system and about all that the government is doing. But empty words, Mr. Speaker, because the Premier's government has weaselled down to the lowest per cent of government funding in history. There is no commitment to education by this government, Mr. Speaker.

Of course we all know that the taxpayers pay for 100 per cent of the funding for education as we do everything else. But the interesting part of this is that the government has the nerve — the nerve, Mr. Speaker — to go back to the taxpayers, through the property base, to fund the lion's share of the costs.

Why is this? Why is this, Mr. Speaker? It's because of their mismanagement. Is it because of mismanagement? I think so. And deals like the NST. That was only \$16 million. It doesn't sound like much if you say it fast. Channel Lake, what's that going to cost us, Mr. Speaker? — 10 million? 15? 20, 30, 40? Maybe 100 million. Who knows? Guyana — what did that cost? Another boondoggle, Mr. Speaker.

Or maybe it has something to do with the patronage of Jack Messer. Maybe it has something to do with those costs and many more, Mr. Speaker. Add these up and I wonder what that money would do for our education system today.

(1600)

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk for a minute about agriculture from rural Saskatchewan, and that will be about 55 seconds longer than the Premier talked about it in his speech. Now can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, the backbone of our economy, the driving force of our economy in Saskatchewan is agriculture and the Premier can barely mention it. As the old saying goes, Mr. Speaker: so goes rural Saskatchewan, so goes urban Saskatchewan.

The lack of commitment, Mr. Speaker, to our road system. The Premier can only pay lip-service to our rail lines. I think the only train the Premier really cares about is the health care train that he's talked about in the past, that was leaving the station and anybody that wasn't on it would be left behind, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker. And one thing about it, the Premier has kept his word. He has left the sick and the elderly behind.

Why is there no money for our roads and our railroads? Yes, the

Premier is right when he said, we are still managing a bitter inheritance from the recent past. But it appears the Premier is giving the people of Saskatchewan his own bitter inheritance, and that of course is the NST fiasco, the Channel Lake fiasco, and the Guyana fiasco, and certainly the Jack Messer fiasco and his other patronage appointments. That will be his legacy and it certainly makes the GigaText, the Tory GigaText fiasco, look pretty small.

Now to wind up his smoke and mirrors speech, the Premier talked about consulting with the people of Saskatchewan as to how they would spend their modest surplus that the government has put together. And he says, and I quote: "My government has listened carefully . . ." I'll repeat that, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker. He says, "My government has listened carefully . . ." Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think so. I don't think he's listened at all and I don't think the people told him to do many of the things that he's doing.

I don't think he was told by the people to cancel the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contract — a mutually binding, legally binding contract. I don't think they told him to create havoc in the health care system and create huge waiting-lists. I don't think they told him to buy a power plant in Guyana. I don't think they told him to blow \$16 million in a NST deal across the border. I don't think they told him to invest money in New Zealand and lose 4 or \$5 million a year for six or seven years. I don't think they told him to raise utility rates. And I don't think they told him to pay Jack Messer a \$300,000 severance package.

So don't let the Premier, Mr. Speaker, tell us that he's listened to the people. I don't think he has. I think that this is just a smoke and mirrors speech, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure that the rest of this province will see it for what it is as well. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank you for this opportunity to rise in the House and address the House and the people that are watching over television on some of the concerns and ideas that we have about the Speech from the Throne that we recently heard.

But before we get into that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for the work that you did in the constituency, with the tours that you did to meet with the students to explain to them what happens in the House and how the House operates and why it does, and why you are dressed in such a strange manner. And I think if, as time progresses and you at some time want to decide what exactly you want to hide . . . hang your hat on, as far as your work in the House is concerned, I would suggest that that's probably one of the major achievements.

Because as we went to the three different schools that we visited in my constituency — VCA (Valley Christian Academy), Hague, and Rosthern — and met with students from division 3 and division 4, I think as we listened to their questions, and they were very often totally different sorts of questions from different schools, but it showed a number of things.

They knew something about the House; they didn't understand

it totally. And I think because of the visits, they have a new appreciation of what happens in the House, and a new interest and I also believe a new respect, that people would actually come out from the legislature, talk to them, visit with them, let them wear their hat, and all those sorts of things. I would like to commend you on that move and I enjoyed that opportunity of working with you at that particular time.

Okay. Back to the throne speech. I'd like to take some time to express my concern not only with the priorities laid out by the members opposite in their throne speech. And I think as we look at what was in that speech, it had some vague rumblings of the nothings that were in it last year.

There was a bit of sound and fury, but I think as the saying continues, signifying nothing. And as we listen to the sound and the fury, as I think everyone's realized, we've even listened to the people opposite, members of the government side talking about it, didn't have very much to say about the specific content. And I think that indicates that it really signified nothing, so as we deal about the priorities and the leadership that are being demonstrated through these particular actions.

I do believe, Mr. Speaker, there was probably, as we've debated the Speech from the Throne, I think there's one thing that's come through that and it may not have had anything specifically to do with the Speech from the Throne, but I think the direction that we see that the House has sort of gone in and the quality of debate and the direction of debate.

