

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present petitions on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who would like to see their fuel tax reduced by 10 cents a litre. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the federal and provincial governments to immediately reduce fuel tax by 10 cents a litre, cost shared by both levels of government.

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from many places throughout our province. Some of those places are St. Louis, Melfort, and Kinistino.

I so present.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition opposed to nursing home fee increases. And the petition says that residents of nursing homes are there out of necessity. It goes on to say:

Wherefore your petitioners will humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to rescind recent large increases in nursing home fees.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitioners are from the wonderful community of Biggar.

And I'm happy to present them, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition today, asking the government not to change paved highways to gravel.

Wherefore your petitioners will humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to set aside any plans to revert Saskatchewan highways back to gravel, commit that the government will not download responsibility for current numbered highways onto local governments, and to consult with local residents and to co-operate in funding and implementing other alternatives.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The people that have signed this petition are from Regina and Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned about plans to turn paved highways back to gravel. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon.

Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to set aside any plans to revert Saskatchewan highways back to gravel, commit that the government will not download responsibility for current numbered highways onto local governments, and to consult with local residents and to co-operate in finding and implementing other alternatives.

And this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Moose Jaw, Wynyard, Briercrest, Ogema, Pangman, and that's it. Thank you.

I so present.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the switch was legitimate. It wasn't meant to confuse you.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of youth of Saskatchewan concerned about the harmful effects of tobacco. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to pass legislation to protect children from tobacco use.

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

And this is signed from folks in my constituency — Estevan, Bienfait, North Portal, and Macoun.

I so present. Thank you.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of people who wish to retain medical services in Cupar, Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Cupar Health Care Centre remains open and physician services are retained in the community of Cupar.

And this petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed exclusively by people from the great community of Cupar.

I so present.

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of concerned citizens about cellular service. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide reliable cellular telephone service in the districts of Prud'homme, Bruno, Vonda, and Cudworth.

And it's signed by residents of Cudworth, Nipawin, Melfort, Bruno, and Vonda.

I so present.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition opposed to forced municipal amalgamation. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to halt any plans it has to proceed with forced amalgamation of municipalities in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures are from every corner of the province and pretty well every community in the province.

I so present.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions to present today on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately take steps to begin reconstruction of Highway 47 from the Handsworth turnoff to Junction of No. 1 Highway.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions come from the communities of Corning, Glenavon, Regina, Stoughton, Indian Head, Corinne, Windthorst, Peebles, Estevan, Macklin, Young, Weyburn, Creelman, and Fillmore.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I have a few petitions I'd like to present. I'd like to read them all regarding converting paved highways back to gravel roads. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to set aside any plans to revert Saskatchewan highways back to gravel; commit that the government will not download responsibility for current numbered highways onto local governments; and to consult with local residents and to co-operate in finding and implementing other alternatives.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions are signed from people in the Bengough, Milestone, Indian Head areas.

I so present.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to present a petition from citizens in the Hafford area concerned about the future of their hospitals. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take necessary steps to ensure the Hafford Hospital remains open.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good people from the towns of Hafford, Blaine Lake, and also the RMs (rural municipalities) of Blaine Lake and Redberry Lake.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here to reduce fuel tax by 10 cents a litre.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the federal and provincial governments to immediately reduce fuel taxes by 10 cents a litre cost shared by both levels of government.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures are from all the major cities and communities spread out through the province.

I so present.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from citizens who are concerned about hospital closures. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

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

The petitioners are from the communities of Drake and Watrous.

I so present.

**Mr. Wakefield:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition regarding cellular service in the province. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide reliable cellular telephone service in the districts of Strasbourg, Duval, Govan, and Bulyea.

And this petition is signed by many, many people from the Duval, Govan area as well as Regina.

I so present.

**Mr. Wiberg:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I have a petition by members of the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the lack of enthusiasm for their issues from the Provincial Ombudsman. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

That we the undersigned, being taxpayers, Metis citizens and their supporters, do hereby seek leave to petition the government to establish an office of the Metis Ombudsman. And that the Metis Ombudsman have the power to receive and act on the complaints of Metis citizens in Saskatchewan against their government.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good people from Prince Albert, Yorkton, and Saskatoon.

I so present.

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens concerned about medical services in their community. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Cupar Health Centre remains open and physician services are retained in the community of Cupar.

And signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Southey and Cupar.

I so present.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition regarding the high price of fuel:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the federal and provincial governments to immediately reduce fuel tax by 10 cents a litre, cost shared by both levels of government.

And the signatures on this petition are from the good citizens of Spiritwood, Rabbit Lake, Leoville, and Shell Lake.

I so present.

**Mr. Peters:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition in regards to the health care in Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

And the petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by the folks of Young.

I so present.

#### 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.

These are petitions of citizens of the province on the following matters:

The passage of legislation to protect children from tobacco use;

Repealing the provision of the personal injury benefits in the automobile insurance Act;

The amalgamation of municipalities;

Cellular service in Prud'homme, Bruno, Vonda, Cudworth, and Lake Alma;

Ensuring the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open;

A ban of smoking in public places and workplaces;

Rescinding large increases in nursing home fees; and

The reconstruction of Highway 47.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's fair to say on this day, Mr. Speaker, that as we gather for our deliberations in the Assembly, that we have in the gallery here an observer from literally the other side of the world.

We have a Rotary exchange student from Australia, Mr. Speaker, who is in the gallery. Her name is Emma Briggs, and I'll ask her to stand. I see she's seated in the gallery beside a member of the Moose Jaw Rotary . . . Moose Jaw Wakamow Rotary Club.

As the members will know there are many clubs, Rotary Clubs, in Saskatchewan that sponsor exchange students and also host exchange students from other parts of the world. It proves to be a wonderful experience in leadership training for people from our country as well as other countries here.

And Emma has been living in Moose Jaw for nearly a year now and attending school there and will be returning home soon. I'd ask all hon. members to show her a welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and say "good on you."

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

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in introducing to you and through you to the Assembly a very courageous young gentleman and his mother, John Melenchuk and his mother Beatrice, in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

These people are part of the grassroots Metis of Saskatchewan and they have been calling on the minister responsible for some time to look into allegations of unfairness and in the electoral process and so on.

So I ask all the members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming these two fine people to our Assembly today.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly a person sitting in your gallery, who's my secretary, Shirley Richardson. And I'd like to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that today is Shirley's last day of work — and that's not because the Legislative Assembly is at its stage in the proceedings, it's because Shirley is retiring.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that Shirley actually started working in the private sector 47 years ago, which is hard to

believe looking at Shirley, but it's true. And she spent half of her life working in the private sector and half of her life working in the public sector. And she started with the province in 1969. And she has been working for ministers of the Crown since approximately 1971. She worked first for John Brockelbank, the minister of Government Services, then for Gordon Snyder, who was the minister of Labour, then for Norman Vickar, who was the minister of Economic Development.

Then Shirley worked at SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) for a brief period until 1982, at which point she began to work for the private sector — she, along with many of her friends, I think.

She was there in the private sector for a number of years, and she returned to the legislature in 1993 to work for Bob Pringle, when he was minister of Social Services. And when I was appointed to the cabinet in 1995, I'm very happy to say that Shirley came to work for me and has been the source of a great deal of guidance and advice, which I've appreciated very much.

Well I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this is a person that's worked for the public sector for quite some time in a very senior capacity. She's very competent, she's very efficient, she's very professional in every way, very committed to her job.

And I know all members will want to join with me in wishing Shirley the very best in her retirement, for many years of happy retirement with much health and happiness with her partner, Kal, and her grandchildren and family. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to the members of the Assembly and also in your gallery, it's a pleasure for me to introduce Denise Batters in your gallery. She is a lawyer here in Regina, and a good friend, and a good source of advice with my duties in the caucus here. And some of us need all the help we can get, Mr. Speaker. So that's very much appreciated.

And I just ask all members to join with me in welcoming her to the Assembly today.

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

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today in your gallery I'd like people to join me in welcoming people that I deal with in my portfolio. And if they would stand when I introduce them. Greg Zaba, iron worker international union; Bert Royer, iron workers, Local 771; Stan Shearer, IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers), Local 2038.

And in the opposite gallery here, the west gallery, John Peterson, operating engineers, Local 1870.

So if you would join me in welcoming them.

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

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too

would like to welcome Denise Batters here today. Denise is married to a former constituent of mine, Dave. So I extend my welcome to you as well, Denise.

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

**Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to be able to introduce to you and through you to the rest of this House, a friend, constituent, hard worker, now assistant business manager for the IBEW, Ron Hitchcock who is seated up in the west gallery.

I'd like you to welcome Ron to this . . .

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

**Mr. Kasperski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's also my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly two very important workers in our caucus office. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce Carolyn Rebeyka, our chief of staff, and Gail Fehr, our director of administration.

Mr. Speaker, it's their job to make those of us on this row look good and they do a very good job of that and I just, on behalf of all of us, want to thank them.

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

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Saskatchewan Economic Facts and Figures

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. More good news for Saskatchewan today, Mr. Speaker. Good news to ponder as we travel home.

As we prepare for the holiday weekend and for some summertime in our constituencies, here's a quick primer of good news facts and figures for those who believe in Saskatchewan. In the face of doom and gloomers that continue to claim that the earth is flat and the sky is falling, there is differences, Mr. Speaker.

First fact. Employment, May to May, last year over this year, up by 14,600 jobs, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Employment from January to May, year over year, up 13,100 jobs, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Average weekly earnings in Saskatchewan, April last year over April this year, up 2.5 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Wholesale trade up 23 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Retail trade up 3.9 per cent, Mr. Speaker. New motor vehicle sales, April over April, up 10.1 per cent.

And to be fair, and to be fair, Mr. Speaker, here's a negative stat: Employment Insurance recipients in Saskatchewan, April

over April, down 10.2 per cent. We can't win them all, Mr. Speaker.

There you have it, Mr. Speaker: more jobs, unemployment down, FarmGro open in Regina, AGM Garment in Saskatoon, 10 million more for Flexi-Coil, working people like our legislation. The rain has stopped and the sun is shining . . .

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

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

#### **No-fault Insurance Victims Group**

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I handed in 1,000 names on a set of petitions from the victims of no fault, added to a previous 3,000 that have been handed in. The group, victims of no fault, is a growing group and they have esteemed people joining their concern on a daily basis.

They have held a number of meetings throughout the province. They started off with one in Saskatoon and one in Regina. The meetings have had verbatim reports made of those, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to table those today for the members of the legislature, please.

#### **Ups and Downs for Saskatchewan**

**Mr. Thomson:** — This may well be my last opportunity to bring good news. But I want to say this . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — For this session.

**Mr. Thomson:** — For this session. But I want to say this. This session has been marked by several things going up and several things going down. And I think the members opposite often have a hard time remembering this. So let's review.

Jobs, up. Unemployment, down. Economy, up. Taxes, down. Hope, up. Pessimism, down. This is pretty straightforward stuff. You'd think that they would understand on the opposite side.

When we're talking about the way up, we're talking about a way up for people. I say look up, Mr. Speaker, look way, way up. Because that's where this province is heading.

Thank you very much.

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

#### **Opposition's View of Government Record**

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Friday I had the opportunity to speak to a group of grade 5 students from Naicam who were visiting the legislature. They asked me a lot of questions and then I asked them a couple of questions.

At one point I asked the class who could name the parties in the legislature. One little boy put up his hand and he said, the Saskatchewan Party. And then another little guy said, then we have the demolition government.

Mr. Speaker, I started to correct him until I thought about it. And then I thought, you know, you've hit the nail right on the head. The government has demolished the highways, they've demolished the health care system, they've demolished the business climate, they've demolished agriculture, and they've certainly demolished the Liberal Party.

Mr. Speaker, this truly is a demolition government. Mr. Speaker, I don't think I'll ever look across the floor without thinking of those words again — the demolition government.

This province will continue to have a demolition government until they are demolished by the voters in the next election.

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

#### **Tourist Attractions in Moose Jaw**

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Summer is upon us and many people are thinking of planning their holidays. Well if you're looking for some summer excitement, try Moose Jaw. Moose Jaw can boast having the most interesting tourist attractions in Saskatchewan and even in Canada.

After visiting the Temple Garden Mineral Spa, which is known for its soothing and healing waters, take a little trip to the past in the newly refurbished and reopened tunnels of Moose Jaw. These tunnels were part of Moose Jaw's Chicago connection during the Roaring Twenties. The connection originated when American gangsters would ride CP (Canadian Pacific) rail to Moose Jaw to beat the heat of prohibition. Here, tourists will be able to discover the secret world of Al Capone.

Besides learning of the Chicago connection, people can learn of the challenges faced by Chinese immigrants when they first settled the West. And next year the tourists can look forward to the opening of our third tour — the River Street Amphitheatre — which will bring history live to the stage.

But besides the tunnels of Moose Jaw, tourists can also take in the Saskatchewan Air Show at 15 Wing on July 8 and 9, or the Legends of the Road Baseball Tour on July 11 and 12. And later in July, come on back for the Festival of Words which runs for five days at the end of July. The festival includes concert performances, plays, readings, workshops, and a Battle of Books and the War of Words.

As you can see, there is a lot to do in Moose Jaw.

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

#### **Climax Citizens Patch Highway 18**

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, more good news for the NDP (New Democratic Party) government.

People in southwestern Saskatchewan, specifically in Wood River and Cypress Hills, have taken the government's job on of doing their own roads. Yesterday 150 men and women showed up in the Climax area to begin the work of patching Highway 18, which under this administration it's turned into a disgrace just like thousands of other kilometres of highway in this

province. Together these people patched 83 kilometres of highways.

Mr. Speaker, while these people should be congratulated for their initiative in stepping in where this government continues to fail them, we must reiterate that events like this should not have to take place.

Last week in this House the government voted against accepting the state of the highways as their responsibility and now they are proving it by forcing residents of this province, who pay higher taxes than nearly anyone else in the country, to fix their own highways.

Mr. Speaker, it's a disgrace, and one that I'm sure people throughout the province will remember at the time of the next election. Thank you.

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

### First Settlers in Saskatoon

**Ms. Jones:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This province, which is the best in which to live in all of Canada, was built with the hard work of many pioneers and First Nations peoples. They laid the foundation for this great society in which we live — an innovative, caring, and compassionate society.

This past Saturday, I had the pleasure of attending a historic gathering in Saskatoon in my constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin to honour one of these pioneering families. The occasion was held to dedicate a monument to the first family to permanently settle in Saskatoon, the Carl and Julia Kusch family.

The Kusch family arrived in what is now Saskatoon in the spring of 1883. They originally homesteaded on what is now the property of the Erindale Alliance Church, where the monument is now located. They farmed the land for many years and in 1983 the family was recognized by the provincial government for continuously farming the homestead for 100 years.

Their dedication to their home community is evident in the Kusch family's donation of land. Those familiar with Saskatoon will be interested to know that the Woodlawn Cemetery and St. Paul's Cathedral are located on land donated by the Kusch family.

On behalf of my colleagues, I want to express gratitude for the work done by the first settlers of this province. And I want to congratulate the Kusch family for their continued dedication to the city which their predecessors helped to build.

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

### Weyburn Bantam Girls Fastball Team

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, the DQ Blizzards bantam girls fastball team from Weyburn will represent Zone 1 at the 2000 Saskatchewan Games in Yorkton later this summer. The Blizzards went through the tournament last weekend undefeated. They have three outstanding pitchers: Nicole Bryns,

Susan Bobbitt, and Brett Watson, and combined with powerful hitters at the plate, they have a great chance to be the victors at the games in Yorkton.

I'd like to congratulate the girls and their coaches, Mike MacInnis, and Dave Unrau on a great season so far. And, Mr. Speaker, what makes this even sweeter is that the Dairy Queen in Weyburn are the proud sponsors of the DQ Blizzards.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Fraser Institute Report

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions for the Premier of the demolition government. Mr. Speaker, this session began three months ago today with this government once again demolishing family income by raising taxes. Every family in Saskatchewan was hoping for a tax cut, instead the demolition government raised the PST (provincial sales tax) by \$160 million.

Mr. Premier, the Fraser Institute has just announced that tomorrow will be tax freedom day in Canada. Our tax freedom day in Saskatchewan doesn't arrive until July the 6th. The third latest tax freedom day in the country.

Mr. Premier, why did your demolition government raise taxes instead of cutting taxes? Why do we have to have one of the very last tax freedom days in the entire country?

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question, and say to the hon. member opposite that there are at least two or three things faulty with the Fraser Institute's analysis.

One can have some respect for the Fraser Institute, I suppose, but I have found it, Mr. Speaker, not to be exactly the most unbiased observer and analyst of NDP finances.

One of the biggest difficulties in the analysis of the Fraser Institute has always been on freedom day — the calculation of the interest payments which we have to pay every year through our tax dollars thanks to nearly 10 years of your administration. And if you make those adjustments, Mr. Speaker — make those adjustments — and you take into account as well resource revenues calculations, you'll find that we have made tremendous progress in reducing tax freedom day.

This province is being stronger built and forward looking today than ever before in our history.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well let's look at the past. When the NDP took office tax freedom day was the June 15. Now it's July the 6. That means that every taxpayer in Saskatchewan works three more weeks just to pay their taxes to this demolition government.

Saskatchewan taxpayers work over half a year just to pay their taxes — Mr. Speaker, that is tragic.

Mr. Premier in Manitoba tax freedom day is June 27; in Alberta

tax freedom day is June 19 — over two weeks earlier than here in Saskatchewan.

But here in Saskatchewan our demolition government continues to raise taxes, and Saskatchewan families continue to pay over half their income to the government.

Mr. Premier, why should Saskatchewan families have to pay over half of their income to you?

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I said that the Fraser Institute, with the greatest of respect to it, and the Leader of the Opposition has some — how shall I describe it? — rather unorthodox methodology in arriving at tax freedom day.

For example, in this report that the Leader of the Opposition cites, what's the best place in Canada according to the Fraser Institute? Would it be, for example, Ontario? No. No. It's Newfoundland, Canada. Why? Newfoundland, Canada — why? Because Newfoundland has the lowest average income in Canada. Is that what you want us to work towards — judging the Fraser Institute?

You know Alberta's ranked . . . Alberta, Alberta, get this, Mr. Speaker — Alberta, according to the Fraser Institute, is ranked fifth behind all four of the Maritime provinces. Now here's how it works.

The institute says that royalties collected are part of the taxes paid by Saskatchewan families. Can you believe it? That's a falsehood; there're not. They're paid by the oil companies. So by its solution, don't tax the oil companies . . .

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

**The Speaker:** — Order.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Well I can't believe that the Premier would have the nerve to start talking about gasoline because he taxes the hide off Saskatchewan people — there, both in royalties and the tax at the pumps.

Mr. Speaker, family income isn't the only thing that's being destroyed by this demolition government. They are also demolishing the health care system — bed closures, hospital closures, doctor shortages, nursing shortages, and the longest surgical waiting list in Canada. That's the record of this demolition government.

And every day in this House, the Premier gets up and blathers on about 1962. The Premier . . . Mr. Premier, let's start talking about 1993. That's when you closed 52 hospitals, and that's when you brought in your wellness model that was suppose to save health care. Instead, Mr. Premier, you have destroyed health care. And all we have to look forward to is more bed closures, more hospital closures, and even longer waiting lists.

Mr. Premier, instead of talking about 1962, why don't you talk about your record of destroying health care system now?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, here we go again, and I

love this debate. Those people opposite attack us for health care, all the while believing in a two-tier, privatized health care system. The member from Weyburn, the member from Estevan, the members over there who support Mr. Stockwell Day.

Do you know what Mr. Stockwell Day wants to do? He wants Ottawa to give the money to the provinces without any conditions. That means no national standards. That means two-tier system of health care. That's what they want us to do.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that when we launched the Fyke report review on health care, we have renewed our commitment ever since 1991, ever since 1962, to build the best single-payer, publicly funded health care system in Canada. That's the difference between us and them. We have to save medicare — they want to destroy medicare.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under the Premier's government we have seen health care deteriorate in Saskatchewan to where it's the worst in the country. He can't point the finger at anybody else any more. He's got to shoulder the blame himself. Not only is health care falling apart, but highways in this province are falling apart under his watch.

The Premier said that he got the message from the Wood River by-election, but he has not reversed his plan to gravel highways. He has no plan for fixing the highways in this province. It's just one more area of failure for this demolition government.

Mr. Premier, three years ago your government started talking about its 10-year plan to fix highways. But three years into that plan, and you'll have to agree with this, highways are in worse shape than they've ever been. Many are not even safe to drive on, and you're turning them back to gravel.

Mr. Premier, why are you and your demolition government destroying Saskatchewan's highways?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, here we go again, the same old stock question by those people opposite. And here is the answer, Mr. Speaker — first question was on taxes, second was on health care, third is on highways — I quote from *The StarPhoenix* editorial of yesterday. Quote — this is my answer to you, sir:

Whichever political party promises to deliver it all (by) is playing voters for patsies. Any voter who believes that turfing out the current government will, overnight, get all (the) highways magically paved, rural hospitals reopened, waiting lists zapped . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. I want to thank hon. members for allowing the question to have been heard. I would like to thank you also to allow the answer to be heard.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — I'll finish off, Mr. Speaker, by saying any political party that says you can get:

. . . rural hospitals reopened . . . waiting lists zapped, farm supports ratcheted up and taxes slashed is practising a form of self-delusion not seen since the heady days of Grant Devine.

That's what you're practising.

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

### Sale of Personal Health Information

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, the national CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) television show, *Undercurrents*, recently aired a program about a provincial government experiment undertaken in Ontario. It was to gather health data from residents of one community.

It was revealed during this program that this project was based on what was already happening in Saskatchewan. It was reported that in Saskatchewan, the government gathers everyone's health and drug records and then offers that data for sale to drug companies and health market researchers.

Madam Minister, has the Department of Health ever sold the provincial database of personal health and drug records or portions thereof, and if so, to whom?

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

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — What I can tell the member is that Saskatchewan Health does not sell personal health information from any of its databases.

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, the CBC *Undercurrents* program mentioned several times the practice of the province of Saskatchewan to sell the health information of our residents to other companies. Yet the minister is denying this; or perhaps like the minister of Gaming, she doesn't know what's going on in her department.

Madam Minister, if the Saskatchewan Health or the NDP government is not selling our personal data health information, why is this fact commonly stated in Ontario by their government officials? Why did a national CBC news program openly talk about it? And why would you not answer our written questions submitted to you earlier this session?

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

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the member is that Saskatchewan Health does respond to requests from researchers and will compile edited, aggregated information for researchers for approved health research in this country, Mr. Speaker. But we do not sell personal health information from our databases.

**Ms. Bakken:** — Madam Minister, why would you not answer the written question then, if you're not selling the information?

Mr. Speaker, in the CBC story, a lot of the controversy

surrounding the issue of the Ontario provincial government gathering personal health data information and then selling it involved the concerns of people that confidentiality might be breached. People were very uncomfortable with the idea of where their personal health information might end up and the idea it might even be sold at all.

I am confident that people here in Saskatchewan will have much the same concerns when they find out that the Department of Health or other agencies sell their health data.

Madam Minister, what safeguards are there in place that will ensure the confidentiality of the records of the people of Saskatchewan regarding health criteria?

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

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the member is that the questions that she asked will be tabled. The answers to those questions will be tabled in the legislature after question period.

What I can tell the member is that any data that is provided is provided in an aggregated or a summarized, non-identifiable way to protect confidentiality. And what the member is doing and continuing to do is to create alarm and fear, because she's trying to undermine our publicly funded and publicly administered health system.

She of all members of the legislature, now that we have the member from Wood River, they want to destroy public medicare in this country. And she is doing nothing more than fearmongering and asking silly questions when she knows no one's confidential medical record has been shared or ever will be shared, except by the former Devine government.

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

### Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority Political Contributions

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Mr. Premier, this morning you finally admitted the taxpayers' money has been funnelled from SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) to the NDP. According to the NDP news release, the NDP received at least \$8,000 in cash from SIGA since 1997.

But the news release doesn't talk about the thousands and thousands of dollars in prizes provided by SIGA to NDP fundraising events. And the news release doesn't talk about the money that was funnelled from SIGA to individual NDP MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for fundraising events and sponsorships.

Mr. Premier, the Provincial Auditor has clearly stated that all casino gambling profits in Saskatchewan are taxpayers' money. And now you are admitting casino profits are . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I would ask the hon. member to kindly go directly to his question.

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — . . . funnelled from SIGA to the NDP.



Mr. Premier, do you think it's appropriate for taxpayers' money to be funnelled from SIGA to the NDP?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, any money which SIGA through its casino operations accumulates, after validly justified and properly accounted expenditures, which are the subject of, as I speak, an intensive review carried out by the appropriate authorities involved with Justice, as the Minister of Gaming has indicated, those are then to be divided in accordance to the formula.

Question of sponsorships, whether they relate to leaders' dinners or golf tournaments, are part and parcel of a legitimate part of doing business if they're legitimately recorded and legitimately itemized.

That the accountant will decide, and that the accounting process will decide. And it's no different for SIGA than it is for the Royal Bank, or for Hollinger, or for anybody else coming to anybody . . . contribute. No difference whatsoever.

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

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, another question for the Premier. Well, for at least for the next few weeks you're the Premier of Saskatchewan. You are also the Leader of the NDP. And today you have admitted that taxpayers' money . . .

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

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. Hon. members, may we continue with question period, please.

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Well, Mr. Premier, if you'd like four more years, you can always come and run in Carrot River Valley.

Today you have admitted the taxpayers' money has been funnelled from SIGA to the NDP, but you're refusing to give the taxpayers' money back. According to your news release, the NDP won't give \$8,000 in taxpayers' money back unless the Provincial Auditor tells you to do it.

Mr. Premier, the Provincial Auditor has already said all casino gambling profits are property of Saskatchewan taxpayers. Will you do the right thing and immediately return every penny of taxpayers' money you and the NDP have received from SIGA?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, when a person goes to a casino and decides to invest or gamble — call it however you will — that is an individual choice. That is not a tax. That is in the consequence of the operation.

**The Speaker:** — Order, please.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you very much. And, Mr. Speaker, after properly accounted expenses, after properly accounted expenses, whatever there is left over must be paid

according to formula.

This is no different than any of the corporations which . . . who have shareholders, which have shareholders, come to sponsor the dinners of the Leader of the Opposition, after their expenses for . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They simply do not want to hear the truth or the answer. This is no different that anybody else. They would deny this to SIGA.

Now I am saying to this House, Mr. Speaker, and I'm saying to the people of Saskatchewan: there will be a complete and full audit of all of these expenditures as related. That is underway as I speak. In due course that audit will decide what should or should not be done.

Let's not prejudge. Let's see what the outcome of the audit and the circumstances are. And for our part, as we revealed today, if remedial action is required — if — we will take it forthwith. Right now, that is not called for. There has been full revelation by us, and I call on them to do the same thing.

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

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think one of the things I should point out to the Premier is, is that when people are gambling in those casinos he referred to they are using government-owned machines. The Government of Saskatchewan owns those machines.

Mr. Speaker, another question for the Premier. We have been informed that you received as much as \$15,000 in prizes from SIGA for your NDP fundraising golf tournaments in Saskatoon in 1998 and 1999. We have also been informed that SIGA provided a similar amount of prizes for your 2000 NDP fundraising golf tournament in Saskatoon, but that you had the good sense to return those prizes.

Mr. Premier, what was the value of all the prizes that SIGA donated to your NDP fundraising golf tournaments in 1998 and 1999?

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I asked the Provincial Secretary of the New Democratic Party to tell the president of the New Democratic Party what the facts were with respect to SIGA prizes as the member has indicated with respect to 1998 and 1999. I'm told that as far as the provincial New Democratic Party is concerned, which sponsors the Romanow scramble golf tournaments, those figures which were reported today are the correct figures to the best of the knowledge of the party and the records reveal.

That's the answer to the member.

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, another question for the Premier. Mr. Premier, you aren't the only NDP MLA that has been getting money or fundraising prizes from SIGA. We have been informed the Deputy Premier also received thousands of dollars worth of prizes from SIGA for NDP fundraising golf tournaments in 1998, 1999, and 2000.

Mr. Premier, the Provincial Auditor says the money SIGA used to buy these prizes with was taxpayers' money. And it appears that you and the Deputy Premier used the prizes from SIGA to raise money for the NDP.

Mr. Premier, will you come clean with the people of Saskatchewan? How much money in cash and prizes have NDP MLAs received from SIGA? How much money and prizes has the NDP Party received from SIGA? And will you commit today that every dime of taxpayers' money that was funnelled from SIGA to the NDP and NDP MLAs will be repaid immediately?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, notice how this Saskatchewan Party operates and this one-term MLA from Carrot River operates. He starts his questions on the basis of what the provincial New Democratic Party . . . on the Romanow scramble tournaments received by way of prizes. I give him the answer. Then he shifts over to what about other individual MLA constituencies and their prizes.

And I say to him, as I said earlier, that every NDP MLA, by way of a prize or sponsorship in a golf tournament — if after the audits are completed and it is indicated were not made correctly — will be returned. The reality of the matter is that there have been no prizes, I'm informed, made to the Deputy Premier in Regina Elphinstone. Instead they simply yell. They will not accept those facts. They are told, they are told, they are told — tell us who told you.

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

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Mr. Premier, it's time to fess up and the question is very, very simple. Did SIGA donate prizes to your NDP fundraising golf tournaments in Saskatoon in 1998 and 1999? And if so, what was the value of those prizes?

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, my answer remains the same. The information that I have received from the provincial secretary of the NDP and the president is as reported publicly to the journalists and to the House today by myself and the members opposite. That is the situation. If there . . . It's reported, and they know what's there. It is exactly \$8,000 over the four years or the three years of the operations that were involved, including the sponsorships of the fundraising dinners.

And I want to say to the members opposite how it is that they would draw a difference between SIGA buying a table, sponsorship table — taxpayers' dollars is what they argue — they draw a difference between that, but not their good friends Hollinger press or CP Rail or anybody else. They are absolutely phony and irresponsible in their accusations.

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

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, taxpayers' dollars are supposed to be going to the associated entities fund, to the First Nations fund for the general benefit, economic, and well-being of First Nations people and . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. I'm sitting close to the member and I can hardly hear him. I ask all members to please come to order.

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Mr. Premier, the Provincial Auditor says all casino profits generated by SIGA-operated casinos in Saskatchewan is taxpayers' money. It's not SIGA's money; it's not FSIN's (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) money; it's not the NDP's money — it's the taxpayers' money.

So when the NDP accepts money or prizes from SIGA, you are funnelling taxpayers' money from SIGA to the NDP.

Mr. Premier, do you support the practice of funnelling taxpayers' money from SIGA to the NDP?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, the member keeps on going over and over again, and I'm saying to the House and to the people of Saskatchewan, we have given the SLGA (Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority) complete authority to have all of the books and the records checked — and they will be checked completely and fully.

They will be done so by an independent auditor, Ernst & Young. They'll be done so in concert with the Provincial Auditor. They will be made public, and if remedial action is to be taken, we shall take this action.

On the issue of this amount of money that the members continue to characterize wrongly as taxpayers' money, and perhaps some general sense they are right. On this issue opposition is correct.

If it is ruled that these were not donations, the contributions made, pursuant to sponsorship in the right way, we will be making those payments back forthwith. And that's something more than the Saskatchewan Party has ever done to date on their contributions.

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

**The Speaker:** — Order, order please. Hon. members, I truly appreciate the applause, but kindly now let's get back to business. Thank you very much.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Hon. members, please. Hon. members on both sides, please. Government orders have been called. I'll ask the Clerk to call our next order of business.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 59 — The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2000

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again today would like to take this opportunity to speak out against Bill 59, speak out against its negative effects on the economy, and also on the negative effects it has on the freedom of speech for the workers in this province. Also on the loss of the democratic right for employers and employees in this province.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Mr. Speaker, this Bill, Bill 59, is nothing but forced unionization. The government will be forcing workers into unions. The union workers will not have the right to determine on their own whether they want to belong to a union or not. Not only they will not have a secret ballot, but they will not even have the right under the current rules to sign a certification card in order to ask whether they want to be in a union or not.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill 59 is nothing but an NDP money grab.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Mr. Speaker, the NDP government forces workers into a union, the workers of this province are forced to pay union dues whether they're in the union or not, and the unions donate that money to the NDP Party.

Not only the employees are forced, but also the employers lose their right to pick their own bargaining representative. This Bill is nothing but a Bill to circumvent the law, the judge's ruling recently.

(1430)

Bill 59 will have a dramatic negative effect on the economy of this province. It will result in loss of jobs. Because of the effect of Bill 59, Saskatchewan companies will not be able to compete bidding on Saskatchewan jobs. These contracts will go out to the out-of-province, open-shop companies. The profit from these companies will be paid in other provinces, and the workers will pay their personal income tax in other provinces.

And not only that, Mr. Speaker, but the utility rates and cost to the taxpayer will increase in Saskatchewan.

This government has had an opportunity on a number of occasions to debate this Bill. The North Saskatoon Business Association offered to host a debate between the minister and the Saskatchewan Party but they refused to have a public debate. Also, the Alliance for Economic Growth has asked the Premier for a meeting to discuss the effects of this Bill, but again the Premier said there wasn't enough time before the Bill was passed to discuss the implications.

My colleague brought in a motion to hoist this Bill for six months — delay it for six months. Again, the coalition government turned down that request. Saskatchewan Party has put forward a number of very common sense amendments and each one was voted down by this NDP coalition government.

With this Bill . . . we would like this Bill withdrawn or at the very least delayed. Give the Saskatchewan construction industry and the Saskatchewan construction workers and the

Saskatchewan people an opportunity to be heard. Do the right thing — put the Saskatchewan people ahead of your fundraising schemes and withdraw Bill 59.

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

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel I must respond to that. And there's really just two things that I want to say.

One is that we had several years of consultation on this Bill. And people who were participants in the processes — I quoted yesterday, Mr. McLachlan and others — they acknowledged that there was an MOU (memorandum of understanding) that became very close to being accepted.

Certainly I wasn't very happy that they weren't able to reach a consensus because it would have made my job much easier to have had the parties reach agreement as they did in Ontario.

But that wasn't the case here, Mr. Speaker. And I regret that. And certainly I've made a commitment to the members that we will sit down with the industry and get on with life in terms of how to deal with the real competitive issues that they raise . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I understand that. But at the end of the day, I remind the member opposite that when you sign a contract with somebody, you should not be able to avoid that obligation by setting up another company and moving your interests into that company.

And based on the letter that the member opposite sent out guaranteeing to sell his vote for either 1,000, 5,000, or \$10,000 based on the 23 votes they had on this matter yesterday, I would assume you're now \$115,000 richer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The division bells rang from 2:34 p.m. until 3:03 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

#### Yeas — 31

Romanow	Trew	Hagel
Van Mulligen	MacKinnon	Lingenfelter
Melenchuk	Cline	Atkinson
Goulet	Lautermilch	Thomson
Lorje	Serby	Belanger
Nilson	Crofford	Hillson
Kowalsky	Sonntag	Hamilton
Prebble	Jones	Higgins
Yates	Harper	Axworthy
Junor	Kasperski	Wartman
Addley		

#### Nays — 26

Hermanson	Elhard	Heppner
Julé	Krawetz	Draude
Boyd	Gantefoer	Toth
Stewart	Eagles	Wall
Bakken	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
McMorris	Weekes	Kwiatkowski

Brkich	Harpauer	Wakefield
Wiberg	Hart	Allchurch
Peters	Huyghebaert	

the people of Saskatchewan with a government that has become unaccountable, autocratic, and unable to deal with the problems facing Saskatchewan.

The Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

#### General Revenue Fund Executive Council Vote 10

**The Chair:** — I'll invite the Hon. Premier to introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, it's my pleasure to introduce to the members of the House, especially the new members of the House, the officials who I have advising me.

First of all Dr. Greg Marcheldon, who's the deputy minister to the Department of Executive Council, seated to my immediate left; seated to my immediate right is my chief of staff, Ms. Judy Samuelson. In no special order, behind, is seated Bonita Heidt, director of administration and information services, behind Dr. Marcheldon; and seated behind me is Jim Nicol, who's the acting director of senior management services and also the executive assistant to the deputy minister.

Those are the officials that are with me today.

#### Subvote (EX01)

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And to the Premier, we welcome you here with your officials. We look forward to a productive session of garnering some information from you and your officials on the role of Executive Council, and by extension, your entire government. For as you and I both know, as the Premier of the province you are responsible for your administration in every degree.

Mr. Premier, this has been an interesting session — my first session, some would speculate your last session. That's something that you'll have to let the people of this province know in your time.

But it's been a particularly interesting session because you've been lurching from crisis to crisis. And when that happens, it's a sign of no vision, no battle plan, a lack of planning, lack of management, lack of understanding of the problems, and preoccupation with the wrong things, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, what we have seen as a government and a Premier that was once seemingly invincible — no one could ever touch the mighty NDP Government of Saskatchewan — and yet last year's election you almost lost it. In fact you lost the popular vote, you . . .

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — You had to do what you called some soul searching at the time. And the soul searching you did was to find three souls that were for sale to put together a majority government. And since that time, I think you've disappointed

Mr. Premier, I looked at some comments that you made back in 1989 — that's when you were the leader of the official opposition and you were criticizing the Devine government. And I want to make it clear that probably that the Devine government deserved criticism. I have no quibble whatsoever with that.

But, Mr. Premier, you said, then there's the — and I quote you from August 16, 1989, and this is out of *Hansard*, and you say:

Then there's the question of the vision. Does a government have a positive vision of the future, a vision that has room for all? Or is it a vision which in effect tries to return the province of Saskatchewan to a yester-year . . .

And I'll interrupt there to say, Mr. Premier, I haven't heard anyone in this House talk about the past more than I've heard you talk about the past in this session.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — And then you talk about:

. . . a vision which (is really a narrow) . . . which has a (really) narrow and partisan plan, the result of which is going to be for the benefit and enrichment of the advancement of fewer of our Saskatchewan people? It is a vision which builds bridges between urban and rural, or is it one that divides?

And you know, Mr. Premier, that your administration has divided rural and urban Saskatchewan more than any administration in the history of this province.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — You go on, Mr. Premier, to say:

Is it a vision which seeks to build into the system the accommodation of the interests of the Indian and native Aboriginal people, those who have been traditionally been victimized over the years by all governments, Or is it a vision which divides?

And again, Mr. Premier, I interrupt your own words to say that the state of Aboriginal people in this province has never been lower than it is under your administration.

Mr. Premier, you go on to say that these are five yardsticks by which you measure governments:

. . . fairness, stewardship, capacity to run things in a proper way, management, trust, and vision . . . this government (you said) has been an abject failure, and in my judgment, the worst government, probably, in the history of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Premier, you may have been right at the time. I don't know whether you were or not because I don't know about previous

administrations. But I know that your administration has been worse than the one that you succeeded.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Mr. Premier, our province has gone downhill in the last nine years. Mr. Premier, we have watched an NDP government that was once touted as the champs of political strategy become a government that lurches from crisis to crisis. You have no plan for this province. You don't know how to deal with our problems.

For the first seven or eight years, your strategy has simply been to blame others — blame the Devine government, blame the federal government, blame the current opposition. You've got a thousand ghosts that you want to blame, Mr. Premier.

And then something happened; it happened last September and people said, is that all you've got to say, Mr. Premier? Is that the best you can do? And that's why you lost the popular vote. The answer coming from your government was no, this is the best we can do. Those other guys were terrible. Measure us against them and we'll measure up.

Well you don't measure up. You don't even measure up according to your own yardstick, Mr. Premier. After nine years in office you still don't have a plan to deal with the challenges facing Saskatchewan. You don't have a plan for tomorrow, let alone the next year or the next decade.

What you've been reduced to is dealing with issues management and lately, I might say, crisis management. And that has led to such ill-conceived and politically crass policies as forced amalgamation, forced unionization, and Mr. Premier, it must even sadden you — forced gravelization. We're going back to the '30s under your administration, Mr. Premier.

You have no plan to deal with the youth of this province. You just expect them to leave. You're giving them nothing to stay here for. What a legacy you're leaving. Young people leaving the province of Saskatchewan. It's so sad that I . . . that it's hard to find enough words to describe the hurt in the families of Saskatchewan as they watch their children leave probably never to return, unless we can change this province's attitude and give them a good reason to come back to this province.

Mr. Premier, you have not given Saskatchewan people high-paying jobs. People in other provinces standard of living is going up; Saskatchewan's standard of living is at the bottom of the barrel. We're on the bottom rung of the ladder. So many categories, economic categories, and Saskatchewan is a failure. We're the poor cousins of our great country of Canada.

(1515)

Mr. Premier, you have no plan to deal with a lack of investment in our province. Private capital and industry opportunities are passing our province by. You have no vision as to how to change that.

Mr. Premier, you have no plan to deal with the important . . . the emerging importance of the Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan. Their standard of living is despicable. They are

one of the biggest assets our province has and you have no plan to harness that asset, to help them to feel more at home in Saskatchewan and more a part of our province's economy.

Mr. Premier, there are other issues that you are failing to address, and I, along with my colleagues during this opportunity of estimates, will deal with those issues.

After nine years in office, you still have no vision, no plan, to deal with these issues. All you can do is continue to point your finger at others, blame others for your incompetence and your lack of performance.