I'm reminded, Mr. Speaker, of a sport that most of us I think through our lives have engaged in, and some of us enjoyed very much, and that's fast ball. It used to be called softball back, you know, a decade or four ago.

But there's a bit of an analogy, I think, we can draw from that particular sport to what we've seen in the House, and I think it's a very important one to draw in view of many of the comments that have been made in the past two or three days. And because all of us have been involved in that sport, I think we can all appreciate this bit of an analogy.

We're all very well aware of how the situation is . . . and the times when we've gone up to bat and as we've crouched over the plate with great hopes for what the event would bring and maybe a beautiful hit and a lot of cheers, as we observe what's going on, we heard that the catcher is having a conversation with the umpire. And the pitcher out there is very carefully looking to see if his girlfriend is watching. The fellows out in the field are talking about the cars that are driving by, and the shortstop is chewing on a blade of grass.

And as each one of us stood there in that situation, something started to dawn on us. What starts to dawn on us is that actually we're very ineffective, and we're no threat. Because we also recall the situations on different teams or different leagues and with some more experience, where we've gone up to bat and the very first thing that happened is the catcher starts to talk to you and try to get your attention. The pitcher leans over and gets his resin bag and gets ready for the pitch. The infield moves in and gets poised. And there's no one chewing on a blade of grass. And the coach for the opposite team is hollering for all the people in the outfield where they're supposed to stand.

And suddenly when all of that attention is focused on you, Mr. Speaker, you realize that actually you're a threat and you're doing something well. And, Mr. Speaker, as we've listened to what's gone on in the House in the last while, and from the members opposite on the government's side, there's been a feeble attempt, as I already mentioned, to try and deal with it, with the content of the speech. And when there isn't much content, a feeble attempt doesn't get you very far at all.

But we also recall that most of their activities have been aimed over at this side at the Saskatchewan Party. And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, there's the analogy. That suddenly they're waking up and finding out that what's happening here is not the Premier and the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, it's the opposition — the Saskatchewan Party opposition. And they're very aware of what's going on. And as we start to hear the chirping even right now, Mr. Speaker, we realize that they understand that there is a party here that is doing something that is out there and we have the voice of the people and the concern of the people.

And I think every one of us, Mr. Speaker, every one of us in this House as we've been home throughout the last little while, particularly the last two, three days, as we've walked up and down the streets we know, Mr. Speaker, that I haven't seen one person in my constituency this last weekend admit that he was from the government side of the House. Because someone would have asked him, and what are you going to do about Jack Messer? And they would have said, tell Jack we want it back, Mr. Speaker.

And so I suggest that people out in the constituencies have no idea if their MLAs from the government side of the House were at home, because they probably weren't. And if they were, I'm sure they weren't telling anyone what was happening. And I'm sure they weren't out there for a time with coffee, because they would have been told that we want it back, Jack.

Okay, and as I just finished saying, before I brought that important analogy to your attention, Mr. Speaker, that actions speak much louder than words — much louder than words. In fact on that same note, the member from Lloydminster I believe it is — which is correctly pronounced, Mr. Speaker, Lloydminster not Lloydminister — but the questions have been raised time and again in question period, about what's happened with Channel Lake. I have yet to see the person representing Lloydminster applauding a single answer in response to the questions on Channel Lake and Jack Messer. And as I said earlier on, actions speak much louder than words — much louder than words.

It was quite clear by last week's occurrences that government priorities are not health care or education or highways as the throne speech would have us believe. As you recall, there wasn't much in there on that.

No, Mr. Speaker, this government is more concerned about giving patronage appointments to their political hacks and then rewarding them with taxpayers' dollars when they mess up beyond belief.

An Hon. Member: — How many dollars was that?

Mr. Heppner: — That was millions. It would have been most people's pay cheque with about six or eight zeros added after that, Mr. Speaker.

In the last week I have had the privilege of talking to people in Saskatoon, Regina, Swift Current, Prince Albert, my own constituency, and travelling down the Yellowhead Highway all the way to Russell, Manitoba to visit my kids on the weekend. I tried to talk to a few other people on the way there as well.

And the Channel Lake situation keeps coming up again and again. And they're asking, what's happening with my tax dollars? Did I actually pay for that fiasco? Did I pay for that \$5 million?

Well, Mr. Speaker, the good news probably is they have already paid for it, which is probably a whole lot better than having to tell them that they're going to get a bill in the mail saying, would you please pay for it.

Because, Mr. Speaker, as they've listened to the goings on in Channel Lake, SaskEnergy, SaskPower, and all those sorts of things, the questions that come to mind is, how is this going to be addressed through the throne speech? How will it be addressed when the budget comes along a little later on? And they haven't heard an answer. They listened to the throne speech and there was nothing in there that gave them a feeling of confidence, Mr. Speaker, that actually Channel Lake was going to be dealt with.

And yet the thing is so simple. There's a contract there and the person selling doesn't even read the contract, which in itself is highly unusual, Mr. Speaker. Because you and I have bought cars. All of us have bought cars and trucks and vehicles and houses and land, and it seems to be that usually it's the seller that draws up the contract and the buyer reads it and decides to sign it or not to sign it.

In this case, Mr. Speaker, it happened to be the other way around. The buyer got to decide what he was going to pay. The buyer changed it and someone — oops! — didn't even make a mistake. They didn't even read it.

(1615)

Mr. Speaker, there's always a chance that all of us make mistakes and we've all made a few. However, Mr. Speaker, when you don't even read it, is much more of a mistake and a disaster than when you read it and you maybe don't understand it. Five million dollars. That's the same outfit, Mr. Speaker, that I believe is interested in investing throughout the world — places where they speak Spanish. What in the world would these people do, Mr. Speaker, if they were reading a contract in Spanish? I dread to think how many dollars we would throw away, Mr. Speaker.

And maybe that's where this whole thing comes from, Mr. Speaker, in the dealings they've had in other countries where they couldn't read it; they've learned just to sign and not read, and they're doing the same thing now. It is a disaster. It will be paid for. Most of it has been paid for, and hopefully as the statement goes, we would like to get it back.

Mr. Speaker, I could and probably will go on at length about the shameful acts of Jack Messer and the NDP government as it relates to Channel Lake. Interesting question — speaking of contracts. We just can't seem to find out exactly what the price was that Channel Lake charged for the gas. So maybe the reason they made this money that they said they made, which covered up the costs, is actually because as utility users in Saskatchewan we paid a padded bill. And so as we often say, our utility rates are often a form of taxation. I think they were this time, Mr. Speaker, just to pay for that.

But first I would like to illustrate how this government's actions, as I spoke earlier on, speak louder than words in another area. In their throne speech, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite say they're dedicated to fighting youth crime and lobbying the federal government to bring about changes to the Young Offenders Act.

Well that's a hard statement to really believe when you follow up with the actions. Because the Young Offenders Act, Mr. Speaker, has needed changes for decades. We've known that. And yet, Mr. Speaker, when I spent some time in North Battleford because of the thing that happened with North Battleford that has hurt so many people there — the murder of a lady that was taking care of two young offenders — at that point, Mr. Speaker, our Justice minister said there really isn't a problem. There really isn't a problem.

That's the same Young Offenders Act, Mr. Speaker, that we have had for years. And now he's sort of halfway onside — halfway onside. Probably as onside as the Justice critic for the Liberal Party was, Mr. Speaker, when he was on a talk show, and he gets one phone call that wasn't too, you know, supportive of his position. He gets another one and suddenly he wasn't there any more. Reception just faded right out.

And they looked on their radios, the people wanted to hear what the Justice critic from North Battleford had to say and two little . . . one little word appeared up on the little dial, it was gone. And they looked for that radio station "GONE", it was gone. What a shame. There were people in Saskatchewan who wanted answers from all three parties on this issue and the government side said, no problem. The Liberal Justice critic was gone, couldn't find him on the radio, couldn't find him anywhere's else. He's shown up later on and he has some views on it and I'm glad at least that he has some.

But I think that the Young Offenders Act has to be looked at. Looked at not with the idea of throwing people in jail with adults and becoming hardened, ugly criminals. Because there's a number of things we have put into our background on the Young Offenders Act, Mr. Speaker. First of all, the great majority of young people in this province are honest. Everyone of us would trust them with our cars. We would trust them with our jobs. We would trust them with our kids, and we do, Mr. Speaker, when we let them babysit our families. I think it shows some of the trust that we have in them.

But there is unfortunately a small group of our youth that are young offenders and, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the young people themselves are upset about this was shown about a year ago when Miller High School students collected over 14,000 signatures. These were students, Mr. Speaker, who felt that

there were other young people out there that needed the Young Offenders Act changed so that these people's good reputation would not be besmirched; to make their society that they were moving into and going to be taken control of in a couple of years . . . would be a better society.

So the concern over the Young Offenders Act does not just come from old, grey-haired men like myself. It comes from people in Miller High School, and I believe virtually every single high school in this province. And we need to listen to them. We now have, as I said . . . the Liberal critic is listening. The Justice minister has said that yes, there's going to be . . . taking some action on that. But I think there's a few things that we need to outline on the Young Offenders Act, that we have to look at.

A good Young Offenders Act has to accomplish two or three things. One thing it has to accomplish is we have to have something in there for rehabilitation. Because, Mr. Speaker, it is my firm belief that everyone of us in this House has made a mistake somewhere's in their life, and we were given all a second chance. And I believe we've all taken it, with maybe a few exceptions, and we've turned our lives around and I think our young people need that same kind of a chance. And that is the purpose, Mr. Speaker, of any program that has a rehabilitation component in it. It is to give these people the skills, the opportunity, to turn their lives around and be the contributing people to society that they can actually be.