Mr. Premier, huge blow it must have been when you set up your renewal program for the NDP Party. And you took your colleague, a very close colleague, Mr. Ned Shillington and put him charge of NDP renewal, only to see him also throw up his hands and say there's no hope with this NDP government, I can't convince them about renewal. And he took a job — where, Mr. Premier? Where did he take a job?

He took that job in Calgary. He went to Calgary for opportunity — your own colleague, your own close colleague. One of the few that you have remaining has up and abandoned this province. He's abandoned you, he's abandoned the NDP, and he's gone to Alberta.

Mr. Premier, he is an example of what's happening to people, person after person, whether they be young people, business people, seniors, who are leaving this province. The problems aren't getting better, Mr. Premier, they're only getting worse.

As I said, Mr. Premier, I believe you may be getting near the end of your tenure. There's a lot of speculation in that regard, but whatever the case, you seem to be on cruise control, Mr. Premier. Your hands are barely on the wheel. Certainly your feet aren't on the gas — we know that because we're stalling, Mr. Premier.

I believe that your personal agenda, as some would call it, is an exit strategy from your current position, and perhaps that's why your government lacks vision and doesn't know what course to lead the province down.

Mr. Premier, your team is in a shambles. Your key players are gone. Your caucus, your cabinet is weaker than Saskatchewan has seen in decades. Mr. Premier, you have failed the vision test by your own yardstick.

I ask you, Mr. Premier, will you apologize to the people of Saskatchewan for losing vision and losing confidence in our province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, I want to say that I have a great deal of respect on a personal basis for the Leader of the Opposition. I think as a Member of Parliament for four or five years, he distinguished himself. I don't agree with his policies and programs. That's another matter.

I say that by way of preface because what I have to say next makes me wonder whether or not my heretofore relatively high

opinion of the Leader of the Opposition should be maintained.

I have to say that this is his first time in the House as Leader of the Opposition in Executive Council estimates. For me it isn't my first time — nor is it my last time. And I want to say to the opposition leader . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — And I want to say to the opposition leader that of all of the opposition leaders that I have faced and opposition leaders with whom I have served in estimates, your presentation this afternoon talking about lack of vision really is one of the dramatic descriptions of that failure — that failure on the part of this amalgam of men and women who have come from basically disgruntled Conservative ranks who have old scores to settle. They never believe they lost the election in 1991; they want to re-fight the election. Disgruntled Liberals. Some new Alliance types, new Reform types, like yourself, sir.

You talk about our vision and our program and I'm prepared to stack it up — as it will be stacked up at the appropriate time at election — at any time against what your party has offered.

Our vision for the province of Saskatchewan is a vision which is based on a dynamic 21st century Saskatchewan which is plugged into the information and technology society, which knows how to build and to prosper in a global society and community, which makes sure that while we are economically competitive and strong we provide a very solid social base.

I point to the programs on the economic development. A budget introduced by the Minister of Finance this year which will put us on a track where 70 per cent, approximately, of Alberta taxpayers will be at the same level of taxation as ours, the largest . . .

And the rudeness, the rudeness of the members opposite there. They can laugh if they want, but that's typical of the kind of opposition that we have. And a big warning I might add, parenthetically, to the people of Saskatchewan of the kind of government that they could expect if ever, ever that day comes.

Largest tax cuts in the history of the province of Saskatchewan, voted against by the Leader of the Opposition and his group. An economic package which sees more people in the first five months working each month in the province of Saskatchewan than ever in the history of the province of Saskatchewan since 1905, since we entered Confederation.

A social program which shows compassion for children, the children's action development program at 55 million people, the joint committee that the member from Humboldt is serving very ably with the member from Saskatoon Greystone. The new provisions in respect to social services, building on independence, getting away from the safety net. Where are they? They're in the National Child Tax Credit Benefit program — that's where they are.

I can continue on listing those examples. New opportunities for working men and women. Job skills and job skills training and work training programs. And one could go on and on, including in a very difficult farm situation where I want to thank the

Leader of the Opposition in uniting with us or we uniting with them — I don't care about the credit — coming together as a Saskatchewan team. We went down to Ottawa; we fought. We didn't get what we wanted to get but we got \$300 million for rural Saskatchewan.

We've got a huge agenda out there now to fight for. Transportation for farmers and making sure that that works. We've got to make sure there's a safety net which is in place. All of these are programs which are in progress or being accomplished and it hasn't been done. It hasn't been done in nine years; it hasn't been done in nine months of the election.

But I tell you when the history is written of this period of government, it will be demonstrated by not the Leader of the Opposition and not by me but by independent observers that this was a government that rescued Saskatchewan from bankruptcy, from bankruptcy, from bankruptcy.

Now this is a word that I am told I should never use by the banking institutions and the investment houses who tell me that no Premier should say bankruptcy. And I want to tell you in 1992 and '93 when *The Globe and Mail* reported, because of the profligacy of the government preceding for nine years, that there was a provincial government unable to meet its budgetary demands given \$850 million a year in interest payments.

And I say to the credit of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, to his credit and also to the premier or at least the Finance minister at the time, Mr. Mazankowski, they came to the assistance of this government and helped the people of this province put together a budget.

And with the people rolling up their sleeves and tightening their belts and some taxes went up and some programs were reduced, we've pulled through it and we eliminated the deficit and we balanced for seven years in a row and we've done it in a balanced way — one-third for debt reduction, one-third for income tax reduction, one-third for investments and new programs, be it roads or health care education, the Ken Fyke review which has been launched.

You can hear me, Mr. Chairman. I don't want to take up the time of the committee unnecessarily.

That vision of what we are aiming for and what we have accomplished is a vision of a dynamic, progressive, socially sensitive, caring, and all-embracing government. That commitment remains in this coalition government as strong today in the year 2000 as it did from the day that I was sworn in first as Premier on November 1, 1991. I will put that record up against any other record at any other time.

And this is no time to re-fight the election of September because I always get a chuckle of my Conservative friends when they re-fight it. But I do say one thing, in this House, in this session — I haven't done a record of it, so I'm not going to re-fight the election; but I'll tell you what it's reflective of — in this House, in this session, I stand to be corrected, I'll say this right now . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I stand to be corrected and I'll say so publicly. But I bet you, Mr. Chairman, that if the officers of this House took an examination of the number of questions that were asked and in what areas they

were asked by the Saskatchewan Party and the official opposition, I bet you that there were — what? — not one question on economic development, not one question on economic development.

A handful of questions to the Minister of Agriculture — a handful of questions.

I bet you, Mr. Chairman . . .

**The Chair:** — Order. Order. Order. Order.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — I will say, Mr. Chairman, if you total up the questions asked during this session, you'll find by two country miles, three country miles, where these people opposite were headed. They asked more questions about forced amalgamation as they described it, and more questions about the Queer City Film Festival than they did about medicare or education or even on roads or any other concerns of the people of Saskatchewan.

If there is any more damning indictment of the failure of this opposition, it is their phony arguments and questions on so-called forced amalgamation and their failure to speak to the concerns of ordinary men and women. Mr. Chairman, that's a condemnation of them, not of us. They're the ones who have no image. They're the ones who want and have no vision. They're the ones who want to freeze health care. They're the ones that want to freeze education. They don't care.

And talk about divisions, talk about divisions. Isn't it interesting that we went through question period and we may go through estimates here, isn't it interesting that when you go through the sponsorships that took place in respect to leaders' dinners or golf tournaments, not a question directed to anybody except SIGA. Not a question directed to anybody outside of the SIGA area. Why? Why? Why . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I don't want to get into that. If you want to get into it, we'll get into it. But not one question.

Mr. Chairman, this is an opposition which is totally divided. It's an opposition which has a group of men and women who support Stockwell Day actively, who I predict will resign their seats while I'm still Premier to run for Mr. Stockwell Day. That's what I predict.

And you know what Mr. Stockwell Day believes in with respect to health care? He believes that Ottawa should transfer the money to the provinces with no conditions. And that means every province can have their own standards. And that means . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . right on, right on. The member from Moosomin says right on. That's why you have a Bill 11 in Alberta.

That's exactly what's going to happen. It's an opposition which is terribly fractured, divided. The member . . . oh, they laugh. They laugh. The member from Estevan . . . the member from Estevan . . . yes, you. The member from Estevan objected in question period today to me saying that she's for privatization.

**An Hon. Member:** — I did not. I sent you a letter asking you to give me the quote from *Hansard* that said I supported it.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Oh, well the member says now that she wants a letter to show whether or not she's for privatization. My question is this: is she for privatization or is she not? She has to tell me. Her argument can't be, you can't find it on me, Mr. Premier; you can't find it. I'm for privatization but you can't find it anywhere in *Hansard*.

Her position has got to be to stand up and say, I'm for it or I'm agin it. And if you're agin it, then your member from Weyburn is for it, and your member behind you is for it. The member who got elected is for it. And if you're agin it, your leader is for it. And if you're against it, the person sitting in front of you is for it — privatization.

Divided on policies, divided in their political ambitions, visionless, gutless, and they want to take us back to Devine. No, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, it is this side that has the opposition; it is your side which is barren of ideas, and why you'll never sit on the treasury benches — never.

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

(1530)

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and through you to the Premier, Mr. Chair. My concerns and my questions are around the issue of SIGA because I think, Mr. Premier, you mentioned a couple of issues there and ridiculed our interest and our concern about them.

And first and foremost amongst them was the issue of amalgamation. Well, Mr. Premier, not understanding why it is that this side of the House is concerned about amalgamation shows just how out of touch you and your government are.

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

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — That is nowhere near where the real world is, Mr. Premier. Go out into the Porcupine Plains, the Shellbrooks, the Nipawins — go out and talk to those people. Spend some time with them and find out what they think about your plans for municipal amalgamation.

I would suggest, however, that you don't take Dr. Jack Stabler and Dr. Garcea with you.

Mr. Premier, some of the issues around SIGA I think have to be addressed, because they go right to the core of the very understanding of some very, very basic principles.

You suggested earlier in question period, in fact you and the members of your government ridiculed the statement that the government owns the slot machines at SIGA. Well I would like to read from you . . . for you a letter dated June 14 from the Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan to the Hon. Minister responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority. The Provincial Auditor says, Mr. Premier:

The Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority owns the slot machines (at) . . . SIGA casinos. The revenue from the slot machines belongs to (the) Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority and . . . therefore, Mr. Premier, (is) public money. SIGA can deduct legitimate expenses from

the slot machine revenues and then remit the net amount to (the) Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority.

Further to that, the Provincial Auditor also believes that casino profits are public money, taxpayers' money because they are for the social and economic well-being of the entire province of Saskatchewan.

The profits from SIGA, and this has been determined by your government, must be divided in three ways: firstly, to the First Nations fund, secondly, to the associated entities fund, thirdly, to the General Revenue Fund. Those are then as a result of the distribution of the profits considered taxpayers' dollars — taxpayers' dollars that are to be used for the well-being of the people of this province.

I think firstly, Mr. Premier, of the First Nations fund. Yesterday in this House we had two very articulate and compassionate MLAs stand up and deliver the interim report of the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade — this report, Mr. Premier — in that report it is clearly identified that some of the victims, a lot of the victims of the exploitation of children in the sex trade are in fact First Nations people, First Nations children. Those are the people where it is necessary that that money go to in order that they stand a fighting chance at life in this province.

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

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — But what's happened? The money is being siphoned off to NDP MLAs and NDP constituency associations. They don't even stand a chance of getting it in the first place.

The other issue, Mr. Premier, is the associated entities fund. I spent 20 years working in the human services field, Mr. Premier. I have a very good working knowledge of the associated entities fund.

The associated entities fund has done a tremendous amount of good for people with disabilities and vulnerable people in our society. And there are lots of agencies, non-government organizations, community-based organizations out there, Mr. Premier, that are suffering today. They can't deliver the programs and services that they need to to provide support for vulnerable people because your government has cut their funding.

So here's the one last avenue that they have is the associated entities fund. The people with disabilities, vulnerable people, people with special needs are not going to get that money. They're not going to get it as long as you don't consider SIGA profits taxpayers' money.

The other issue, Mr. Premier, is the issue of the General Revenue Fund, the third area. I mean if this isn't taxpayers' money, then I would like you to explain to me what it is, if it can go directly to the General Revenue Fund.

Mr. Premier, my question simply is: do you agree with the Provincial Auditor that SIGA profits are taxpayers' money?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, here's what I believe. I believe what the Provincial Auditor wrote but what you, the hon. member from Carrot River, did not say in question period, or even now, until you were forced to read it.

And I remember a little incident involving myself where the allegation was a misquote and that I should withdraw. I'm not going to put that to you. But you know full well what you put in question period, and only now were you forced to come clean.

And here's exactly in that letter of June 14, 2000 what the Provincial Auditor writes. He writes the following:

The revenue from the slot machines belongs to SLGA (and that is an obvious fact with which we agree) and is, therefore, public money.

That's what he wrote. You said taxpayers' money. Now I want to tell you — I want to tell you — that when the Royal Bank gets shares money, it is public money. That's why they're called publicly credited corporations. I am telling you that when it is argued that there is an obligation with respect to public money . . .

**The Chair:** — Order, order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Now when the questioner was making his statement and putting the question, there was no problem hearing the statements and questions. And I ask for the same respect for the person delivering the answer.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — And so, Mr. Speaker, to try to make the point succinctly. Here's a situation with respect to SIGA and with respect to the question of, let's take the VLTs (video lottery terminal), the SLGA licensed VLTs.

If you have a hotel which has VLTs, privately owned, privately operated, of which there has to be a payment of the revenues of VLT to the GRF (General Revenue Fund), is it argued by the Saskatchewan Party that that private hotelier is not permitted to buy a corporate sponsorship table at a Saskatchewan Party banquet? Yes or no?

And is it argued by you, sir, and is it argued by you, sir, and is it argued by you, sir, that that private hotelier is not private — that he's really a nationalized corporation? What is it?

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Premier, the issue around interpretation — interpretation. Mr. Premier, it's absolutely incredible how this government . . .

**The Chair:** — Order. Now I'm going to ask members to . . . Order, order.

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Well, Mr. Premier, let's put the same question to you, sir. If the government of this province has the regulatory and legislative responsibility for SIGA — the regulatory and legislative responsibility — is it then appropriate for that very government to turn around and allow those that they regulate to donate back to the political party which they belong to?

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



**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member from Carrot River now is way over his head. He is way over his head.

I want it to be known that the hon. member from Carrot River is in effect arguing that if the hotels association should buy a corporate table in representation of the hoteliers privately, at a Saskatchewan Party corporate fundraising, that that somehow is unlawful and inappropriate, regulated as it is — the hotels — by the SLGA. That's your argument.

And my question to you is simply this. If it is wrong for SIGA regulated by SLGA, is it wrong for the hotels association to appear on November 10, 1999 funneling money to the Sask Party and the Leader of the Opposition? Tell me that.

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Mr. Premier — thank you, Mr. Chair — Mr. Premier, it's not us that's saying this is taxpayers' dollars. It's the Provincial Auditor who is saying it's taxpayers' dollars.

And how, Mr. Premier, can you justify taxpayers' dollars being turned around and redirected back to the political party to which the government members opposite belong?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — You know, Mr. Chairman, why I say he's way over his head. He refuses now twice to answer the question and I've given . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh no, I've given the . . . I've given the answer. I've given the answer of the government in my questions.

By analogy if a farming person on farming operations makes a profit, as tough as it is these days, and pays taxes, by his argument, that belongs to everybody. And it's got to be audited by everybody.

If the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, if a hotel on VLT makes a profit, privately owned, your argument is that's taxpayers' money — every cent of it has got to be audited by the Government of Saskatchewan. That's what you're saying.

That is the most ludicrous and ridiculous argument, and you single out one group and one group only, and you don't even apply it. If the company that is paying royalties for oil companies, pays taxes, you argue that is public money . . .

**The Chair:** — Order, order. Order, order. Order, order, order. Now we had, by my count, at least a half a dozen people that were making every bit as much noise as the Premier in his attempt to answer the question. The Chair appreciates the quiet now.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'll be very brief. It is not an arm of government we're talking about here. And the examples I used make that point. Now maybe they didn't catch it by me asking the questions, but that's the issue there. It's an arm of government.

And it is important when you're dealing with public funds — I don't care whether you're the Royal Bank or the Government of Saskatchewan or SIGA — it is absolutely, critically important that those funds be properly, and totally, and completely accounted for.

That's why the minister in charge of the Gaming Authority acted decisively and immediately and that's why, I repeat again, that we are going to pursue this, through the SLGA, the regulatory authority — not the government but the SLGA — by law empowered. The auditors are there, full compliance by SIGA. Whether it is SIGA or in any other field of endeavour, there has to be proper accounting of funds.

That is the situation which exists today, and we're committed on that. But for that member to single out and not be able to answer even logically where the differences are shows how hollow these arguments are and really shows one thing — he's not interested in joining with us in cleaning this up and answering the issues. What he wants to do is to draw political points. It's not working, Mr. Member. It's not working, and it won't work.

Let the process work. Let the auditors do their job. It's in concert with the Provincial Auditor. It'll be public. You can debate it. What remedial action needs to be taken, will be taken.

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

(1545)

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Premier, when we as the official opposition attempt to, as you say, let the process work, we are just simply thwarted each and every time. And I want to refer specifically to the stonewalling of our attempts to be able to discuss this with the Provincial Auditor at Public Accounts.

And once again . . . And it'll be interesting to see what kind of a spin you can put on this one, Mr. Premier. The Provincial Auditor, in the report just recently issued, indicated very clearly — members can ask our office questions on what we plan to do and on what we actually did; such questions can be asked at any time and at public meetings of the Board of Internal Economy, the Standing Committee on Estimates, and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

But we, Mr. Premier, were not allowed to use due process. So with respect to the issue of hotels and the issue of contributions, there are some very distinct differences, Mr. Premier. Hotels are not bound by a province-wide agreement with the Government of Saskatchewan that mandates the division, the division of funds into the three categories that I referred to earlier. Hotels as well, Mr. Premier, have revenue from other sources.

SIGA has revenue from only one source — gambling. And that is why your government has a specific special agreement with them because even you realize that it is a single and sole source of revenue. And it is through that that you then in turn wanted to be able to have a certain degree of input into where those profits went.

And I don't think any hotelier out there would have any appreciation of you attempting to tell them where their profits go.

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

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — The question, Mr. Premier, is do you

honestly believe, Mr. Premier, that contributions to NDP MLAs and NDP constituency associations are legitimate expenses of SIGA whose sole source of revenue is gambling and who have a very specific, very narrow agreement with you and the province of Saskatchewan.

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, the member asks three questions. First of all, on the issue of the Public Accounts Committee, you have a right — the opposition does — every member has a right to raise whatever issue is appropriate before the Public Accounts Committee, in its wisdom, deems should be discussed.

Now I wasn't at the particular meeting that you refer to, but the argument that was advanced, as it was explained to me later by the government/coalition government members of the Public Accounts Committee was this: you can debate the report of the Provincial Auditor once the audit is done, but what is there to debate in the absence of this study being completed?

I mean it's underway right now in a full-scale way. There will be lots of opportunity to do that, and I acknowledge that. So there's no denying your right to raise it. The issue is the difference of when is the appropriate time.

Now the second issue you raise is the question of hotels. I have news for the hon. member opposite — hotels have been for years in the province of Saskatchewan virtually totally regulated by the government — Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority. Virtually . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll tell you how they've been . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I'll tell you how they've been regulated.

They are regulated as to whether they get a liquor licence. They are regulated as to how much they can sell and in what time. They are regulated as to what hours. They are regulated as to what food they must serve. They are regulated as to whether they get a VLT licence. They are subject to a government agreement as to where the proceeds of that VLT revenue goes to. They are subject to an absolute check by the SLGA. There are SLGA inspectors out there checking the hotel operators, and even by your own earlier admission, the SLGA owns the VLTs that are inside the hotels.

And you're telling me that they're not government regulated? Give your head a shake, please. They are government regulated, but they are also private operators and they are entitled to have promotion and they're entitled to be involved in advertising as is anybody else who deals with the SLGA such as SIGA. They're entitled promotions and advertising just like anybody else under the rules.

Now you asked a question about what happens if, what happens if, what happens if . . . well we'll all be smarter when the accountants take a look at the report and tell us what should take place. All smarter in that regard.

But I want to tell you one thing. That if the argument it is that there shouldn't be money coming by SLGA-regulated authorities, then somebody's got to explain why there was money being funnelled by the hotels association on November

10, 1999 to the Leader of the Opposition's official lunch and business dinner.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know the Premier is a lawyer and he's using a tactic here to deflect attention from the issue. The Premier knows that there is a formula for the revenues of the Liquor and Gaming funds. He knows that in the case of the hotels that they get a share of that which is their money.