I was very comforted when I think of what's going to happen in the future in Saskatchewan when we had, at the opening of this session, we had three schools represented here where students had written those three essays, dealing basically with government things and those kinds of ideals. I felt that was very positive for a number of reasons.

First of all, that these young people were interested enough to have written on that particular topic and have done that well on it. The other thing that I personally took a certain amount of pride in, is that out of those three teachers that brought those three groups here, one I'd had as an intern in a previous life. And he'd been an excellent intern and now he's teaching in a Regina school and doing very well.

The other one was a young fellow that sat in my grade 10 social studies/history class decades ago when he was in grade 10. And he's now the principal at Herbert and he was here with a group of kids. And I said, there's another young person that has done very well for himself and now contributes to society.

So I think we need to have that rehabilitation in there. If we don't do that and don't do it well, Mr. Speaker, the costs to our society are going to be great. The costs will be there in a lack of security for people. The costs will be there that we will be forced to fund them in some sort of institution of some type. And so we need to make sure they're rehabilitated.

Young Offenders Act also needs to have a certain component to it, Mr. Speaker, that gives the public a feeling of safety in their communities. And, Mr. Speaker, as you're very well aware, Regina is now the number one capital of break-ins in Canada, Saskatoon not far behind at number three. Not a very comforting thought.

Last year I believe, we had a whole situation with stolen cars, where we came in probably first in the country as well. That shouldn't happen, because when people realize they live in a city that is first or third in Canada for break-ins, it doesn't give you very comforting thoughts when you go to bed to know that every other city in Canada there is less of a chance that you will be broken into that night than in your own home, in your own bed, in Regina or in Saskatoon.

And I think our Young Offenders Act needs to have the kind of teeth in there that people just don't keep reoffending. I'd like to give you an example, Mr. Speaker, just to underline this, from a community in my constituency, thankfully is not a crime-riddled constituency. And yet it is there. But here's an example to indicate what actually happens out there . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And the members from Saskatoon are trying to underline the fact that their city is not crime ridden. And I love Saskatoon but I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that if you check the records, my community and my constituency is a safer place to be.

But here's what happened in one community in my constituency, and it happened, Mr. Speaker, within the last two months. A couple of young fellows were working on a car. When they were done — and they worked fairly late at night on these cars, as young fellows do — they walked out of the shop where they were working, on the yard, and they climbed back into his car to find out that his car had been broken into and his radio had been taken and his telephone and a few other odds and ends.

As chance would have it, Mr. Speaker, there was a skip of snow that had fallen that night, and so he followed the tracks. And they took him downtown and around town a little ways, back out of town near the town shop. And there he came across three young fellows who were the very people that had broken into his vehicle. Well he managed to capture two of them. The third one ran off — unfortunately that was the one that had the telephone. But being the kind, considerate sort that he was, he decided rather than to deal with it himself he called the police officers. The RCMP came and said, oh these are the three. We just had them earlier on in the evening for the same sort of thing.

So, Mr. Speaker, here you had a situation where the young offenders committed a crime earlier on in the evening, they were caught, the police met with them, dealt with them as best they could — and how they can is part of the Young Offenders Act — and within hours on the same evening in the same community, Mr. Speaker, they perpetrated another act of theft and vandalism, and the RCMP couldn't do much more with that.

That shouldn't be happening. That kind of insecurity that it creates in the hearts and minds of the citizens of this province shouldn't be the fact. And so the Young Offenders Act has to have a component in it that ensures safety for each one of us.

The Young Offenders Act has to have a third component. The first one is rehabilitation; the second one is the safety that it has to provide for the community; but the third one is that there need to be some consequences. And as I've gone around the province — some people use the word punishment and some

use the word consequences — there's no difference between those two.

What has to be there is that when the young offender perpetrates a crime he knows something is going to happen to him. And you can call it a punishment, you can call it a consequence; but he knows there's going to be an event that's going to take place because he's perpetrated that crime. And that event should be such that it makes him say, I would prefer not to do this again.

And if we like the word consequences, we'll stay with that. If you like to sound a little more hard over like punishment, it's the same sort of thing. We need to have that. Our Young Offenders' Act is weak on all three of those areas.

And I would like, Mr. Speaker, to have all three people from the three parties, the critics and the Justice minister together, to go down to Ottawa and to sit down. We're not coming down here with diverse, different opinions. We know that there's a problem; we have some idea for solutions. Let's all sit down together and work through a solution we can all live with, we can all support, because it will help all of our communities. And that ultimately, Mr. Speaker, is why we're here, is we represent communities — we represent communities. We need to work with those.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that as we talk about the justice, there's another interesting little sideline that has nothing to do with the young offenders. But it's the matter of the people that have insufficient funds to hire expensive legal aid. And, Mr. Speaker, I've had a number of phone calls on this issue.

I had a phone call this morning from a person who cannot afford an expensive lawyer and he says, I have the feeling that the people that I get in Legal Aid aren't the same quality that if I had hundreds of thousands of dollars at my disposal, have the kind of money at their disposal that maybe government has. And they feel that they're disadvantaged in that particular area. And I think we need to look at that as well.

As I said earlier, when we're talking about the young offenders, most of our kids are good kids. But in the discussion — and this came up in Swift Current and I think it needs to be brought to our attention here as well, Mr. Speaker — is that when we're talking about . . . the question came up, why all these young offenders?

And I said, well some kids make bad choices. Some kids have no hope. They live in a situation where, when they get up in the morning and they look at their immediate environment, there is nothing there to give them the feeling that, I can rise above this. If I do this and this I'll be able to achieve something in life. They have no hope, and if they have no hope, then what are they losing by perpetrating a crime on society. So we have to work on that component.

There is one other one, and I think it's one that we need to address but it comes through from a little different angle, and that is that many of these young offenders are there because of fetal alcohol syndrome, Mr. Speaker. And that is one where even though we have to work with these young people, and we have to make sure that we protect society, we know that the

chance of success is very slim.

These young people, Mr. Speaker, do not have the sense of conscience and right and wrong and the ability to make rational decisions that some of the other young people have that stay out of trouble.

And the question came from a person when I had that meeting in Swift Current — that was probably one of the most critical questions there, is what can we do to stop that pipeline of critical kids coming through on that young offenders situation, and maybe especially the ones with fetal alcohol syndrome. And that one is outside the realm, Mr. Speaker, of the Young Offenders Act.

(1630)

And I think we have to deal with that with legislation that affects that whole area of pregnant mothers and the children that they are bearing. Last year, Mr. Speaker, it was brought up in this House, some of the tentative legislation that we put on some of the information that was received at liquor board stores, saying that this substance could be dangerous to pregnant mothers and their offspring.

And I think we have to go further down that road, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we don't keep that pipeline full of fetal alcohol syndrome kids, because they cannot be held responsible for what they're doing, and yet society has to keep on dealing with them. That is a serious problem, Mr. Speaker. It's not part of the Young Offenders Act but we have to keep working with that.

Next, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a little bit about education, a little bit about education. There've been a couple of things that have sort of reared their unfortunate, ugly heads in the last month or two. One was the results that students in university made on a test dug out of, I think it was 1934, grade 10 geometry, I believe what it was. And the results were very poor.

I've been looking for a 1934 geometry grade 10 exam, Mr. Speaker, because I have a funny feeling I'd like to challenge it. I think everyone in this House would like to challenge it. They'd probably like to do it quietly on their own with the answer book beside them to see how well they could actually do, but I think we'd like to know what happened there and why that happened.

But something more recent on the same vein, Mr. Speaker. There were some tests made of students in our public school system dealing with math scores. And we didn't do that well, Mr. Speaker. When I found out that Saskatchewan students had taken that test I said, I hope we come first because having been in the education system, I know there are good kids, good boards, good teachers. Surely out of that, there would be some good marks, and I think there probably were. And I thought we would rank fairly high. Number one, it's a little tough to get, but I would have been happy with two or three or four or five — it would have been the top half, and the top half is not bad.

But, Mr. Speaker, we came last. We came dead last. Dead last, Mr. Speaker, is not good enough. Now I'm not sure where else they gave that exam where people might have done better than

that, but we came last.

Well, Mr. Speaker, our Education minister took this to heart. Our Education minister took this to heart, and so she should have. And I was duly proud of her, Mr. Speaker, that she said we're going to deal with this problem and we're going to fix it. Immediate, I thought, we were going to have answers and our students will rise to the top, where Saskatchewan students should always be.

And so what did she do, Mr. Speaker? Well she's going to spend a quantity of money, somewhat similar to the amount that Jack Messer is getting and — a little less, but it's in the same number of figures on the left-hand side of the decimal place — and they're going to analyse, Mr. Speaker, our Saskatchewan curriculum. Well offhand that doesn't sound like as bad idea because maybe these students . . . there's something wrong with the curriculum, and in the math class they're actually doing something different.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I went ahead and asked some of the people that I've spoken to in the last while about that solution. And you know, Mr. Speaker, it was amazing how almost every one of those people, when I gave them the problem, I could see by the glint in their eye they had the solution. I said, if in fact the minister is right that it has to be the curriculum that's going to be tampered with or fixed or something of that sort — or something of that sort — if it's our curriculum that puts us in last place, then what would be the solution, Mr. Speaker, to get us into first place?

And there would be about a two-three second blank look and then the eyes would light up. Because the answer, Mr. Speaker, that came from everyone out there is: well then let's go to the province that did the best and take their curriculum. We could just dial up, that should cost not more than a dollar or two, and a minute or five, and say: could we have a look at your curriculum. We'd get it faxed down and there we'd have it.

We might even have to pay them for it, but I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, it would have been a lot less money and wouldn't be on a long, drawn out thing like this one probably will. Because, Mr. Speaker, personally I've been involved with curriculum development and it takes months and years and years and months to get it done.