Now if they were to take more than their share of money, Mr. Premier, they'd be breaking the law. But they're given that money, that's part of the agreement, and they can do with that as they very well please as long as they pay their taxes. You know that they have to live by the rules, Mr. Premier.

SIGA has some rules too. Just as it would be wrong for those hotels to take more than their share from the formula, Mr. Premier, it is wrong for you . . .

**The Chair:** — Order, order. Order, order. Now there's much competition in the opposition benches for the Premier's attention. I would simply inform members, during the estimates for Executive Council there's no prohibition on any and every member asking questions. But for the moment, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Premier, I hope you're not accusing the hotels of breaking the law because you know they're not. You know that they're acting very responsibly.

The problem is . . . The question is, Mr. Premier, should the NDP be receiving money from SIGA? Is that ethical? Is it legal? And the answer is no. That's the problem. You're a lawyer and you know that. You're trying to deflect blame or suspicion on hotels when in fact that blame and suspicion rests on your shoulders and the shoulders of your party.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Now, Mr. Premier, if I have time I'll come back to this, but I want to get on to another issue and that's the issue of the coalition government . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — I'm sorry, I can't hear you. I can't hear you.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — I said I now want . . . if I have time I'll come back to the SIGA issue but right now I want to get on to the issue of the coalition government. The Premier's having trouble hearing but I'll speak loud so he can hear every word.

Mr. Premier, the story of the session so far of course has been the unholy alliance of the Liberals and the NDP. It was very controversial and the controversy has only grown. And then when you start thinking about the unpopular policies of your government and the poor performance of your government, the popularity and the respect of the citizens of Saskatchewan for this coalition — or as it might be better described demolition government — continues to sink to new lows.

Now, Mr. Premier, without the support of those Liberal

members you wouldn't be able to push through your agenda. That's obviously why you talked them into joining in a coalition with yourself. Without Liberal support you wouldn't have been able to pass Bill 59 which was passed a few minutes ago, a negative labour legislation package that sets Saskatchewan again behind our competitors in the fight for jobs and economic growth.

You talk about who's talking about economic growth and you're killing economic growth with bills like Bill 59.

That was achieved with the support of the Liberal member from Saskatoon Northwest and the Liberal member for North Battleford, Mr. Premier. Without their support you wouldn't have been able to further plan to gut health care, close facilities, and downgrade facilities.

The Liberal leader said prior to the election that he was going to chain himself to the Plains hospital to keep it from closing. That's what he said. We all heard that. You heard it. You were laughing at him. You were laughing at him too then, Mr. Premier. But lo and behold, now he's chained to you. He's chained to you, Mr. Premier. He's chained to the NDP and of course he's chained to your health care policies.

Now the Liberals campaigned very hard against you in the last election and they actually surprised you and they surprised me by getting about 20 per cent of the vote. Of course in Wood River they won about 40 per cent of the vote, and it was a saw-off between ourselves and the Liberals as to who would represent that seat. That of course was settled pretty clearly the other day and it's a real weather vane to point out people's dissatisfaction with your coalition government.

Last year, Mr. Premier, the Liberals made 35 promises to the people of Saskatchewan. None of those promises have been honoured. Now that tells us a little bit about what happens around the cabinet table.

But we want to look at some of these as they specifically concern your department, Executive Council. And I want to know why you haven't done what the Liberals suggested, Mr. Premier.

In Priorities 1999, the Saskatchewan Liberal platform, they suggested that you should reduce the administration budget — this is vote 10 in case your officials want to check on this — reduce the administration budget from 2.256 million down to \$700,000. They also wanted to reduce the accommodation and central services by over two-thirds. The Premier's office they were going to leave as is.

But they were going to cut communications coordination and media services to zero. To zero, Mr. Premier. They were going to cut House business and research to zero, Mr. Premier. And they were going to cut the department staff, your staff, Mr. Premier, they were going to cut them from 82 people down to 21 staffers. That's what your Education minister said he was going to do.

Now I have the new vote 10 here, and lo and behold, instead of spending \$7.256 million, it's gone up. It's gone up to \$7.349 million. And instead of staff dropping from 82 down to 21, it's

gone up to 84.

One of those people include two-tier Harvey McLane, the man, the Liberal MLA in this House that you used to lambaste, you used to belittle, you used to call the spokesperson for two-tier health care in Saskatchewan. You've vilified that man. You coined the name yourself, you called him that name and other names under the sun, Mr. Premier. And now you hired him.

So the only thing you've done that might indicate some Liberal influence over there is hire a defeated candidate. All of the other recommendations you ignored.

Mr. Premier, my question to you is: why didn't you follow the Liberal leader's commitment, his party platform to reduce your department? Why didn't you do that?

And we'd like to know, did the Liberal member, the Liberal leader, lobby you hard? What kind of a battle ensued in the cabinet . . . around the cabinet table to keep that staff up there at its current level, to increase your budget? Why didn't he have enough clout to commit to . . . to get you to commit to his platform, Mr. Premier?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — First of all, Mr. Chairman, I want to assure the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that our government believes in competence with respect to hiring, and that means that people who are of neutral political persuasion if they're competent, people who may be of New Democratic Party persuasion if they're competent, and Liberal people of Liberal Party persuasion if they're competent.

Why, Mr. Chairman, we're so committed to competence that I'd even hire a Saskatchewan Party member if I could find a competent one anywhere around the province of Saskatchewan; and thus far, it's been rather difficult to find a competent one. But we'll look and maybe the Leader of the Opposition will give us some suggestions.

I want to say a few words about the coalition before I speak specifically to the question. The coalition, as the parliamentarian that the Leader of the Opposition was in the House of Commons will know, is not new in parliamentary government and it's not new for sure in European forms of government where many coalitions exist. New Zealand is the most recent example of a parliamentary government coming together in coalition.

And in coalition the government basically operates as follows. You'll have the platform of the two parties — let's bring it right home to Saskatchewan — the party of the New Democratic Party platform, the party of the Liberal Party and their platform. And there will be areas where the Liberals will not agree with our platform and there will be areas where we may not agree with their platform. And what you try to do is to identify the areas where you do agree in order to benefit the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

And that is exactly where we stand. In some areas, we may have to agree to disagree. We may even see some areas where what we stood for amended in the election campaign in an

attempt to compromise and we're working at doing that whether it relates to Executive Council or to any of the other areas of health or education or roads.

(1600)

But what the coalition does bring together in commonality is a positive vision for publicly funded, single-payer medicare and more money — not two-tier like they do. We believe in, as we have funded nearly 7 per cent for education under the Liberal leader's leadership in that portfolio, I might add, strong education.

We believe in the situation that the highways issues, which have been raised by the opposition members, that has to be dealt with, and we've got to deal with it together as *The Leader-Post* or *StarPhoenix* editorial I've been citing lately says, I think, quite accurately. We've been dedicating more money.

A number of areas I can identify with has been positive action and progressive action and visionary action. Now the hon. member says what about the Executive Council? There's been no reduction as the Liberal leader has advocated and the answer is that there hasn't been a reduction at this particular time. We are continually looking to reduce money. We're trying to make sure that the increases are moderate. The increases this year amount to 1.3 per cent only this budget year under review that the Leader of the Opposition over the year before, that's what it amounts to in percentage terms. In staff size, it's two full-time equivalents or an increase of 2.4 per cent.

Now that doesn't match what has been said. I acknowledge that as the Leader of the Opposition says, but I say to the Leader of the Opposition the reality is these increases are for sure very, very modest. And in that regard both the Leader of the Liberal Party and myself, as the Premier as the province of Saskatchewan, are determined on common goal to achieve. Lean, as tightly and as efficiently a managed government as we can with as few bodies as we can without destroying the operation of government and that includes Executive Council.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Premier, you said prior to the election that the Liberals couldn't even govern themselves; they should never be . . . you know, form the Saskatchewan government. You now have two key ministries — two key ministries — given to Liberal cabinet ministers, one who was going to give you zero dollars in your communication budget. I mean zero dollars for research for this Assembly, Mr. Premier.

The Minister of Education, Minister of Education is supposed to be in charge of the knowledge base of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, and . . . (inaudible) . . . as one of the people that you correctly identified should not be in government. And then you turned around and put him in government for your own well-being and for the well-being of your party so that you can continue to govern Saskatchewan. That tells you a lot about your priorities, Mr. Premier.

And you put the member from North Battleford in place in the very important ministry of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, another area where there's some severe problems in your government. You identified that these people are not

capable of governing because they weren't capable of governing themselves and their own party prior to the election, and now they're full partners in your own government. What kind of reflection is this on your judgment, or on the judgment of your government and also on the quality of your government, Mr. Premier?

Now, Mr. Premier, I want to go on to another area and that's the area of taxes. I find it's extremely . . . Mr. Premier, I find it extremely entertaining to listen to the members on the opposite side suddenly hold themselves up to be champion tax cutters, yourself included. You were very reluctant to talk about cutting taxes. The Liberals said they weren't going to cut taxes at all.

Mr. Premier, you didn't have the courage to sign your own election promise that you would cut taxes by \$1,000. You wouldn't sign that, other leaders did. Of course, the Liberal leader knew he'd never form government, but you didn't have the courage to sign that commitment to cut taxes. You weren't sure you wanted to cut taxes. You're still not sure you want to cut taxes. And the Liberals are clear that they don't want to cut taxes.

The current Economic Development minister, Mr. Premier, said with a straight face that tax relief was not a priority for Saskatchewan people. Where do you people live? Who do you talk to, Mr. Premier? That's the same minister who cautioned against Saskatchewan people becoming . . . or Saskatchewan becoming economically strong to the point where it actually becomes a have province, because it would cut into federal equalization payments.

Mr. Premier, your Economic Development minister, the minister in charge of growth in this province, wants us to be a welfare case. Can you imagine?

So you've got incompetent Liberal members in your government. You've got an Economic Development minister that wants our province to be a basket case.

Now, Mr. Premier, this sentiment was supported wholeheartedly by the Liberals who joined your coalition, and so we've seen your tax reduction package in the Finance minister's budget. There was a lot of talk. If I remember correctly, it started off saying that this was a historic tax-cutting budget. Aren't those the right words? Historic tax-cutting budget.

But when all the dust settled, Mr. Premier, when all the dust settled and Saskatchewan taxpayers checked their pocketbooks, they're \$40 million behind after this budget, not the meagre \$40 million ahead that your Finance minister said they would be. That, simply put, is a tax increase. It's no wonder you weren't prepared to sign that commitment to lower Saskatchewan taxpayers' tax bill.

Of course, you know what you did. You expanded the PST. I don't recall a whole lot of talk about that prior to the election. There was some talk about lowering income taxes and some talk about lowering the PST, but there certainly wasn't talk about expanding the PST. That was when you kind of slipped in there at the last minute, wasn't it, Mr. Premier?

Of course you didn't talk a whole lot about underfunding of

schools. And in fact, since you took office in 1991, you reduced funding for education.

Now you misquote others saying that we would zap spending for health care or education. You actually reduced funding for education from 1991 and the total loss to the education system in Saskatchewan is \$380 million up until this budget. That's your record. That's your legacy, Mr. Premier.

The PST was expanded. Mill rates have increased at the municipal level.

And then you tried some sneaky things. You tried some sneaky fee increases that you didn't want tell people about. You started off with the infamous coyote tax. And then you went on to increase fishing fees, hunting fees, park fees. You didn't want people to have recreation in Saskatchewan.

And then, Mr. Premier, and this is the one that disturbs me the most, and I don't how you can stand up and not blush about the fact that you've increased nursing home fees. You know, the most vulnerable people in Saskatchewan. And Mr. Premier, my father, who has now passed away, had to use the health care system; he had to stay in the Palliser hospital in Swift Current for the last years of his life. So I know what I'm speaking about when I talk about long-term care for people.

And, Mr. Premier, the people that are the most needy, the most helpless, and who have contributed the most to the well-being of this province, you have the nerve in this budget to hike their nursing home fees. Mr. Premier, that's about as low as a government can go. I don't know how you folks can come into this Assembly and not slouch in your seats when you do those kind of despicable things — tax the most needy, the most vulnerable people in this province.

It is one of the low points of your nine years in government; something you need to correct, you need to not be so proud and just simply say, we made a mistake, we're not going to attack seniors, we're not going to attack people that are in nursing homes, we're going to rescind that decision to increase their fees, Mr. Premier. This is the tax cutting, the historical tax-cutting budget that your Finance minister announced three months ago.

Now, Mr. Premier, your government is failing on the very important issue that is going to hurt this province in the long run. People are leaving this province because taxes are too high. Young people are leaving the province because there's no jobs here; there's no opportunity where there's high taxes. Business people are pulling up and leaving the province; even some larger businesses are talking about leaving NDP Saskatchewan because your taxes are too high and they don't believe you any more when you say you're going to cut taxes.

And, Mr. Premier, seniors are leaving Saskatchewan. I know of one couple, Mr. Premier, they've made an agreement that when one of them passes away, when one of them passes away, the other one will move to Alberta to escape the high death taxes in this province.

So, Mr. Premier, you're going to try and squeeze every cent out of these people when they die. And they're not going to let you

do it; they're going to leave Saskatchewan. And so Alberta or Ontario or some other jurisdiction's going to get some money, and we're going to get absolutely no revenue even though they have spent a lifetime contributing to this province. Some legacy, some record, Mr. Premier.

In the past year because of your high-tax policy we've had a net loss of 1,600 people.

A huge population growth on the Prairies. Manitoba's doing very well; they grew 6,000 people — that's more than the population in Melfort, if I'm correct; that's more than the population of Kindersley, it's more than the population of Nipawin. That's a lot of people and Manitoba was able to grow their population by 6,000. Alberta was 11,000 or more — I think it was more than 11,000 people they grew their population.

We're going backwards. We're going backwards under your administration. We lost 1,600 people; prospects for population growth are just not there as long as taxes are high.

Mr. Premier, given these facts . . . And you know that I'm not manufacturing these, these are Statistics Canada numbers. They are facts. Our taxes are high — that's a fact. Our economic performance is poor — that's a fact. Our population is dropping — that's a fact. It can all be tied to high taxes — that's a fact.

Mr. Premier, will you call a fall session of the legislature, bring in a mini budget, and actually cut taxes. Just cut taxes — don't raise any taxes?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, on the specific question about a fall session, we are not ruling out that possibility. I have not made a decision, and obviously won't for the next few weeks in any event. I do want to say . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Take the summer off.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — It won't take the full summer.

I do want to say, however, a few points in response to a rather lengthy address by the Leader of the Opposition. First of all, talking about the Minister of Economic Development and on the general issue of taxes which took place, the tax policy, under her term as minister of Finance and the present Minister of Finance, speaking to both those issues generally.

What the Leader of the Opposition conveniently fails to draw to the attention of this House is what I would argue is the outstanding performance of the former minister of Finance in inheriting a province from '91 to '95 — I'm talking about bankruptcy — and bringing it to balance and setting the pillars into place for long-term balances and surpluses well into the 21st century. The member from Saskatoon did that.

But specifically, the tax situation is clear. I have a lengthy list here that is provided as a briefing note. It's rather disjointed. Just to give you a sample. Effective April 1, 1993, the sales tax on 1 800 telephone services eliminated to attract calling centres to Saskatchewan. That's what the Minister of Economic

Development did.

Effective January 1, 1994, new adjustments to royalty structures for oil and natural gas to be competitive to Alberta. It was introduced by her reductions.

February 17, 1995, investment tax credit for the manufacturing and processing was introduced at the rate of 9 per cent, and been extended to used M&P (manufacturing and production) equipment effective retroactively to February 17, 1995. And that was reduced to 7 per cent in 1997. And the reduction, I might add, in that period of the sales tax to 7 per cent also by the current Minister of Economic Development.

Nineteen ninety-five, the fuel tax rate on aviation reduced from 7 cents per litre to 3.5. July 1, 1995, personal income taxes were reduced to \$150 per taxpayer reduction in debt reduction surtax.

I could go on. I'll just give you two more. Effective July 1, 1995 the very successful M&P profits tax reduction was introduced. Effective March 21, 1997, as I said, the sales tax was cut. And on March 21, 1997 the sales tax on certain medical devices purchased by individuals was eliminated.

The members say when was it increased? It was increased beginning with the former administration of Mr. Devine's, who was going to reduce it to zero, and increased it. And we increased it. I acknowledge we increased it. But I tell you — we decreased it.

(1615)

And I want to tell you something else while I'm on sales tax. Right now, I don't care whether we had to or not, we did it. We did it. You say we didn't. We did it. And I want to tell you, even with this budget where it remains at 6 per cent with an expanded basket of items which are taxable, it is the second lowest tax percentage rates on sales — the lowest being Alberta — and the second lowest basket of tax items in all of Canada. That's a fact. That is a fact.

Now we want to continue to reduce that. We want to become more competitive with Alberta on the sales tax side. If you're saying to us more needs to be done, we agree. Where we disagree with you, however, I'll say in a moment, is what I think is an extremely imbalanced — and if I may say so kindly — highly irresponsible fiscal policy which I will talk about in a moment in getting to that goal that you talk about. That's what the former minister of Finance did.

And what did the current Minister of Finance do? In a budget that you voted against, that we're voting off today, the Saskatchewan flat tax and provincial surtaxes abolished. Three rate structures — 11, 13, and 15 — introduced. De-linking. Fairness for families. By 2003 — this is the same Alberta track — the average family will save about \$1,000 a year in income tax.

Significant higher personal credits. An implementation of basic personal credit of 8,000. A spousal credit or equivalent of 8,000. A child credit of 2,500. A thousand dollar supplement for existing seniors credit.

I want to draw this to the attention of the Leader of the Opposition: 55,000 low-income people — you want to pay attention to this; I ask the Leader of the Opposition to just give me one brief courtesy to pay attention to this — 55,000 low-income people, one in every eight taxpayers, will be removed from the income tax rolls. One in eight. One in eight. That's what we've done. Do we need to do more? The answer is yes, we need to do more.

But here's your problem, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, and why I say you'll never be in the treasury benches. Your problem is that right now you are playing what is the old-style politics of opposition — everything to everybody.

You want to rebuild the roads, as the Wood River by-election was all about. You want to increase the health care and more than we've done at 6 per cent. You want to cut taxes. You condemn us on education, even though there's a 7 per cent increase. You want to balance the budget.

You want to do all of that, although in this session . . . and I am going to make this prediction, Mr. Chairman, subject to correction, but we're going to check this and put it out to the people of Saskatchewan. I predict, Mr. Chairman, I have made one prediction on questions, that by 2, 3, 4 country miles they asked more questions on Queer City Film Festival and on so-called forced amalgamation than they did on anything else together. And health included.

I'm saying, you total them all up, you total those two up, and you will have asked more than anything else . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well no, the hon. member from Rosthern . . . It's okay, Mr. Chairman. I can hear him.

The hon. member from Rosthern, he's right — they did ask questions about health. I think it was the member from Swift Current who talked about the bats in the belfry of the hospital somewhere. They did ask questions about that.

And they actually talked about Bill 11 and how we should follow Alberta. So they did ask some questions. I didn't say they didn't ask any questions at all. They asked questions. I'm saying they asked more.

But I make this prediction, I say this: when, as we are now doing, when our Department of Finance is now doing, is computing the calls on the public purse by you, sir, and your officials, this budget alone, my prediction is it will be well in excess of a billion dollars — in other words, a deficit of a billion dollars if we were to adopt all of your disparate points of view that you have advocated in your disunited and not purposeful session. That's what I predict. A billion dollars.

And here's what your problem is. I'm going to read it one more time. The Saskatoon *StarPhoenix*. I never thought I would do it, Mr. Chairman, but I'm going to do it. Quote:

Whichever political party promises to deliver it all is playing voters for patsies.

I'll stop there from the quotation. "Deliver it all". Know what I just said? Deliver it all, all things to all people, you're playing the voters for patsies.

Any voter who believes that turfing out the current government will, overnight, get all highways magically paved (new member from Wood River), rural hospitals reopened and waiting lists zapped, farm supports ratcheted up and taxes slashed is practising a form of self-delusion not seen since the heady days of Grant Devine.

Not my words, the words of the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* editorial board . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, a newspaper owned by Conrad Black; \$75,000 in contribution to those people. Even they see the self-delusory nature of this group that pretends to be ready to be a responsible government.

And I'm going to close, Mr. Chairman, from this editorial. And mark my words. This is why I say to the Leader of the Opposition why he'll never be in the treasury benches, none of you will be. This quotation:

The sooner we all understand that, the sooner we can demand that our politicians stop cynically driving wedges between people and start articulating workable plans on how to address such challenges as highways, education and health care without adding to the debt.

New member from Wood River — not one word. Not one word in your by-election on how you could achieve that. No vision, no plan. You, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, not one word how to achieve that. No vision, no plan. You, Mr. House Leader, not one word. You in fact have put \$1 billion at risk.