And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that by the time that thing has worked its way through this maze called the curriculum maze, most people would have forgotten that our students in Saskatchewan ever wrote that test. And we really won't know that it's a problem any more till it rears its head again and we'll go through the same process.

But we don't even know, Mr. Speaker, that it happens to be a problem and they do another set of tests. But there has been a problem in ongoing years. Because I'm not sure how old, Mr. Speaker, Jack Messer actually is, but there's a good example of a person who went through our system and didn't learn the math at all.

And in fact, it is even more than the math, it happened to be the English course. As a matter of fact, it was probably even the history course, or he would have known better than to go to

Guyana and try and accomplish things over there, Mr. Speaker.

Okay. So the solutions in education aren't always complicated. The people out there could find them. But I'd like to also mention, Mr. Speaker, as you talk to the people out in taxpayer land, the 40/60 split that we now have as far as the funding of education tax, and the minister has said it's not good.

But we need a time line. Even though it may not happen this year — and it didn't happen last year — but we need to start working and people out there need to know where they go and when they're going to get there, because at the rate this government's going they don't know where they're going or when they're going to get there which means when they're somewhere they don't know if they're supposed to be there, or what day it is, or where they are.

And I think if you listen to the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker . . . if that statement sounded somewhat fuzzy, that's exactly what the Speech from the Throne was all about — it was a lot of fuzz.

If, Mr. Speaker, we look at the taxation thing . . . There was a meeting of SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) last week, Mr. Speaker, and members of cabinet were there with one notable exception, and SARM takes note of that. And I believe that exception probably won't be returned to the House after the next election because they didn't take kindly to not having the cabinet there — I mean that one individual. A credit to all the rest of the ones that came.

But the one thing that came up, Mr. Speaker, is the amount of tax on property. And with reassessment, that has skyrocketed. The agriculture community knows that, and we know that, Mr. Speaker. The people on the government side of the House know that, very definitely, that these situations just aren't acceptable.

In fact, the member from Saskatoon Northwest was probably one of the few people who could answer that question with a split second without even having to think about it, to say yes, rural taxes are just too high. The amount of tax that's been put on because of the reassessment is too high. And I'll say more about that, Mr. Speaker, when I get into my chapter on agriculture. How this has affected the farming community because it happened to be, especially in farming communities, they understand the concept of the straw that can break a back. And I think that tax is one of those.

Because, Mr. Speaker, things in agriculture change. Almost everyone in this House, Mr. Speaker, has some rural roots and we know how things change. Partly because we're . . . as a result of what happens with the weather. Weather is a key thing. It affects all of that. But here we have something, Mr. Minister, that looks like it won't go away. A hailstorm, Mr. Speaker, comes and goes. High fertilizer prices come and we hope they'll go. Our railways, Mr. Speaker, came and went. But there's one thing that's come and it looks like it's not going to go, and that's that high tax component that is put on rural Saskatchewan and the farm lands. That needs to be changed, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, again . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Now all hon. members

will recognize that it is the hon. member from Rosthern who has the floor. And I know that there are other hon. members here trying to put their remarks on the record, including some of his own colleagues, and I urge them to save them until they enter into debate and can be attributed to them personally.

In the meantime, if we could allow the hon. member from Rosthern to speak unimpeded.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So when we get into that part in agriculture we will reiterate this part on taxes, that it is one of those things that farmers have been hit with and there is no hope on that, Mr. Speaker, because apparently it's not going to change; it may just get worse. Weather will come and go, everything else seems to come and go in rural Saskatchewan, but that will stay.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say a word about roads. And in this discussion, Mr. Speaker, I know we're not allowed to bring props into the House, but I should have probably brought some highway maps so that the question that was asked, and it was a very . . . a question with a lot of depth to it is, what roads? I could have given a highway map to people so that they would be able to differentiate highways from the rest of Saskatchewan. And I think that is one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, why we need to ensure that the cost on highway maps is kept as low as possible, so people know where the highways actually are.

Anyway, as I mentioned earlier on, Mr. Speaker, I spent this weekend, or part of it, in Russell, Manitoba visiting some of my kids and my grandkids. And, Mr. Speaker, I'll say more about that later on, why when I want to visit my children, my grandchildren, I have to leave the province to visit any one of them. That's not as it should be but that's for another part of what I have to say about the throne speech, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway, I'm coming back from Russell, Manitoba, and so there's about five minutes or so and I'm into Saskatchewan, and so then I came through Melville and then I'll work my way down across the highway, such as it was. Mr. Speaker, it was scary. There were parts of the highway that had a sign up that says, we're moving from paved to gravel, and you couldn't tell the difference. There were parts where you moved from one to the other and you couldn't tell the difference.

In fact as very often, Mr. Speaker, you couldn't tell whether you were on a gravel road, a grid road, a paved road, or what you were on. It was a real disaster. It was in fact unsafe at spots because of the ruts in the roads that were in there. Part of those happen to be on Highway No. 10 that were out there and working their way down through here. Those highways are not good enough. They were unsafe.