I serve notice on the people of Saskatchewan that if this government should be defeated, I serve notice on this province, that if it should be defeated — which it will not be defeated — they will see a return to the Devine years with a vengeance, a vengeance. What we're seeing here are the last remnants of those self-delusory, heady days of the Devine government.

I close by saying:

. . . (it) is practising (they, the opposition) a form of self-delusion not seen since the heady days of Grant Devine.

I say this, Mr. Chairman, "heady days of Grant Devine," I never thought that any official opposition leader or any official opposition would even begin remotely to make Grant Devine look responsible in the management of public finances. They have succeeded where even Mr. Devine couldn't, in being even more irresponsible than he ever was. No, you'll never be elected, sir, never, because you are not a man of vision or compassion or purpose, and you cannot speak to these issues. That's my view, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, and to the Premier, that's what you say every year and it never comes true. People don't believe you any more. It doesn't.

You said the hon. member from Canora-Pelly wouldn't get elected. He won with a huge majority. You said the member from Kelvington-Wadena wasn't going to get elected. She had one of the highest pluralities second only to the member from Cannington. You said Mr. Wiens would get re-elected. We clobbered him in Rosetown-Biggar. Most of us got way more

votes than you got in Riversdale. You're the Leader of the Government for heaven's sake.

Nobody believes you any more. We don't believe you when you tell about . . . when you talk about how many questions we had. You were wrong again, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, out of 748 questions that we asked — now listen, listen carefully — 700 . . . We have good staff on our side of the House, a little better than yours. From the 748 questions, by far the most questions were asked on health care to the Minister of Health. I don't know what you call your second — is it the junior Minister of Health, the other one? I'm not . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . the Associate Minister of Health, 47 questions, and to the full-time Minister of Health, or whatever her title is, 108 questions, for a total of 155 questions on health care out of 748 questions.

I think my colleague from Melfort-Tisdale did a heck of a job, Mr. Premier. And my colleague from Weyburn did a great job. And, Mr. Premier, I think you answered some health care questions on top of that. So maybe the percentage is even higher.

We asked the Municipal Affairs minister 71 questions and that includes questions on roads besides forced amalgamation. So, Mr. Premier, you might want to eat your words, and you might want to start being accurate in the comments you make. Don't make these wild allegations year after year.

You know I think you think you're on TV, and you can say that we're all doomed over on this side. But the facts are speaking louder than you are. You're wrong time after time after time after time. People are tired of it. Your Minister of Education called it rhetoric and you live it. You live it every day in this House. You live it every day out there. And people of Saskatchewan have caught on. You can't play those tricks any more.

Mr. Deputy Chair, I'd like to table the document that shows the questions that we've asked to the ministers of the Crown.

Now, Mr. Premier, I'm going to just briefly touch on health care and my colleague from Melfort-Tisdale will also touch on health care. I know you like to talk about health care, Mr. Premier. I know you like to talk about health care, but it's always looking to the past and saying what had happened in 1962. You know, I find people . . . I find it almost hysterical, Mr. Premier, that you continue to hold yourself up as the champions of health care when all around you the evidence is that health care is falling apart in Saskatchewan.

You know, Mr. Premier, you remind me of a person who used to be clothed, you used to be clothed in some beautiful raiment, but it's been so long and you've worn the same clothes for so long that they're tattered, they're torn, they're threadbare. In fact they're falling off. In fact, Mr. Premier, you're almost like the emperor with no clothes.

Mr. Speaker, because you're so naked, we are now seeing the scars. And these are some of the scars, Mr. Premier. The scar of waiting lists is on your NDP body. The scars of infant mortality — and this isn't funny, Mr. Premier — scars of infant mortality

on your body. We have the scars of the nurses' strike and the working conditions for nurses. Those are scars on the body of you and your government, Mr. Premier.

We have the scars of health districts in debt. You had to take over the East Central Health District, the Yorkton area, because things were so messed up. Most of the health districts are running deficits. This is in your wellness plan.

Mr. Premier, the administration of health care in Saskatchewan has run amok — it's a mess — under your watch, Mr. Premier, and that of your government and your two health ministers. You have two people helping you with health care, and it's never been worse.

You don't know how to manage health care, so that's why you talk about 1962. People of Saskatchewan want to talk about the year 2000 and whether or not there's going to be health care today and tomorrow when they need it.

Now, Mr. Premier, Saskatchewan residents have fled by the thousands in search of health care outside of our province. We live in a province where cancer surgery or heart surgery is no longer treated as an emergency. People are forced to watch their lives hang in the balance or to leave the province to get themselves treated.

Now, Mr. Premier, you may not like it, but that's a two-tier health care system. It's your two-tier health care system. Mr. Premier, you are in contravention of the Canada Health Act.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Mr. Premier, we live in a province where we now live hours from the nearest health care facility, which may or may not be a hospital. And to get to that health care facility, we have to travel over the worst highways in Canada. Mr. Premier, that is two-tier health care. It's your two-tier health care.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Mr. Premier, you and your Minister of Health, you just love to talk about the five tenets of the Canada Health Act, and they are noble, Mr. Premier. They are noble. But you're ignoring the fact that one of these tenets — equal accessibility to health care — is being lost, and you could argue is lost in the province of Saskatchewan. And so what do you do — what do you do, Mr. Premier? Well you get up here and you did what you just did a few minutes ago. You start pontificating about unrealities, virtual reality you might call it, but it's simply not true, Mr. Premier. The evidence insists that it's not true.

So you talk about 1962. You talk about your days in the Blakeney government. Mr. Premier, it's not 1962 any more. I believe that's 38 years ago. That's a long time ago, Mr. Premier.

People are worried about health care today. Everything's all right when people are waiting months and months for treatment? No I don't think so. And we all have loved ones who have waited, I'm sure you have friends and close colleagues who had to wait far too long. I know I've had some.

I know I had an uncle that had to wait months and months for a hip replacement. He's one of your supporters — I don't know if he supports you any more, Mr. Premier. That was a long, long, painful wait he had to . . . he had to go through. He had to quit driving; he felt like he was a burden on his family because of you and your health care.

Mr. Premier, is everything all right when palliative care patients in Climax have to be transferred out every weekend to Shaunavon? Can you imagine? I talked about the despicableness of increasing nursing home fees. I think this is about equal. If you take palliative care patients and say okay, it's Friday. It's Friday and palliative care patients hit the road; we're going to bounce you down that highway.

What number is the highway from Climax to Shaunavon? Highway 18, the one you're going to turn back to gravel. Got to bounce that . . . or Highway 37 . . . got to bounce that person to Shaunavon, and then make them stay in Shaunavon for the weekend, and then you load them back up.

This sounds more like potatoes or flour we're hauling around. These are people, Mr. Premier, they're people. Don't forget it, they are people and they are people that are counting on you. Palliative care people that you're hauling around on the weekend because you don't care about health care.

You're worried about 1962. Well that falls pretty flat on the ears of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, you can't help an alcoholic until he knows he has a problem. Mr. Premier, we can't help you fix health care until you recognize, until you acknowledge that you have a problem.

Mr. Premier, you have a problem. Are you listening? You have a problem that's got to be fixed.

Mr. Premier, when are you going to stop playing your childish games, your pretend games about health care and actually get down to the job of making health care work in the year 2000?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, to some extent, Leader of the Opposition is dead right — I have a problem and the problem is the Saskatchewan Party on health care. But it's not only my problem; it's the problem of everybody in the province of Saskatchewan.

And the hon. member starts off again with no facts, no proper facts. The hon. member, I don't know if he ever has heard of the Canadian Institute for Health Information, CIHI, but this is a very authoritative, reputable, independent national organization which rates the question of health care across the country.

And by the way, I would add, moving from CIHI, *Maclean's* magazine did a rating of health care too and put University in Saskatoon as number three of all of the cities in Canada. And they don't like that but that's the reality.

But nonetheless, CIHI, I want to say this, and that is about CIHI, the following. CIHI publishes its figures and it says that



per capita surgical volumes, I wonder if the member from Kindersley would just be interested in this, per capita surgical volumes in Saskatchewan are higher than the national average in 13 of 16 — 13 of 16 — major categories of in-patient surgery. The figures are for '97 . . . '99 . . . '97-98 and are adjusted.

Saskatchewan surgeons perform 90.6 orthopedic surgeries per 10,000 residents compared to a national average of 67.1 per cent. Now I want to ask the Minister of Health and associate to give me some help here. How many doctors' visits are there a year in Saskatchewan, GP (general practitioner)?

**An Hon. Member:** — 4.7.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — 4.7 million?

**An Hon. Member:** — Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — The Minister of Health advises me 4.7 million people in Saskatchewan visit GP offices a year, every year — 4.7.

How many visit specialists?

**An Hon. Member:** — 926,000

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Nine hundred and twenty-six thousand visit specialists, plus, — 926,000 visit specialists.

How many road ambulance trips a year — 76,000 trips by road ambulance and more than 836 air ambulance trips.

How many diagnostic and therapeutic radiology services — 253,000 a year. How many tests at the provincial lab a year — 1.45 million a year.

And I could go on and talk about the satellite kidney dialysis in Prince Albert, Tisdale, Yorkton, Lloydminster. The cancer treatment — 44,000 radiation. Outreach chemotherapy ranging from Humboldt, Kerrobert, Estevan, Outlook. And I could go on and on.

And CIHI recommends and notes all that.

My question to the hon. member opposite is, if the system is so bad, how come it does so much? How come it does so much? Listening to the member opposite, the system is not doing anything. And it's doing more than ever.

And in this year's budget, we see an 11.1 per cent increase over last year. The budget totals \$2.1 billion — it's in the record — and includes \$150 million transition fund, which is going to be used while the study of Fyke is going on, and particularly post-Fyke.

And I could give you the list, but without taking time of the committee, it's all in the budget. But give you one example, a 5 per cent increase to the health districts. I give you one other example, \$3 million to Aids for Independent Living. Another example, 27 per cent increase — 21 million for prescription drug. And I can go on and on. That is what our program does. That's what we do.

And so I ask the hon. members again, opposite, if the system is so bad, how come it does so much? Tell me that. Tell me how much that's the case . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And cancer therapy — I cited that one — the Minister of Health is giving me cancer therapy; I've cited that one. I can continue.

The numbers are there. These aren't numbers from myself and the government. These are numbers from CIHI and independent observers. That's why the people know that what the Leader of the Opposition and the Sask Party is saying is not factual, is absolutely not factual.

For the hon. members opposite, they say that I'm concerned about 1962. You know something? I am concerned about 1962, because 1962 was the establishment of single-payer, publicly funded medicare on the basis of the five fundamental principles of health care. They were our gift to Canada. And I would tell for those who do not know opposite, for six years the people of Saskatchewan funded medicare 100 per cent, Mr. Member from Melfort, 100 per cent right out of the treasury.

It wasn't until after John Diefenbaker appointed Emmett Hall — to John Diefenbaker's credit — and Emmett Hall recommended the program, our program nationally, and only after Mike Pearson implemented 50/50 federal cost sharing, that we had national medicare. For six years, we carried it alone, and 50/50 and we had national medicare based on those five comprehensive principles.

And we are now adjusting. We have to acknowledge the system is in flux and in change. We have huge technological changes — \$3 million for an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), just to buy one; 1 million to operate it every year. Same with all of the others. CAT (computer assisted transcription) scans.

Today in Canada we spend more money on prescription drugs than we spend on doctors in Canada. That's what's happening in this country and in this province. That's the change.

We're not frozen to the question of 1962 because we know that medicare changes in its technology and its medicines. But what we are addicted to and in support of, are the basic values and five fundamental principles, and here's where there is a difference between us.

We support medicare, Mr. Chairman; and that bunch opposite — okay, I'll withdraw the word, bunch — the official opposition opposite, this group calling themselves the Saskatchewan Party, the amalgam of the coalition party supporters, the amalgam of the former Conservatives provincially, they are opposed to the health care, medicare system, which we invented and which we're trying to save and to preserve.

You know why they're opposed? It started right away from their constitutional debate and their policy platform way back when they founded themselves, November 17, 1997. And here's how it's reported in the Regina *Leader-Post*, quote:

During a panel discussion Saturday, party organizer Brian Fitzpatrick called the five fundamental principles behind medicare (quote) "mindless slogans" . . .

Not my words, their words . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Are they?

. . . “mindless slogans” that stand in the way of innovative health-care solutions like private clinics.

Here’s what the member from Rosthern says — *Village Press*, November 24, 1999. Here they say, quote:

Saskatchewan is experiencing a serious health care crisis, and would do well . . .

To do what, Mr. Chairman? Do well, quote:

. . . to look at the Alberta government’s experiment with private clinics, according to Ben Heppner, Saskatchewan Party MLA for Rosthern constituency.

Do I hear hear, hear from there? Do I hear, hear, hear? We heard it, hear, hear from the opposite side.

Then we have the new member from Wood River, the new member from Wood River. Remember there was a leadership race. There were three leaders: the current, successful leader, they had the member from Melfort running, they had the . . . Who else did they have? Maybe there was three only, and they had the new member from Wood River.

On health care, on health care, on health care, people of Saskatchewan note on health care, this is what the would-be leader believes in, quote:

The whole health care system needs a review. I’m in favour of private clinics.

Then we have the member from Weyburn, the member from Weyburn. *Weyburn Review* October 20, 1999, quote:

One option Bakken put forward during the course of her campaign was the privatization of health services.

Note, Mr. Chairman, note, Mr. Chairman, note the report, Mr. Chairman, note the . . . I’m going to say this it doesn’t matter . . .

**The Deputy Chair:** — Order, order. Members of the Assembly I think that the level of background noise and yelling . . . I realize there’s a lot of emotion around this issue and I want to respect that, but the amount of noise at this point is making it very difficult for the speaker who has the floor to make himself heard. And I therefore ask for a little calmer response please, more order.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, I’m going to repeat this from the *Weyburn Review* October 20, 1999. And this is the quotation, quote:

One option Bakken put forward during the course of her campaign was the privatization of health services.

Now this is . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the whole thing. “I think it should be an option,” she goes on to say.

Now note the words health services, health services — health services. Even the new member from Wood River who tried to limit himself to private clinics — private clinics — even he limits to private clinics.

The member from Weyburn says health services — services — that is the whole shebang. Private for-profit hospitals. Privatize the whole doggone thing because they don’t believe in the five principles of the health care system. And why would they not do anything other than follow the way their leader has set the course . . . (inaudible) . . . the current Leader of the Opposition.

Starts all the way back from his days back in the House of Commons. Back in the House of Commons he says, this is in *Hansard*, March 16, 1995. He’s talking about health care in Manitoba. He says, “Is the government prepared to bring the Canada Health Act in line with the 1990s and give the provinces real control over medicine delivery and health care financing?” is what he says.

By the way, there is a quotation, if someone could find it for me, where he speaks about our province and what he calls the closure of hospitals and how he supports it. How he supports the closure of hospitals, coming back to . . . (inaudible) . . . But then he goes on to say this, Mr. Chairman.

Then he goes on to say this, Mr. Chairman. He starts out on February 23, 1999 and he’s talking about health care. And he says this, according to the CKRM report: “Hermanson also likes one of the new Party’s first proposals,” referring to the new party that’s being set up here, and that is to have the federal government surrender its responsibility. Surrender its responsibility for what? For health care. Not even private clinics, but for health care to the provinces.

Right, they say. They say it now — right. Now just imagine if the federal government funds and surrenders its responsibilities, there are no national standards — no national standards. Nothing that says you as a Canadian as a matter of birthright will have reasonably competent and reasonably accessible services to all the health. It’s not identical from region to region.

Not even identical in this province. I understand that and I understand much more has got to be done.

(1645)

But he wants to surrender it. And that he says. He’s publicly said that he supports Mr. Preston Manning, Leader of the Alliance Party. The one who’s going to win it of course is the person that his next door seatmate supports, the member from Kindersley, Mr. Stockwell Day. And what does Mr. Stockwell Day say? Exactly what I just read to you about what the Leader of the Opposition said — surrender federal responsibility to the provinces.

Now you do that without national standards . . . and oh by the way, I think maybe I have the quotation. February 15, 1994, in the House of Commons. This is what he said, the Leader of the Opposition, this is what he said then as opposed to now. Quote:

I know that most Canadians place a high priority on health

care. I would just like to relate a little bit about what is happening in my own province of Saskatchewan. We had governments that liked to build monuments, that liked to build hospitals. We probably have more hospitals per capita in our province than in any other part of Canada. Unfortunately, we have now no money to operate those hospitals. Our priorities were probably wrong. In fact, I'm sure they were wrong.

That's what he said in 1994.

And now he would have us believe something entirely different. It just goes to show you, the reason I'm citing this is not because I need his support for our health care reform — I don't want his support on our health care reform — but to show the inconsistency, the fundamental inconsistency. And then when he's pressed further on this matter, in doing away with the Canada Health Act — just do away with it. Do away with the Canada Health Act.

The hon. member from Humboldt just keeps on yelling from her chair. I can barely hear her, notwithstanding . . .

**The Deputy Chair:** — Order, order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I do want to encourage members not to yell across the seat from their floor. It's one thing to heckle, it's another thing to bellow. But let's try to avoid doing that.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, I will try to bring my remarks to a close because I think I've made the point with respect to where these folks opposite us stand on the differences with respect to health care. That is clearly documented in all of the quotations that I've given. And it's not only that, but it's seen — it's seen — by those who observe it, independently.

Well this is the second time that I've had to do this. *The StarPhoenix*, October 31, 1998, reviewing the platform of the would-be government over there. Quote:

Welcome to the remake of *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*, this time featuring Saskatchewan Party leader Elwin Hermanson in the lead role.

This is the quotation, *The StarPhoenix*. It has nothing to do with personal appearances or otherwise. Quote, dealing with health care, I'm reading now from the editorial:

For instance, (it has, referring to their party) it has no plans (no plans, no plans) to address concerns in health care. There's no prescription to cure the bed closures, surgical waiting lists, nursing shortages. All it will do is hire an ombudsman to whom people can complain.

No, there's something else they'll do. This is their way up platform. And what they're going to do is they're going to implement, within six months of attaining office, value-for-money health care audit. Now I want to say two things . . . And again, the member for Wood River applauds.

I want to say two things as I take my chair on this issue. *The StarPhoenix* of 1998 that I just read, saying it has nothing to offer, is dead wrong. It has a lot to offer — privatized health care. That's what they didn't see in 1998, except that they had

no vision. Now we know clearer where they're headed, supported by the member from Wood River.

The excellent . . . He applauds again. The member from Wood River . . . that's fine, he can applaud. He applauds again in support of my statement that they're for the privatization of health care — applaud it — and that they are in favour of having no national responsibility, no national responsibility in health care.

You know how you have no national responsibility in health care? Do away with the Canada Health Act. Then, like Stockwell Day, let every province control it; then, like Stockwell Day, see Alberta set up Bill 11. That's what Stockwell Day in Alberta. Let them two-tier, let them have private hospital for profit.

Well I want to tell you, you may think it goes back to 1962 — I don't care what you think. It goes back to 1962, to the year 2000, to the year 2062. This government coalition and this party is committed to medicare and the principles of medicare. They're opposed, and they will never have the front benches as a result.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Premier, I'd like to welcome your staff here today. And, Mr. Premier, just before I start today, not knowing if you'll be back next session, and I believe you possibly don't know if you'll be back, Mr. Premier, I thought of a couple of solutions, and I think we've mentioned one before, where you might go and be the health care saviour for the Prime Minister.

But there's a new job opened up, Mr. Premier. Stockwell Day is gone, and I thought maybe you could go over to Alberta and learn under Mr. Klein how a progressive, a progressive and successful province runs their province, knows how to lower taxes, knows how to get an economy rolling, knows how to keep the people happy within that province, Mr. Premier.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — But I did want to say, Mr. Premier, that should you not be here next session I want to wish you very well in your endeavours in the future.

Mr. Premier, I want to take just a minute and remind you — and I'm not sure, Mr. Premier, if it was last year's estimates. I believe it was maybe two years ago just after we formed the Saskatchewan Party. And I remember you getting up and ranting and raving and pointing across at me and my colleagues and saying, Mr. Member, you'll never be back because in the dead of the night you were formed — the backroom boys — you will never be back. I believe you also said that to other members in this House — the member for Canora-Pelly, Kelvington-Wadena, Kindersley, Rosthern, Cannington, all the other members, Moosomin. Well, Mr. Premier, as you know I'm back; they're back. The only difference is, is I found some friends. We found some friends, Mr. Premier — 17 new friends. And, Mr. Premier, you know what? Wood River just found me another one — 18 friends.

So, Mr. Premier, what I'm saying to you is you've been wrong before; I believe you're wrong again.

Mr. Premier, on September 16, out in rural Saskatchewan and urban Saskatchewan, they elected a minority government — I think something you'd like the people of this province to forget. And how did you counter that? You went out and bought a fledgling Liberal Party that was going nowhere, but now they're going somewhere; they're going down. But, Mr. Premier, that was your solution and your reaction to the people of this province telling you that they weren't happy with what you'd done, and they wanted you to change direction.

Mr. Premier, that was your solution because I don't believe you are capable of functioning under a minority government. Mr. Premier, I believe that because I believe you don't know how to lower taxes. Is there a member on this side of the House that believes you know how to lower taxes? I don't think there's a person in Saskatchewan believes that.

Mr. Premier, I don't believe you know how to provide health care, shortened waiting lists, that the people of this province deserve. Is there a member on this side that really believes that? No.

Mr. Premier, I don't believe you know how to provide education for our kids that they deserve. I don't believe you know how to keep our schools open. No one on this side believes you know, and I believe no one in the province thinks that you know how to provide education that our children need, that our children deserve, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, I also believe that you bought the Liberal Party to get out of a minority situation because you don't know how to repair, how to build our roads, how to stop the crumbling of our highway system. You bought the Liberals to protect you from going down because you just don't know how to fix the problem.

Mr. Premier, I'd like to talk about farmers for a minute. Being one myself, Mr. Premier, we know — I know — you have no idea how to help farmers in this province. And your record shows that, and the September 16 election proved that, because farmers from all across this province said that Premier and that government hasn't cared about . . . enough about us to help us one little bit.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Mr. Premier, I believe you knew you weren't capable to lead a minority government and compete with our provinces to the east and the west — Manitoba and Alberta. Once again, because you couldn't compete, you bought the fledgling Liberal Party.

Mr. Premier, a few minutes ago you talked about how great 1962 was. And I'm amazed this session, the Minister of Health every day gets up in this House and says, in 1962 we did this. Well that's fine, Mr. Premier, but it's 2000. Isn't it time to get with the times and start governing like you're in the year 2000, not 1962.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Mr. Premier, I want to talk, I want to talk, Mr. Premier, tonight, today, about something that's near and dear to my heart — and that's local municipal government. And what was one of your solutions? I believe you probably had cabinet meetings and caucus meetings and said, what are we going to do to rural Saskatchewan out there because they wouldn't vote for us? Punish them. Punish them by removing local municipal governments.

So what did you do? You thought you would bring in once again, forced amalgamation. Two years ago you tried to bring in the service district Act and you had to back off and drop that legislation. Now you're elected under a new term with your Liberal friends, and you're going to force amalgamation on rural Saskatchewan.

And the cities, Mr. Premier, probably had no problem with that because number one, it didn't affect them; and number two, if it didn't affect them, they really didn't care about it.

But it did affect our towns, our villages, our hamlets, and our RMs (rural municipality), Mr. Premier. And I don't think out there you should be punished for the way you vote and the services you receive from your provincial government just because you didn't like the government of the day.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Mr. Premier, out in rural Saskatchewan we have what we call volunteerism, and to a degree our local councils are volunteers. Because these are men and women out there that probably get at the most, \$10 an hour for the services they provide. And what you and your minister of municipal government plans to do, is replace these people with a bureaucratic nightmare, big municipal districts, where we will have no say in how, number one, Mr. Premier, that we provide care for our seniors out there. We will have no say in how we provide services for our people.

It will be totally removed, put into these big municipal district boards, and the example I'd like to use, Mr. Premier, is health care reform. Every person in rural Saskatchewan has saw what your health care reform has done to them. It cost us out there 54 hospitals, including the Plains, which was a great hospital in the city of Regina, that supplied services for out there.

Mr. Premier, I'd like you to explain to me how forced amalgamation would help the lives of people in rural Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, to shorten the . . . my responses up a little bit in the interests of time, although I'm enjoying giving them and I'm sure that the opposition enjoys hearing them. I do have to, however, make just one or two quick observations.

I fully intend to be here at the next session, and I sure hope the hon. member from Saltcoats is. But in case he isn't, I wish him the very best wherever he may be. So let's agree to meet.

The second part I want to say is this business about "bought the Liberal Party." Here is a report from the Langenberg *Four-Town Journal* of April 10, 1996. And it's under the

headline, Mr. Chairman: “Your MLA Reports.” The headline says: “MLA committed to riding, by (I’m quoting now; Mr. Chairman, I’m quoting now) by Bob Bjornerud, MLA, Saltcoats constituency.”

Many of you undoubtedly read or heard the press reports last week indicating that Liberal caucus members are considering defecting to another political party. As ludicrous as these reports are, I want to ensure you . . .

The member who just spoke wrote this:

. . . the people of Saltcoats constituency, that I remain committed to you, the Liberal Party, and my caucus colleagues. As a further sign of my loyalty, and that of my caucus colleagues, we have each signed a document in which we unequivocally deny any intention of joining any other party.

(1700)

Now, now, Mr. Chairman, now, Mr. Chairman, now Mr. Chairman . . .

**The Deputy Chair:** — Order. Order, members. Order. Order, members.

I’d ask members on both sides please to come to order. I’d ask members on both sides to come to order, and thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I may have accidentally struck a little nerve there with the hon. members opposite.

In any event the point is the member who spoke signed a loyalty . . . Now if, if, if, Mr. Chairman, I didn’t have the respect for this institution which I’d like to think everybody has, all members, I would say or ask the hon. member from Saltcoats: how did the Sask Party buy you? How did you . . . What are they paying you?

But I’m not going to ask that. But I’m not going to ask that. I’m not going to ask that. Some . . . I’m not going to ask that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Right. Well that’s what a . . . You know what? That’s what a coalition . . .

**The Deputy Chair:** — Order, order. I just want to draw to the attention of the Hon. Premier that he may have unintentionally . . . he has implied motives of members of the opposition that he may not have intended to, and I just ask him to withdraw those remarks and rephrase them, please.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — I will withdraw them, Mr. Chairman. Absolutely. And parenthetically I’ll only say that the member from Saltcoats alleged buying over here. But I withdraw them. Because I don’t think that kind of language is worthy of the member from Saltcoats for whom I have respect. And it’s not worthy of anybody and I withdraw without any qualification.

Now the issue comes on, quote, forced amalgamation. Mr. Chairman, this government never was committed to a policy of forced amalgamation. What this government was committed to was a round table discussion in 1996 of SUMA (Saskatchewan

Urban Municipalities Association), SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), and the government as a result of the service districts. From that flowed the studies, the studies of which the hon. member takes great objection to.

From that what did not flow logically, except politically, and I remind the hon. member from Saltcoats what his leader was urging me to do and urging all of us to do — not to plan divisions. What flowed from that was this clarion call based on absolutely no facts whatsoever, that this government was for forced amalgamation, knowing full well that the process had gone the way it had gone.

So much so that the Leader of the Liberal Party and myself were at meetings when we signed yet another MOU with SUMA and SARM, saying there will be no forced amalgamation, never has been, and we’ll be looking at ways and means legislatively to make governments at a local level work efficiently — urban or rural. And that’s what they’re doing. And yet the argument is somehow we are “for forced amalgamation.”

Now that’s the factual situation.

Mr. Chair, we believe that local governments have done a very, very good job — a very good job. They are volunteers in many instances. We think that this has been a credit to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

We do also believe, he lecturing me to get into the 20th century . . . 21st century and beyond — that’s fine, fine; it’s a slip; you can laugh at that — he’s urging us to get into the modern day world. And that’s all we’re asking everybody else to do too, including you. Take a look at everything that we have in the province of Saskatchewan to see how we can make it better, more efficient, more responsive.

We’re committed to voluntary; and we’re committed to co-operatively coming up with the best form of governance provincially, at the regional level, local level, nationally, regionally, everywhere that we can. We want to make sure that this is a responsive and effective, and we’re opposed to forced amalgamation. Never were for it at any, any time.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Mr. Chair, Mr. Premier, I just want to touch on a couple of things you said, Mr. Premier. You talked about how much I was paid — I believe if I heard you right and I apologize if I wasn’t — but to join the Sask Party. I just want to tell you, Mr. Premier, that actually what happened is I went for a walk one late, dark night and it just happened.

And you know, that’s what happens to people in the Sask Party. We grow on you. In fact that’s what’s happening to the people of Saskatchewan. We’re growing on them, Mr. Premier, and they’re joining us.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — In fact what’s happening, Mr. Premier, and it’s happening every day, is some of your supporters, been your supporters for the last 40 years, some of them on automatic

debit even, are walking into our office and saying, we will never support that party again. And they're now with us, Mr. Premier.

I want to comment for a second. You talked about the Liberal leader. And you know, yes, I was elected a Liberal to start with. And I actually sat with that leader, Mr. Premier. And you know what, Mr. Premier? Every day of this session I thank my lucky stars that I am not still sitting with that leader of that Liberal Party.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — And I'll go, Mr. Premier, I'll go one step further. The people, my constituents, are glad I'm not sitting with that Liberal leader.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — And, Mr. Premier, I think a number of days this session you agree with me. You wish you didn't have to sit with that leader of that Liberal Party.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — The number of mistakes and putting his foot in his mouth that that Liberal leader has done, you might be better off working within that minority government that I talked about before. The pain might be less, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, you had said — and I don't for a minute believe you on this one, Mr. Premier — that you're going to do what's best for rural Saskatchewan, what's best for local government. But, Mr. Premier, go back to Mr. Blakeney's days, back to the days when your previous government said we should have a county system in this province. Oh, and he scoffs at that, Mr. Chair.

That was your government then and it's your government today that's trying to remove local voice and local autonomy from rural people so that when the next election comes along, there's less people living out in rural Saskatchewan because you're forcing them to give up out there and move into the cities, and you think that way you can hold on to government. It's not going to work. It never worked in the '60s for Mr. Blakeney and it's not going to work for you now, Mr. Premier.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Mr. Premier, what you are thinking of doing out there is the worst thing that has happened — if you get away with it — to rural Saskatchewan; the most devastating thing that happened to rural people out there — seniors, working people out there that are trying to make a living, and our kids out there today. You're trying to change their complete lives. This is the socialist way. If it's not to your favour, remove it, control it, take it over.

Mr. Premier, we could go on and on here about rural Saskatchewan, but please, Mr. Premier, we have our dads and moms out there, our grandparents out there, that we want to look after out there. But what you're planning on doing is removing the power for us to look after our own by removing

local governments.

Mr. Premier, have some compassion — if not for us on this side, the people in rural Saskatchewan. Think of those people before you make these kinds of moves just for the betterment of the NDP Party. These people helped build Saskatchewan.

Do you know your solution to that out there right now for our seniors? One of your solutions is raise home care rates.

Mr. Premier, all we're asking is to just create the atmosphere that we can live out there under the best conditions possible. And what is your solution? Removing a lot of the conditions that we could do that with our parents and grandparents.

Mr. Premier, will you listen tonight and take seriously what we're saying about rural Saskatchewan and, for goodness' sakes, promise that you will not remove the few things we have left out there, the few things you haven't already removed and taken away from us?

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, I gave my answer and the government's position on the issue of local government and our respect and support for it. The hon. member says he doesn't believe it; nothing I can do. I can repeat it 5,000 times over and over again. We are working in this province . . . we're a small province . . . million people plus, rural and urban people.

We've got to get along together. We have some good ideas. We'll try to employ them. I think we have some good ideas. Local governments have good ideas. All of us need to pull together. That's our commitment. You can believe it or not believe it. That's my position.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Premier, thank you for this opportunity to raise some issues concerning transportation and highways with you.

We've heard time and time again this session about the \$250 million budget that the Department of Highways and Transportation is working with in the upcoming year. I believe it's said to be a 6.6 per cent increase, 15 million-odd dollars more. In fact we've heard about it ad nauseam. And the reality is that this is the first year that the budget for Highways has actually reached this lofty height. It's the first time in nine years of your administration.

I'd like to ask what was the budget for Highways and Transportation like back in 1992, 1993, '94, '95. Isn't the truth of the matter that the budgets for Highways in those years were gutted? Isn't it true that the average spending on highways by your government has been less in your nine years than it was in the previous decade?

If you took inflation into account, your government's spending on highways would be considered miserly by comparison. I believe a published report put the actual numbers at 199 million yearly average for your government, compared to 219 million yearly average by the previous administration. And those figures didn't even include the inflation factor; that wasn't even worked into those figures. It didn't figure in the equation.

Mr. Premier, we've heard you vilify the federal government for

failure to fund infrastructure; and we've heard you complain about rail line abandonment. We've heard you decry grain handling consolidation, and the impact of grain being hauled over roads unintended to handle such loads.

But we've never heard you once admit that your own decisions have played a role in the failure of Saskatchewan's highways. We've never heard you say anything at all about how underfunding in the early years of your regime didn't allow for proper maintenance of the roads, nor undertake proper planning for the eventual consolidation of the grain handling system.

Mr. Premier, what did your government do to prevent rail line abandonment? What did your government do to anticipate grain company consolidation of their grain handling facilities? Why didn't you talk to the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool whose support you have had on almost every other policy issue? What did you do to anticipate the unfolding crisis in rural roads and rail lines? What is your record in these areas? What did you do to prevent the crisis in rural roads these last nine years?

Mr. Premier, your legacy in rural Saskatchewan is that of a Premier who has overseen the demise of the countryside. You have paid the people of rural Saskatchewan lip service for so long now, they don't believe you any more.

For the sake of our economic future and for the opportunities we all need to survive, let alone prosper, please tell us today, what are you going to do differently in the future?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, it's quite clear from the editorials, both in the larger centres and the smaller centres, that the party that is not being believed is the party opposite. They don't believe the so-called critic from Highways on his solution because, without me repeating the quotation again from *The StarPhoenix*, it just doesn't add up. What they would say just doesn't add up. And when we total up the numbers demanded by him and the solutions demanded by him, it just doesn't add up.

The lack of credibility is your problem, sir, and the Leader of the Opposition's problem, and that of the Conservative . . . the Saskatchewan Party opposite. That's where the problem really lies.

Mr. Chairman, the member secondly raises the question of the issue of the demise of rural Saskatchewan. Well I'll tell you one thing that we didn't do: we didn't speak for the demise of the Crow rate. We did not urge the change in the Crow rate. We fought the changes in the Crow rate. Where were you on that battle? Will you tell me when you stand up next where were you in that battle? I know exactly where you were in that battle. We fought for, and are fighting for, a Canadian Wheat Board which is modern and reflective of the competitive world that exists out there.

We are for the question of making sure that we can get short-line hauls working, provincially and federally, and making sure they connect to the main lines. We are for making sure there is a highway structure, provincially and federally. Because this is a national situation which requires national

attention. We fight for those issues in terms of the highways situation.

One thing we also . . . we're not for. We were not for the giveaway of hundreds of millions of dollars of highways equipment. Privatization — just like you would do in health care — has happened during the Devine years in the 1980s. We weren't for that.

And we weren't for the giving away of the road tax. How many years was the road tax given away? Eight years, you gave up the road tax. Eight years, you gave up the road tax. Eight years, each year, you allowed about a billion dollars — whatever the figure is roughly speaking, given a number — given a billion dollars to be lost which should have been spent on highways. Shame on you. Shame on you. Shame on you. You were there.

Nine years they're saying for us to repair. Nine years. You doggone right nine years. In that nine years, we've had to balance the budget, we've had to fight the deficit that you folks have left the people of Saskatchewan. You've saddled it . . .

**The Deputy Chair:** — Order, order. I just want to bring to the attention of members of the official opposition that the level of noise in the Assembly is unbecoming of the Assembly. And it's making it very difficult to hear the current speaker. I'd ask you to let the Premier make his remarks without undue intervention.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, there's nothing more I can add. I've outlined our game plan and our program. I've raised questions as to the dilemma the government was in, and is in, and the people of Saskatchewan are in; being recognized by people everywhere in Saskatchewan, editorialists, farmers, people who understand the situation occasioned by what took place in the 1980s.

And until and unless they acknowledge those people who engineered this, the member from Swift Current and others, those who worked in the constituency offices of the premier of the day, until they acknowledge that this . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes it was, yes it was. Because the cat . . . what did the cat . . . what did the cat steal your tongue?

Why didn't you speak up? Why didn't you speak up? Now she's laughing at his . . . at the former leader that she supported . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I did, I fought against it. That's what I did.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm not very good with mathematics, but I find it hard to believe that the previous government could lose a billion dollars a year in road tax when we only collect \$360 million a year now. And gas prices are higher now. We travel further. We have to go further just to survive, to get services of any kind. We only generate \$360 million a year now. How did we possibly lose a billion dollars a year in road tax in the 1980s? I don't understand that.

Mr. Premier, in the nine years of your NDP administration, we've witnessed a lot of things in this province, most of which have not been good. It began with the closure and consolidation of SaskPower offices, SaskTel facilities, and other provincially operated outlets in rural communities throughout the province.

And then you closed 53 hospitals, seriously undermining the health care and the economic viability in each of the affected communities. If the hospital wasn't closed outright, Mr. Chairman, the Premier managed to downgrade the services, replacing full service with something substantially less.

Mr. Premier, the record of your government has been to downsize, eliminate, or consolidate every conceivable service ordinarily provided by the government to the people of Saskatchewan, especially in the rural areas.

But recently, your government has dropped to a new lower standard with its disregard for the vital roadways which link the communities, the communities without services, to those towns and cities that have the services necessary to the survival of rural Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Premier, having slowly but surely tightened the economic noose around the collective neck of rural Saskatchewan, you are now willing to let the cord which keeps many of them alive, barely — those highways out there — slowly deteriorate to nothing.

It's not what I would call a fast killing technique; it's a measure which slowly lets these communities expire. Neglect their highways with underfunding and inattention to repair requirements and let the deathly effect run its course.

I'm reminded of a story of a visitor to a farm where he noticed a pig walking around the yard with three legs. Curious, the visitor asked the farmer what explanation he had for the pig's missing leg. The farmer replied that the pig was really very valuable to him and his family because the pig had once found the barn on fire and it squealed so loudly that the family had been alerted and the fire put out before irreparable damage had occurred.

The visitor was really impressed with the story but didn't feel that he had obtained a satisfactory answer. So he pressed the farmer again.

Well, said the farmer, this pig has prevented the theft of gas from my tanks on many occasions by chasing off the would-be thieves. And I really appreciated the pig's efforts, said the farmer.

Still unconvinced, the visitor asked again why the pig had just three legs. Well, said the farmer slowly, it's really quite simple — any pig that valuable, well, you wouldn't want to eat it all at once.

The record of your government, Mr. Premier, especially as it applies to rural Saskatchewan, is reminiscent of the way that pig was treated by this story.

You always talk about how valuable, how critical the rural reaches of Saskatchewan are to the whole of this province — economically, socially, and even politically. But, Mr. Premier, your actions indicate otherwise. Your policies and decisions have — one by one — cut the communities of rural Saskatchewan to the quick.

You can talk about their value and importance, but they're limping around wounded by the policies of your government.

And now you stand by while community after community, in desperation, undertakes to fix their own roads — the only lifelines left for most of them.

Now we just learned that once again yesterday about 150 men and women from communities along Highway 18 in the great southwest, invested sweat equity to fix about 83 kilometres of provincial highway. This is after they have paid taxes for a lifetime, with reasonable expectation that they would have at least a minimum of modern services.

Mr. Premier, what they are getting is a return to 1962, or earlier, when the roads were all gravel, completely unreliable for all-season travel, and safety of the motoring public was considered unacceptable.

Mr. Premier, how do you justify this regressive, backward-looking policy, affecting people throughout rural Saskatchewan just as the rest of the province struggles to move into the 21st century?

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, what I don't accept is the canned speech prepared by some staffer of the Sask Party for that member to get up and read. And the assumptions are all wrong. Our record is clear — fifth consecutive budget increase in highways, 6.6 per cent over last year's budget.

**The Chair:** — Order, order. No. Order. Order. Order. Now I recognize the Premier . . . Order.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — They don't want to listen in any event.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And just in case the Premier wants to compliment the comments that I make by attributing them to research staff, he can take a look at my handwriting.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Premier, I would like to wish you well in your future life outside of politics. In all likelihood what we are seeing is the last day that the Premier is in this legislature.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — And he has had a very long and yes, very successful career over the last 35 years. And I do wish him well in his life after politics.

But if he wants to stay, I would hope that he would take up a challenge that he issued to me the first year I was in here. During debates he pointed his finger across the floor at me and said, I will make sure you never get back in here.

Well, Mr. Premier, there's been two elections since that time and I've managed to make it back both of those times. The fact is, Mr. Chairman, the Premier says it was a fluke. Well, it might have been a fluke, Mr. Premier, but it was also a fluke that gave me the largest plurality in Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — So, Mr. Premier, I would like to issue you a challenge. If you wish to stay in provincial politics, come



and run in Cannington.