If I think of a tourist coming down that highway to look at some of the places, whether it happens to be the Rose Bush place near Watson or it happens to be the Motherwell farm or it happens to be a Seager Wheeler farm or at Fishing Lake up North, to go visit all these interesting places we have in Saskatchewan . . . or Rafferty-Alameda to see there's actually water in it. And there will be more water in it, and it's just working just fine.

As people drive around the province, they shouldn't have to put up with that. The member from Lloydminster — Lloydminster,

I repeat — made statements about Alberta and their roads that two or three decades ago they had some federal help. Well we all know, Mr. Speaker, that a highway does not last for two to three decades. So even though they may have been built and graded at that time and a culvert put in and the ditches had grass sowed in them and signs put up, that does not give you a good highway for the rest of time. If those highways are still better, there must be a reason for it.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if we look at the amount of money taken off the tax on gas, percentage-wise, that we spend on our highways and compare that with the amount that Alberta or Manitoba spends, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that explains when I go to Russell, Manitoba, and as soon as I'm across the highway, I'm on a beautiful stretch of roadway.

It also explains when I go down to . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Order, order. It's obviously not necessary for all members to be shouting across the floor. There is protocol that I know all hon. members will want to respect in permitting each member to put their remarks on the record in the debate in response to the Speech from the Throne. I'll ask all hon. members to allow the hon. member for Rosthern to continue his debate in an unimpeded manner.

(1645)

Mr. Heppner: — And as I was in the middle of saying that when I went down to Lethbridge, the minute I got across the border, the same thing happened. Maybe if we had more of those pennies off every litre of gasoline we buy in Saskatchewan going to roads, we wouldn't have that big difference and people coming here sort of saying, oops, something must have happened. Nothing was being put into roads.

Let me say a little bit about health. And I'll come back to roads, Mr. Speaker, when I'm back into the section on agriculture because that has become a much more critical part in agriculture as well.

As you may be aware, Mr. Speaker, I spent some time last week with a young lady in this community who needs a transplant. She was told approximately a half a year ago that sometime around the middle of this winter she would be able to get her transplant. There's a donor who's waiting — it's a family member, it's her sister. Now she's been told it will be May or June.

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, her physical condition is deteriorating and deteriorating rapidly, and yet, being put on hold. And so is the life of her sister who is going to be the donor because her sister has seasonal employment which takes place during the summer. So by that particular act, she's now also been denied essentially employment for this summer because the donor, as you know, Mr. Speaker, has a very serious part in that operation.

That's not good. Those kinds of line-ups shouldn't be there. And I know last winter, Mr. Speaker, the government side labelled one of the Liberals as a two-tier person about two-tier health, and they tried to make a lot of hay out of that, Mr.

Speaker. But I suggest to you that two-tiers would be better than what we have now.

We have one tier for those people that actually go down to the Mayo Clinic. They can go down to any place in the States or Alberta or Manitoba and just fork out the cash, Mr. Speaker, because they have it. That's one tier.

Then we have another tier for the people who are close to the hospitals.

Then we have another tier for those people that live out in rural Saskatchewan. Places, Mr. Speaker, where they're told, take this patient into Regina. So the patient is loaded into an ambulance, comes to Regina, is turned down at the Plains — no room. Sent down to another hospital in Regina, Mr. Speaker — we have three now so there should be lots of room — sent down to another hospital in Regina — no room. And they're taken all the way back home by ambulance to come back another day and try again. That is not good enough, Mr. Speaker.

It's much like our game lottery for hunting where you try one year and another year and another year, and you keep putting in your name hoping to get a game licence if everything hasn't been shot out by people who hunt without licences. But that'll be for another chapter as well.

So that kind of health care, Mr. Speaker, is not good enough. These line-ups are not good enough. The people who created medicare in Saskatchewan, if they saw these line-ups, would be spitting in their graves, Mr. Speaker. They set up a medicare with the wish that when people who are ill they would get service.

I talked about the young lady that I was mentioning here in Regina who was waiting for the kidney transplant. You can just imagine the pain and suffering that these kinds of people go through — the frustration of waiting for an operation. And we say one of two things, we say well you have to check with the health boards.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the government created that system. They are responsible for that system. They appoint people to those boards. They need to take responsibility for the way the system works and for the people they appoint. They also are the ones who decide how much money goes into the system. And yet somehow they can sit back and say it's not our responsibility.

They stand some place between Ottawa and the elected health boards. And I think we'll have to call people who are in government dealing with the health situation, we'll have to call them gappers — gappers, Mr. Speaker. They're in that gap between the federal government and the health boards where there seems to be nothing because they don't seem to take any responsibility for anything. So I think from now on they will be the gappers in the twilight zone.

It just isn't good enough to have those kinds of line-ups in our health care system.

Mr. Minister, I would like to take a little bit of time to look at some of the situations that are happening in my constituency and bring those to the attention of this House and to see if there

are things in the Speech from the Throne that are going to address some of the concerns and the needs from the communities in my constituency.