Mr. Premier, as my colleague said, as my leader said, the NDP have no vision, Mr. Chairman. They have no vision, and that's why this province is adrift. But, Mr. Chairman, if — if perchance the NDP should have a vision, that vision is in their rear-view mirror looking back to 1962.

The Premier very clearly sees 1962, because I suspect it was one of his best years. He is romantic, Mr. Speaker, for those old gravel roads, dust flying out, streaming out behind the '63 Pontiac that you often see in the black-and-white pictures, or perhaps a Ford Frontenac.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier that is a romantic time. That is the time of his youth, in his early 20's. Mr. Speaker, while the Premier may wish to return to that after he leaves politics, the people of Saskatchewan do not share his romanticism of driving on gravel roads.

The people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman, want good, all-weather roads, Mr. Speaker, that can be driven whether it's wet or dry. They don't want the dangers of driving down dusty dirt roads as the Premier is romantic about, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier fondly remembers those dirt roads. But the rest of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, do not.

They've had 10 . . . They had those, Mr. Speaker, 40, 50 years ago, but they don't want to return to them now, even though, Mr. Chairman, it has been the theme of the highways and transportation policies of this government for the last nine years.

That theme, as exemplified by Berny Wiens when he was the first minister of Highways, was to turn the roads of Saskatchewan, the highways, back to gravel. And the latest Minister of Highways, the member from Meadow Lake, his vision of highways in Saskatchewan is to turn them back to gravel roads.

We need, Mr. Speaker, a transportation policy for the 21st century, not the 19th century.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — In my own constituency, Mr. Chairman, most of the highways are in terrible shape. No. 8 is being turned by the minister back to gravel. Highway 361, which is a gravel road, is impassable most of the time. The people of the area avoid it like the plague. Highway 47 — Corning north to No. 1 — is another one of those roads that people avoid because they simply cannot drive on them. And that's the state of highways that this Premier is leaving.

There's a good many other highways across this province that are in similar condition. Highways 21, 15, 42, 20, 27, 3, and Highways 18 and 22, even the school boards don't want their school buses driving down those roads. And we can't forget that champion of bad roads in Saskatchewan, Highway 56.

Mr. Premier, most of the people in Saskatchewan believe that you are out of touch with what is happening across

Saskatchewan, that it's time for you to leave.

People don't want to relive your youth, Mr. Premier. They don't want to relive your pasts of the 1950s and the 1960s. They're looking forward to the future, to the 21st century. They don't want to go back to your visions of the 19th century, the visions, Mr. Speaker, of the 19th century that spawned your hero, Tommy Douglas.

Mr. Chairman, the people continue to leave Saskatchewan on the roads that are so bad that they only drive that road once, and that's leaving. They don't turn around and come back. And the fact is, even Tommy Douglas left Saskatchewan. Allan Blakeney went to work at the University of Toronto. Ned Shillington and Doug Anguish, your cabinet ministers, have gone to Calgary to work.

Mr. Speaker, I've listened to your . . . Mr. Premier, I've listened to your words today, and they're hollow words. Just like your words prior to the last election were hollow when you wagged your finger across the floor and said, not one of you will be back.

Well, Mr. Premier, each of us, the nine that were here at that time, are back with bigger pluralities than ever before, and we brought along with us 17 new colleagues that were previously . . . those ridings were on your side, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, what is the record of your government? Nine long years of excuses, nine long years of being irresponsible for any of your actions. Mr. Premier, you should be able to see those nine long years in your rear-view mirror, and see the destruction that you have caused across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Premier, recognize the need of a transportation system in Saskatchewan to carry on the commerce and to build an economy in this province. Why don't you put the highway taxes you collect into fixing the highways instead of padding your union jobs? Fix the roads and get out of the way and let the people build a strong economy.

Mr. Premier, you are no Tommy Douglas. You are not a friend . . . your government is not a friend of Saskatchewan. Move over, get out of the way, or run in Cannington.

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, he's right. There's only one Tommy Douglas. And I'll tell you one thing, he's also right. I admire Tommy Douglas and I'll take my admiration of Tommy Douglas over your admiration of Grant Devine and everybody who brought this province to bankruptcy.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Premier. I have some thoughts that we wanted to share with you with respect to agriculture, but before we did that there's a couple of areas that in the proceedings here this afternoon that I wanted to address you.

I've watched with great interest here this afternoon, and you've made a number of predictions. Some of them that I think . . .

even you don't believe will come true, I don't think. You've made some predictions in the past that were accurate, and I want to touch on a few of them. I'll try not to be too unkind to your coalition partner with respect to these.

I remember when you said that they couldn't even govern their own party, let alone govern the province of Saskatchewan. And then you picked him up in the Liberal dispersal draft and ran with him even after the people of Saskatchewan said that they didn't want that to happen, Mr. Premier.

And if you recall, if you recall previous to the last election, the editorialists in this province, what they were saying about the Liberal Party at that time, they categorized their election platform as how to make government more stupid.

That was how the editorial papers of this province suggested that the Liberal's campaign would unfold. And you agreed. And I remember that distinctly in the House, you made great fun of that kind of platform that they had put forward. And I can't help but agree with you. You were right then in your prediction that they couldn't govern themselves, let alone the province of Saskatchewan.

And they upheld that promise very, very well — they quickly destroyed the Liberal Party. Quickly destroyed it to the point where in the Wood River by-election they've gone from winning the by-election in a squeaker, to third place — just about wiped off the map. The Green Alliance, the Green Alliance, a fringe party in the province of Saskatchewan, nearly got more votes than they did.

And in the last little while, Mr. Premier, you've seen many predictions in the House — I even made a couple of them. One of the predictions that I made was that you would get the thrashing of your lives in the Wood River by-election, and that's exactly what happened.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — And I'll make a couple more predictions. And one of them is when it comes to agriculture, the farmers of this province, just as they did in the Wood River by-election — they didn't support you — and I predict that the farmers of this province won't support your party for decades after what they have seen in the last number of years.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — After they have seen the kind of alienation from your government that they have never seen before in the province of Saskatchewan, after they've seen an administration that ripped up a GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contract a number of years ago — replaced it with absolutely nothing.

After they saw that kind of thing from your administration . . . And I remember the minister, Bernie Wiens, at the time, he said one of his . . . there was a leaked cabinet document I recall at the time. And the contents of that leaked cabinet document were, we'll get over this; it won't matter; they'll forget about this.

Well I can assure you, Mr. Premier, that the farmers of this province haven't got over it, they haven't forgotten it, and they never will forget it. They never will forget it, Mr. Premier, because they simply do not trust your administration any longer.

There's no plan from you in agriculture. There hasn't been a plan in agriculture for a long period of time, and I doubt you'll ever come up with one.

Mr. Premier, in your Throne Speech — you just most recent Throne Speech — you promised two things that rural Saskatchewan people I think pinned a little bit of hope on. Two things. One was you were going to appoint someone, a distinguished person I think was the term you used, to oversee changes in terms of the agriculture community in Saskatchewan. I forget, you had some hokey way of putting it, as you always do, but there was somebody you were going to put in place. You haven't done that. The people of Saskatchewan, the agriculture community continues to wait in that regard.

The other thing you were going to do was put interim . . . into agriculture you were going to work towards and implement a long-term safety net program. Nothing could be further from the truth of what's happened here in Saskatchewan. We do not see anything with regard to that.

The other day in Ag estimates the Minister of Agriculture admitted to the farmers of this province that there was nothing more — nothing more — than the four-letter word AIDA (Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance) that you helped develop on your side of the House. And that has become nothing more than a four letter word in agriculture for the people of Saskatchewan.

In fact that is your legacy in agriculture. Two four-letter words to the farmers of Saskatchewan — one of them being GRIP and the other one being AIDA. And to this day the farmers of Saskatchewan will never forget it and they'll never forget it long into the future, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Premier, I think the farmers of Saskatchewan are looking for some things from your government and I don't think it's too much to ask. I think they are looking for an adequate rail and an adequate highway system to move their product to market.

I think they are looking for diversification opportunities so that they can diversify their farming operations to allow them the opportunity to take advantage of the markets that the world is putting forward to them.

I think they are looking for a reliable safety net from your administration and from the federal government as well so that they know that they have some interests that are going to be protected. That's the other things that they're looking for.

They are looking as well for marketing choices. They are looking for marketing choices because they see a world market out there that is lucrative; they see a world market out there that is demanding of new products and new innovation. They want opportunities in those areas, Mr. Premier.

But most of all I think what farmers in Saskatchewan are looking for, and I think was demonstrated more clearly than ever in the Wood River by-election, they're looking for a government that at least listens to them and understands the problems that they have. And they have got none of it from you. In any area that I have just outlined, they have got nothing.

They've got no vision from this government in terms of marketing choices. They've got nothing in terms of highways or a rail system. They've got nothing in terms of diversification opportunities. They've got nothing in terms of a reliable safety net from you. And they most certainly have not got any kind of an understanding of the problems that they have from your administration.

And that's why, Mr. Premier, that's why . . . You may not understand why you lost the by-election in Wood River but those were very, very good reasons why you lost down there and took the thrashing of your lives, and I think in a seat that your administration and the Liberals have held for a number of years and a seat, in fact, that the Deputy Premier held at one time. That, Mr. Premier, is what your legacy is in many, many areas.

That's what your legacy is in agriculture. That's what your legacy is in health care. That's what your legacy is in highways. That's what your legacy is in taxation. All of those kinds of things that the communities all across this province have grown tired of.

And, Mr. Premier, I think that as we draw forward into the next election campaign — and I don't know whether you're going to be fighting the next election campaign or not — but I predict across this party that we have here on this side, I predict that every single member of this Assembly that we have on this side of the Assembly, including myself, will be here to fight you all the way along. We will be there. We will be candidates. We will be putting forward a platform. We will be doing everything we possibly can to defeat your administration. And I predict, Mr. Minister, Mr. Premier, that the people of Saskatchewan have had enough of your administration, they've had enough . . .

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — I predict that they've had enough of the . . . I think they've had enough of the failed promises from your administration — from the Department of Health, from the Department of Highways, from the Department of Agriculture, the municipal amalgamation minister back over there. A number of ministers all across this province will go down to defeat, I predict, Mr. Premier, because they are tired of your administration. They want nothing to do with it any longer; all they want is to be relieved of the NDP for as long as we can possibly have it here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Premier, when . . . I'll sum up by asking two simple questions to you. When are you going to put in place the long-term safety net that you promised since you destroyed the GRIP program? And when are you going to put in place your rural agricultural spokesperson that you have promised the farmers and the rural people of Saskatchewan? When will you at least live up to those two commitments?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, I want to begin by thanking sincerely the hon. member from Kindersley for at least bringing back these estimates to a discussion of some of the policies which we need to be discussing, and some of the politics which is inevitably tied up to the issue of policies and the debates, and keeping it away from personality as I think should be the effort for all of us, although we all get carried away from time to time. So I thank you very much for that.

I do want to say in response to the Wood River by-election. You won the Wood River by-election; you won it very significantly. I've already read to you some of the editorialists' analysis of it, and I think that they are partly accurate; they're partly . . . Your observations are accurate.

But I would say to all of you, if I may say so with the greatest of respect, don't show too much hubris. In by-elections since the Saskatchewan Party was formed — I think there was six; you lost four — you've won two in the southwest part of the province, Maple Creek and Wood River. Fair enough. Congratulations to both members and we look forward to working with you in the House.

But don't make this some sort of a harbinger of inevitability because the one thing about politics that we all know and about the attitudes of Saskatchewan people is that they are thinking and they do change and they do see things in the proper light.

In fact in that spirit, if I may say so, and I say it with a bit of a joke but with a little bit of a point to it, one of the better things and one of the good news sides of this estimates that I've heard so far is your prediction that all of the team opposite me right there, the official opposition, are all going to be running in the next election. That really has buoyed me up and all the boys and women on this side in the operation. We're very much pleased by that because we fully believe that by the time . . . Well within the next few months, your true positions will become very, very eminently known.

Now the two specific questions . . . By the way I want to say one thing, I want to say one thing which does trouble me a little bit — the member from Kindersley didn't expand on it; he may or may not want to — is marketing choices, he talked about. And I'm assuming that this means changes fundamentally to the Canadian Wheat Board. But I could be wrong on that and I'm not going to get into it. But certainly that is something which the people of the rural community, the farmers should take note of.

But I'm going to answer the two questions if I can very briefly. The Speech from the Throne is on page five as follows:

My government will . . . appoint an eminently qualified and respected Special Advisor on Agriculture to support our province at the next round of trade talks. And to help the federal government confront the protectionist policies of our trading partners.

That person is Professor Hartley Furtan who is an agriculture economist of some note and I think well respected by most members of the House, if not all. He is occupying the Al

Johnson special chair in the Department of Finance.

(1745)

We think this is properly located doing that particular task, at least he's now beginning to organize himself in doing that task. And any ideas that you might have, I'm sure that he'd welcome that.

With respect to the safety net program commitment which we have made. The Minister of Agriculture said during his estimates and I repeat here again, he tells me just a few moments ago he expects that to be signed, the framework agreement, to be signed in the next two weeks is it, Mr. Minister, approximately. There's a ministers' meeting in New Brunswick of all the agriculture ministers.

And our Minister of Agriculture says . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I'm saying wait until the announcement is made and the framework is there and then you can make your criticisms. You can wait two more weeks. It'll be there. But I can tell you one thing, our Minister of Agriculture predicts that the provinces of Alberta, and the province of Ontario, probably all the provinces will sign onto that framework agreement.

Now, whether it is what we all want, we know the give and take in the negotiations, but we hope to have that safety net at that point.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Chair, it's indeed a pleasure to have the opportunity to engage in these Premier's estimates tonight, because it gives me an opportunity to publicly share a little bit of our perspective about where we believe health care is going, and where it's been, and who is responsible for what.

I was very pleased when the Leader of the Official Opposition asked me to undertake the challenge of being the health critic for the official opposition, because when I look back on what motivated me most singularly to get involved in this political process, it probably was health care in my home community of Melfort.

In Melfort over the years, we've always been extremely proud of the health care facilities and the services that were offered in our community. We're very proud about the fact that we were one of four sites that looked after the provincial regional hospital, Parkland hospital. One of four sites; we're very proud of that.

And the community, when I moved there in 1981 and later, always struck me as being extremely proud about the level and professionalism of the delivery of health care in our community. They worked very hard in their different boards to provide services through the long-term care facilities and through the acute care facilities, and looked with a lot of pride and were recognized, I think, provincially with a lot of envy in some instances about the quality of medical professionals we had in that community.

And, Mr. Speaker, in 1991 I watched as there was indeed a major change in government in this province, and I had not been very much a person that has needed the health care system other than for the minor things that your children have when they're growing up. But I too began to share the pride that the community had in the health care services that were in Melfort.

And, Mr. Speaker, leading up to 1995 when I again become involved, the commitment to health care in 1991 was what motivated me to be involved. And I thought it was an important transition that was going to go on not just in our community or our province, but indeed in the world.

And to listen to the Premier and the Minister of Health from time to time, you would think that the only forces of change in health care that were happening in the whole world were in Saskatchewan and that simply is not correct. It simply is an unrealistic isolation of attitude that must have developed back in 1962 when Tommy Douglas suggested something that was pretty important to this country and it was embraced across Canada. And that's good stuff; it was valuable.

But now you're stuck in it. That's all you can think. That's all that has been able to come out of your government's mouth since 1991 except for a few facts that I think need to be talked about.

People have said that in 1991 and with your health care reform that there were rural hospitals closed. And that's true. It's true that subsequent to that with the Minister of Education chained to the door or not, the Plains Health Centre was closed. And that's true.

But nobody really talks a whole lot about what a lot of communities lost to health care. They don't talk about the fact how services have changed and diminished. They don't talk about people that I can remember in Melfort that practised medicine there in 1991 and who were forced to leave this province because they were so frustrated by the lack of direction and the lack of vision that your government brought in, in health care.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — I remember Dr. Ernie Fuller. Dr. Ernie Fuller had spent a great part of his life working in third countries and gained a tremendous amount of surgical experience. Dr. Ernie Fuller was doing laparoscopic surgery in Melfort, Saskatchewan before they were in the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon. That's the calibre of the man.

And do you know why he left? He left because he was so frustrated with the lack of direction and the aimless theoretical, philosophical wellness thing that was going on. And he's gone to Melfort and to Saskatchewan.

I remember Dr. Paul Anderson who was a brilliant orthopedic surgeon who practised medicine in Melfort and who was recognized to the extent that there were people from Regina coming up to have his services availed. And he's gone.

Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Premier, I remember Dr. Rob Webb, another brilliant general practitioner who has left this province

in frustration. I remember Dr. Rick Twano who has left this province, and this country in fact, in frustration.

Mr. Premier, time after time we have seen our Canadian educated and trained doctors leaving in frustration, and these are people who have been tremendous losses to this province.

And they have told me when they left, it's because you didn't have the vision to know where you're going in health care and instead kept the blinders on and ignored the fact that change is happening everywhere and you're unwilling to embrace change in a constructive, visionary way.

Mr. Premier, Mr. Premier, this has to change. In our country the vision has to change, in our province it has to change. We can't simply go from one crisis to the next and expect the fact that we're going to make up the shortfall by importing offshore doctors. We did that in the past with British and Irish doctors that came to Canada. And that got us out of the glue, if you like, and we've most recently done that with South African doctors.

And they've been good doctors and they've helped our communities, in many instances practising medicine in small communities where other people were unwilling to go to provide services in this system that is in such flux that no one knows where it's going to end up.

And over this time, Mr. Premier, I've heard time and time again where you put on your blaming methodology. You blame the federal government because they haven't contributed appropriately to their share of health care. And they need to be blamed for that. They need to be held accountable for the fact that Paul Martin's budget is balanced on the backs of reduction of transfers to provinces. That has to be said.

But it also has to be acknowledged that just automatically throwing more money at any issue is not going to be enough if you don't have a vision, if you don't know where you're going, if you don't have a plan.

And the latest statistics that have come out of the World Health Organization substantiates that. If you look at the ranking, many countries, many countries who indeed are spending less money per capita, are ranking better than we are. And one of the lessons as a country that we have to learn is that it just isn't enough to throw money at the issue, we have to have a plan. And just blaming past administrations or living in the '60s is not going to lead us to that plan.

Mr. Premier . . . Mr. Premier, you say that you've got this great commitment and this great vision. Well no one sees it. No one knows what it is. You know, you can wrap yourself in all the rhetoric around when you're in this House and when you're in this province. You can wrap yourself around the rhetoric of the Canada Health Act and all the wonderful principles of the wellness model and all these good words. And they are good words. But, Mr. Premier, they're cold comfort for the elderly people who are waiting to have painful hip replacements done.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Premier, they're cold comfort to people that are aged and are worried about going blind because they

can't get cataract surgery in a timely way. Mr. Premier, they're cold comfort to people that are being run around this province in the back of a bouncy ambulance because there's no place for them in a hospital. Mr. Premier, they're cold comfort to people that are sitting at home waiting when the next home care visit is going to happen and they're out in isolated farmyards or things of that nature.

I went out and saw an individual in . . . a senior man and a woman who were sitting at their home and were sitting in a snowed-in driveway; and they said to me, because I walked in to visit them, they said what would happen if we got sick? How would they get to us? People are worrying out there. And all the nice rhetoric is cold comfort to any of those people who actually are finding that the health care system is not coming close to meeting their needs, Mr. Premier — not their expectations but their fundamental needs.

Mr. Premier, you quote a lot of statistics and I know that there's a lot of things going on in health care. And you know why they're going on? They're going on not because of your vision but in spite of it.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — They're going on in this province, Mr. Premier, not because of your vision or this government's vision or your Health minister's platitudes. They're going on because of people who are committed as professionals in this province. They're going on because of doctors like Dr. Stan Oleksinski who was a recent president of the Saskatchewan Medical Association. And on behalf of the doctors he represented indicated his frustration. And he said, and I quote from Saturday, May 13, Saskatoon, *The StarPhoenix*. And he said:

The abilities of doctors in Saskatchewan to provide quality care for their patients is being compromised by "unacceptable" waiting times for beds and medical procedures . . .

That's what he said. And in spite of that frustration, medical doctors are providing incredible service to the people of this province.

And you know another group of people who have to be recognized for what they're doing? It's the whole nursing profession, Mr. Premier. And what is your attitude of your government to these people? Well last year you went and dumped on them by forcing them back to work. You went and ridiculed their great frustration about the work conditions they're working in, and you try to demean what they were trying to say that . . . try to make it just a strict monetary issue. That's what you did to them. And you frustrated them time and time again as they've been forced to try to cope in a system that you have no idea of where you're heading with. That's the frustration that's going on.

And then because they absolutely stood up to you and your interference in the whole negotiation process, what did you do this spring? Your Health minister gets out in the hallway here and says: now you registered nurses and the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association, I'm sorry, you don't have the professional competence to decide what the educational

requirements are for your graduates — you know, mother knows best.