My constituency — as I believe you're aware, Mr. Speaker, having been in it this last summer dealing with the students — is probably one of the more exciting rural constituencies in Saskatchewan. Exciting because things are fairly positive there, as positive as they can be with this kind of a government.

We have, for example, in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, a very large number of dairies who are responsible for supplying most of the milk products for this province. Dairies that are critical to this province. And yet I think, Mr. Speaker, often the people who operate those dairies aren't given enough credit by those people who open a carton of milk in the morning and pour it on their cornflakes.

Because those people are working there in those dairies and they're at it at 4 or 5 in the morning, they start again at 2 in the afternoon, seven days a week, 365-and-a-little-more days in a year. It is a very difficult job. A job that has very few times where they can just say this is my time, I'll just leave it alone. It's something they can't do.

We have in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, poultry operations in the Hague and Osler area, poultry operations in the Dalmeny area. Good operations, large operations that are doing very well. And I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that as this government goes through their Speech from the Throne and the budget situations, that these people will find that their operations are such that they can keep those going and hand those down to their children and their grandchildren. Because the quality of facilities that exists in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, in those areas is a quality that can be handed down. These are not dilapidated farms that need to be abandoned.

We have hog operations in my community, Mr. Speaker. Hog operations that are successful. Hog operations that are independent family units that are operating very well on their own who are taking care of their marketing in Saskatchewan, out of the province, their facilities, their materials, their equipment, bring it in from wherever they need to bring it in, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that the operations are a success.

And probably it would be remiss not to mention the grain operations in my constituency. As you are well aware, we had the opening of CAN OAT recently. It's already in need of an expansion. Some of the best oats in the province, Mr. Speaker, is grown in my constituency, and I must say some of the best oats is seeded in my constituency and is seeded with much delight.

Also many other grains and many varieties of things are seeded and grown in my constituency. Some of the best seed farms that win yearly awards are there, and so the quality of farming in my constituency is next to none.

And at this time, I'm going to have to just take a minute or two and give this government one compliment. It will be just one today. In another chapter, we may continue. But this government did see fit to do some twinning of highways in my constituency, areas of highways where people were being

killed. It's just too bad, Mr. Minister, that there are other areas in this province where people are still being literally slaughtered on the highways and the twinning isn't happening.

When we look at the personal cost, the individual cost, the family cost of those kinds of accidents that have been happening out there . . . I actually, Mr. Speaker, had an NDP come to me out of another constituency and tell me — this is about three weeks ago, at a service station, and he just came piling up to me and he says — Heppner, I get so mad when you talk to me about . . . Heppner, I get so mad . . .

The Speaker: — The hon. member will recognize that in the House we are not to refer to other hon. members or ourselves by our proper names but only by the positions that we hold in the Assembly here, and I'm sure that the hon. member will want to rephrase that appropriately.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well this stranger came up to me and said to me, you make me so angry — and I'm leaving out the expletives — every time I hear you talk about that, expletive deleted again, divided highway in your constituency. You've said there's more important things to do.

And I said I know he's an NDP because I happen to know his history. I also happen to know he's an NDP because he has the same philosophy as government seems to have to have, because people are being slaughtered out there and that's not good enough. Because the costs are not just in the people who die on our highways, Mr. Speaker. The costs are greater than that. Those people are being injured.

And that, Mr. Speaker, when I get to that section we'll deal with again. And that's the section on SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) and the people who are injured on our highways, injured in traffic accidents. And the care and help they're getting in some cases is: sign up with some spa and get some exercises, play in the pool. That's not good enough, okay.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I said, there are many things that we're going to deal with. And we will continue to deal with that, but at this point, Mr. Speaker, I move that debate now adjourn.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

D’Autremont	123
Bjornerud	123
Heppner	123
Gantefoer	123
Draude	123
Boyd	123
Osika	123
Hillson	124
Aldridge	124
Belanger	124
McLane	124
Julé	124
Goohsen	124

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk	124
-------------	-----

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Shillington	124
Draude	125
Belanger	125
D’Autremont	125

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Education Week

Heppner	125
Kowalsky	125

Letter of Apology

Osika	125
-------------	-----

National Francophone Week

Kasperski	126
-----------------	-----

The Liberal Party of Saskatchewan

Bjornerud	126
-----------------	-----

Z99 Fund-raiser

Trew	126
------------	-----

Jean Charest and the Liberal Party

Aldridge	126
----------------	-----

ORAL QUESTIONS

SaskPower President’s Severance Package

Gantefoer	127
Lingenfelter	127

Examination of Channel Lake

D’Autremont	128
Lingenfelter	128, 130
Hillson	129
Romanow	129

Saskatchewan Health Information Network

McLane	129
Serby	129

Medical Research Funding

Haverstock	130
Serby	130

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Resignation of MLA for Saskatoon Eastview

Pringle	131
Boyd	133
Osika	134
MacKinnon	134

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Johnson	135
Murrell	136

Stanger	138
McLane	142
Heppner	144