And I'm sorry, Mr. Premier, that does not indicate the kind of respect that's needed, and it's only after they've protested with our support loudly that you backed off with that ridiculous situation. And it needed to be done.

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

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — You talk to the people that are providing the care out there — the doctors, the nurses, both registered and licensed practical nurses — and you listen to the frustration that they have. And, Mr. Premier, it's extreme because they now see, as well as everyone else in this province, that you don't have any ideas about where you're going.

Mr. Premier, that's unacceptable. And after nine years — you can point to the '80s or the '60s or any other time you like — but, Mr. Premier, you have to accept responsibility for your tenure as the Premier of this province. And I would like to quote you some interesting statistics.

You know it's interesting — and I'm quoting from a Fraser Institute publication — the annual waiting list survey from 1993 to 1999. And, Mr. Premier, in 1993 it showed the relative median total time from referral to treatment, from GP to treatment times in Canada.

And you know, Saskatchewan was in pretty good shape. The average median waiting time from GP visit to treatment was 9.8 weeks in Saskatchewan, you know, and that was actually pretty good. There were only two provinces in Canada that were better — Ontario at 9.2 weeks, and Quebec with 7.3. We were number three — the third best in the country in 1993.

And you know where we are in 1998 after five years of your mismanagement of the health care system? We were dead last at 20.2 weeks. We went from 9.8 weeks to 20 weeks — that's your responsibility, Mr. Premier.

And you can sit there and talk about how many procedures are happening. This indicates how long people have to wait for those procedures. They wait in fear; they wait in pain; and they wait in uncertainty because of your mismanagement. Mr. Premier, stand up and take responsibility for your record.

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

(1800)

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I am proud of our changes, and reform and renewal, to health care and I take full responsibility for it. I might add that I would like to see you do the same. Because as you are critical about our position on nurses, I believe you voted for the back-to-work legislation as well. But you didn't notice that at all in your remarks. So do it in a fair and balanced way.

With respect to the Fraser Institute, you can talk about the Fraser Institute — that's fair enough. I don't accept the Fraser Institute indicators. I do accept CIHI, because Fraser Institute, whatever it is, is not a specialized, independent institute on

health care matters. That organization is, and the Fraser Institute simply is not the case.

Now with respect to physicians, I want to say to the hon. member opposite that he has identified a continuing challenge which has faced previous governments and current governments.

There's no doubt about it that the individuals that he's named — I don't know them all but I know one or two of them — have been outstanding. And I wish they were still in practice in Saskatchewan.

But the truth of the matter is, historically physicians do change; they do travel around. On a province-wide basis — and I'll say a word about your area of North Central in a moment — on a province-wide basis, here's a situation. March 1996, family practitioners totalled 707; today they total 731. Specialists in March '96, they were 439; today they total 453. And the comparisons '96 to 2000 are 1,146 in total compared to 1,184.

So it is stable and it is growing. And by the way, there's another stat which I think is very important here. It can be better, but it's a very important stat — 76 per cent of the 1999 family medicine graduates opted to remain in the province of Saskatchewan, and that's an increasing number.

Now coming to your own area, there's no doubt about it that there's been change. But in your own area all the doctors that have left or decided to make other career changes, have been replaced by doctors who are trained, equally trained, from many parts of the world, but also from our own Saskatchewan situation. And they have been replaced.

And the hospital services in your area, North Central Health District, in Melfort, the Melfort hospital provides emergency services, ambulatory care, chemotherapy, intensive care, obstetrics, palliative care, pediatrics, endoscopy, as well as a wide range of visiting specialist services such as plastic surgery, urology, orthopedics, ophthalmology, asthma allergy, ear, nose, throat, rheumatology. North Central provided in-patient acute care for 1,471 people last year, and performs an average of 300 in-patient and 1,000 day surgeries a year — 1,000 day surgeries a year.

I could give you the other list of community services in mental health and counselling, the areas related to Melfort and St. Brieux and surrounding areas, childhood psychology programs, public health, and the like. There's no doubt about it. If the argument is that more can be done, I agree with you. More needs to be done.

But there's something else which you said which I think is very, very important indeed. And that is, you said that more money alone is not the answer to health care. And you talked about it in the context of vision. And I want to tell you that I agree with you on both of those statements.

Now you may not say this is a visionary speech — I suspect you won't, for political reasons — but I had the honour of addressing A Forum on Medicare: Sustainability and Accountability in the 21st Century, in Vancouver, May 11, 2000. I can get you a copy of the speech and you can look at it,

your analysts can take a look at it. You can critique it, even write to me.

This is, by the way, to the British Columbia medical society, association, invited me to speak to it, and the Canadian Medical Association. The president of the CMA, Hugh Scully, was there.

And I set out in this speech that there are three options that we can adopt, talking about the road map and the plan. And one way that we can follow is the American model. The American model is a privatized health care model. I'm going to spare the words which obviously arouse you but I firmly believe you folks are committed to, which is the privatized model.

In the United States, the percentage of GDP (gross domestic product) spent on health care is the highest of any of the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. And do you know what the life expectancy is for males? Thirty-seven, in the consequence.

And we all know that in the United States, 50 million — these are stats from OECD — 50 million Americans are uninsured, plus 50 million are underinsured, which amounts to fully a third, fully a third of Americans who have no coverage at all.

They're on an HMO (health maintenance organization) system, which basically means a battle between the private insurer, which seeks to de-insure you in order to save their insurance costs and make a profit, and the hospitals, which also seek to make a profit. And the system doesn't work.

That's one model though. And people can advocate it and you can advocate it. I don't. I reject it.

Another model is the UK (United Kingdom) model. The UK model has hit a brick wall. It's hit a solid wall because the Beveridge Report, the national health services . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon me? Is the argument what? Government? Socialist government. It hit the wall during the days of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. That is acknowledged by the European Community.

But here's what happened in the United Kingdom. Let's forget about attaching blame on ideology for a moment. In reality you have a situation in the United Kingdom now where doctors, on two-tiering, practise public medicine — I'm using this by way of example, not literally — public medicine in the mornings and private medicine for profit in the afternoon.

And the two-tier system has just ballooned up so that now, Prime Minister Tony Blair, recognizing the crisis and the folly of permitting the two-tiering and the Bill 11's and that kind of a concept, has dedicated \$50 million — I think it's Canadian, \$50 million, is it Mr. Deputy? — approximately in that order; \$50 million for a five-sectors study on how to get the system back akin to a single-payer, publicly funded approach.

Then there's the third way which I described in my speech and I'll spare you the time and maybe the agony, but I think it is the game plan. And the third way is one which starts off on your theme. Money is not alone going to solve this. We spend 40 cents of your tax dollars now on health care in Saskatchewan —

that's up from 35 to 36.

The question is, if we've rejected the American model, and if we've rejected the UK model as it's unfolded, what kind of a model do we have? Well here's what I say. We say there are challenges, yes, but crisis, no. CIHI says the same thing.

We need to renovate I say, renovate our 40-year-old health care house. By this I mean we need to do more than move the furniture around. We can also change the size, the rooms themselves, expanding some, reducing others, perhaps creating a whole new family of rooms in a previously bare basement.

And here I identify a number of things, the determinants of health care being the most important aspect of health care. I won't say most — equally important, acute care. You know this yourself, as a thoughtful critic in Health. The determinants of health — do you have education, do you have good nutrition, do you have a job. Those are as important as when you are actually ill. And you need that emergency service that you're talking about. We need both.

Very often we talk about health care, but what we really are talking about is illness care. Of course we have to take a look and take care of ourselves when we're ill. We all have, as the Leader of the Opposition's rightfully said, loved ones and people who have a responsibility for the entire province, who when they are ill we have to have the best that we can do for them.

But you talk to any doctor or medical professional and they will tell you that frequently at that stage in the game, it gets too serious or maybe even too late. They do the best they can in palliative, and the medicines are great and the technology is exploding, and who knows what the future of genomes is going to mean in the terms of identifying the illnesses and how we can tackle them.

All of those are exciting prospects; all of them carry huge dollars with them. Huge dollars which will not be distributed equally uniformly across all of Canada no matter how much we desire it — and I desire it — or for that matter in other parts or regions of the country. That's the future; that's the future that's facing us.

And so what we have to do is look at the other side of the coin. Acute care, yes, but we've got to look at the determinants of health care. How about just the question of early childhood development, the very question that the . . . myself and the member from Carrot River debated on another issue earlier when these estimates began.

We need to find a right balance between investments in the acute care, I say in my speech, and health determinants. We've got to find the right balance between treating illness and preventing illness, something which I'm disappointed you discarded in your comments — the wellness model. That's all that wellness talks about — a combination of acute care and prevention.

And all I can say to you is, as I conclude my remarks, this is not a question of saying that Tommy Douglas and those people back in 1962 had it right; they had it right in the principles, the

third alternative. Not the American model, not the UK model. They have it right and that's what we want to defend provincially and federally. There's no doubt about that.

But they could not have envisaged the CAT scan; they didn't know what it was like in '62 or '64. They couldn't have envisaged the drugs. They couldn't have envisaged . . . To be frank with you, even I'm having difficulty, although I see it, accepting television ads saying go to your doctor for this drug or that drug. They couldn't have envisaged the miracles that are taking place, all of which are tied in with dollars and all of which we've got to try to provide for our people in Saskatchewan and Canada as best as we can.

But if we do it alone, as you said, picking up on your theme, it will never be enough. You've got to dedicate the dollars to the determinants and the prevention. It's the combination of the two. And that's the blueprint.

And the blueprint then says, how do you do it? And we say the best system still to do it is not Bill 11, it's not two-tiering, it's not for private, for profit, it is a medicare system and the principles of that period that Douglas and those men and women who had the vision and the guts, to be blunt about it, establishing it, not that we're frozen in time on that. We have to deal with these new medical, technological, and other factors. No doubt about it.

And you're dead right, Mr. Member, if I may say so — if I may, I don't mean this sarcastically — in a partially thoughtful, in my judgment, critique of the system; partially not thoughtful by not putting enough attention on the prevention. We can do more, but that is the blueprint. There it is.

Now, Mr. Ken Fyke has been charged with these thoughts. Those are the only restrictions on him, namely that we're going to work within the medicare system. To apply his best thinking and his experience and get the input from the doctors in Melfort and the nurses, and get it from the district health boards and from the farmers and from the workers and from everybody in our community, to devise for the 21st century the very, very best system of medicare.

And when I get passionate — you can describe it as oratorical flight or whatever — it is because I am passionate about this. This is a question of saving this Canadian dream, saving this great social plan.

I do not agree . . . I respect your right to advocate privatization. I know by looking in the United States what the result is. I do not agree with it. I will fight it to the last day of my ability to fight.

Politically and in every other way I can, I will fight for a third way, which is a combination of modern day medicines, 21st century health care, prevention, making the right balance, and doing it so that, in conclusion, we have enough tax dollars to look after our sick and to prevent sickness, but that we have enough tax dollars to provide tax cuts — more for roads, education, and balance the budget and not go back into deficit.

And that I will say — forgive me if I sound like I'm lecturing — but that's something you're going to have to come to grips

with as a political party. Because you can get all the votes you want in Wood River or anywhere else, but if you're all things to all people without balancing and making those decisions, when it comes to decision-making time, you will not be elected.

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

(1815)

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Premier, and your officials, welcome this evening. Our leader and some of my colleagues have touched on some of the very important issues that people across Saskatchewan, not just in our constituencies but right across the province, are talking about.

We all know that everyone in this province is concerned about health care. They're concerned about long waiting lists and being shuffled out of hospital beds because there's another emergency on the corner waiting for the bed.

And we're concerned that in rural Saskatchewan we already have a two-tier health care system because you have to cough up the money to get to the hospital before you can even worry about waiting lists.

Mr. Premier, people in Saskatchewan are concerned about the highways. They're concerned that they've deteriorated to the point that they're dangerous and unsafe, and we live with that daily. We talk about it in the legislature every day but it's just talk. We don't live it because we're not out there every day. When our cars . . . we know out in rural Saskatchewan that our cars are going to wear out quicker, we know that our insurance is going to go up because we're bound to have the accidents that happen when you have roads in the conditions they are right now.

Mr. Premier, the crisis in health care is obvious because everyone can see it and they know about the waiting lists. Mr. Premier, the crisis in the highways situation is there. Everybody knows it because we see the craters in the road every day. But, Mr. Premier, there's another crisis that isn't as obvious. There's one that we may not even see the real results of for the next 5 or 10 years and that's the crisis that we have in education.

Mr. Premier, the people who are most affected by this crisis is the most important part of our province and that's our children. Mr. Premier, your government has downloaded the responsibility of education onto the backs of property taxpayers in this province. Frequently I've heard you say that the Saskatchewan Party would freeze the education budget.

Well, Mr. Premier, when I talk to teachers and I talk to school boards and I talk to parents and even children, they're saying they wished you would have frozen the education budget the way it was in 1992. It would have been an asset if you would have frozen it then because you didn't freeze it, you cut it back. You cut back \$390 million in education. Mr. Premier, \$390 million pays for a lot of teachers. It pays for a lot of capital expansions and it pays for a lot of maintenance on schools and it pays for a lot of technological improvements.

Mr. Premier, it would have helped us address the concerns that teachers and parents have about integrated classrooms. It would



have helped address the needs for more training so that we can deal with our special needs children, the ones that need help to keep up with their classmates, and the ones that have more ability and a greater capacity for learning and they have to be challenged just to stay interested.

We all know, Mr. Premier, that when cutbacks were announced the school boards and the taxpayers and the parents just said okay, we'll hunker down and we'll do it ourselves. Just like they're doing with the highways right now, Mr. Premier. We'll do it ourselves. We'll work harder. We'll make do with fewer teachers, and we'll make do with leaking roofs, and we'll ask more of the teachers and the aides and the school boards. But what we won't do is cut back on the education. We'll pay for it ourselves, Mr. Premier. And they did.

So the school boards raised the taxes and then the government cut back funding. And they raised the taxes and the government saw it worked so they cut back funding again.

And, Mr. Premier, the government used to pay for 60 per cent of the education in this province and now they're paying for 40 per cent. We still have a 40/60 split but it's the other way around, Mr. Premier, because the people of Saskatchewan are proud and independent people and they are going to look after their children, Mr. Premier.

Since 1991 your government has cried poverty. There was no money and it sure wasn't your fault. It was everybody else's fault. In fact you did a really good job of convincing everybody that life was terrible and we just had to suck it up because we weren't oil rich like Alberta, and the federal government hated us and they wouldn't give us any money, and that the last government betrayed the citizens, and everyone believed you, Mr. Premier. Everyone believed that if we all worked harder and together, worked a lot longer, we'd get through the crisis and then this government was going to help us out.

But, Mr. Premier, your government has made a mistake — at least one mistake, Mr. Premier. It was not knowing when to stop blaming and when to start taking responsibility for being government in this province.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — We as citizens, Mr. Premier, have heard in the past few years that the province's economy is turning around; that there was an economic growth and prosperity. In fact your own government revenues have grown from \$4.8 billion to over \$6 billion since you were elected. But, Mr. Premier, the citizens of this province haven't seen that. Their own bottom lines have not grown by that percentage — by 15 per cent. They aren't taking home that much more money themselves.

We're paying more and more taxes and we've lost more and more services. So last fall, Mr. Premier, we started seeing something new in this province — we started seeing tax revolt meetings. People right around this province saying, I'm not paying anymore education tax. This is government's responsibility.

Mr. Premier, Saskatchewan is now, out of 63 jurisdictions in North America, we're the lowest spending on education per

child. And on the other hand, there's only one province in Canada that actually is spending less provincial dollars on education than Saskatchewan. Mr. Premier, the taxpayers aren't going to take it anymore.

The teachers can't work any harder. The school boards can't cut any more budgets, and our students still need an education.

So, Mr. Premier, when you and your cohorts grouped together after the beating last September, and you figured out the only way you could survive was to buy yourself a couple of friends, and you had some major decisions to make.

Decisions like how can we keep some of our election promises and none of the Liberal's promises. Continue to spend like drunken sailors in areas that's important to you and your group of people that you're still trying to keep a handle on, which is very few and far between, and still be able to spin your stories about economic growth. It was how little money can I put into each department and keep the maximum number of people happy.

Well, Mr. Premier, I'm sure that the day that the inspiration hit you that you could kill two birds with one stone in the area of Education was the happiest day you've had since September of 1999. That was the day when you let the Liberal Party . . . Liberal leader be the Education minister. Let's give him one of the most important departments in government on one hand and then continue to underfund it on the other hand. That way you could blame the good doctor when things weren't going right.

We can pretend he's an NDP when it comes to a vote in the legislature. We can let him believe he's part of the coalition when it comes to a little decision in the coalition. But when it comes to talking to the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), or when it comes to talking to teachers about wage increase, or when it comes to talking to taxpayers at tax revolt meetings, then he's the Liberal leader then. Then he's on his own and he takes the blame and the Liberals are the ones that are wrong and the NDP government is standing strong.

It was a wonderful idea. It kept tough political obligations away from you and planted them squarely at the feet of the Liberal leader — the man who couldn't keep a caucus together, couldn't keep a party together, and can't even keep his thoughts together long enough to stop interrupting himself.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Minister, education is the only hope for so many of the problems that we have in this society, right from growing the economy to ending racism in this province, Mr. Premier. We must have a minister that's visionary, we must have a minister that's strong, and we must have a minister that's open-minded.

Mr. Premier, there must be respect given and shown to the minister and we have to have someone that is listened to across this province, Mr. Premier. We have to make sure that education starts registering on the Richter scale in this province. We have to make sure that people know the economy is only going to grow when we have education, everyone is . . . when it's available to everyone.

Mr. Premier, one of the fastest growing populations in our province is the Aboriginal population. And we know that there is about half of the Aboriginal children in this province live off-reserve. The Provincial Auditor, the school boards, and the teachers have a growing concern over the number of students who get lost in the school system.

The number in Saskatoon alone, Mr. Premier, is about 1,500 students each year who register in one school system and then move to the reserve or another school system and they get lost. They drop out of the system and they aren't found, Mr. Premier. The effect of the dropouts hurt the child, and it hurts their family originally and then in turn it affects all of society. The chances of them being on social services or chances of being part of the justice system, or teen pregnancy or child prostitution, that's all part of the things that happens when there's insufficient education, Mr. Premier. We must work side by side with Aboriginal people to develop their economy and our society.

Mr. Premier, I believe we have the opportunity to develop a new vibrant society and culture unlike any other place in the world. We will, and we can take this challenge and show the world what can happen in the new millennium when we have experienced and educated people working together.

We can only address the challenge if the partners are on a real level playing field, Mr. Premier. We can only be on the same level playing field if we combine our cultures and our abilities. Education is part of our abilities, Mr. Premier. You must be concerned about education when you're the Premier of this province.

I've spoken to members of the FSIN about this problem, and they talk about the possibility of building schools on urban reserves. They talk about how it would work and the concerns that there could be. And when I discussed this with the minister about how your government is dealing with this challenge, he said he had no knowledge of this issue.

Mr. Premier, this is a huge issue and one that's facing all of us in the future. And I believe that as Premier of this province, this is one issue, a very critical issue that we should be dealing with and looking at right now.

Mr. Premier, can you tell me how you're dealing with this very important issue to make sure that we are all working together as we go into the new millennium?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm going to answer the question first and then with your permission, make just a few comments of correction as it seems that I have to with these interventions today.

Specifically, the question of schools on reserves. Let me begin by saying that everybody, I would like to think, in this legislature, understands the importance of education for everybody and understands the importance with respect to Aboriginal peoples, whether they're on reserve or off reserve. There's no doubt about that. The demographics and the other challenges require all of us to be as creative and as dedicated to

providing those schooling opportunities.

But your question asked specifically in reference to the Minister of Education who is doing an excellent job, and I just want to say a word about that in a moment. The question of reserves and schools on reserves and what is your government doing about it was the question.

Well I want to, yes I want to tell you, hon. member from Kelvington, that you must fully understand that, when you're dealing with reserves, you are dealing with a position taken by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations that reserves are a responsibility, through treaty, a constitutional and fiduciary responsibility of the Ottawa federal government.

Now that's not to say that we can't partner. But what it does say is that, heretofore in any event, largely the position taken by many of the leaders in the Aboriginal community — with whom we want to partner to make sure there is this education — is one where we need to get the federal government at the table, and in recognition of the fundamental principle that this is an overarching federal responsibility. And I'm sure that your colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, will understand that particular position.

So there we are. We need to do as much as we can. But there we are with respect to on-reserve.

Now what are we doing about off-reserve? A concerted effort — alternative programs, Joe Duquette at the secondary level, teacher training programs, a shared curriculum revision process for the inclusion of Aboriginal content, specific programs, pre-kindergarten, Indian, Metis education, structures to engage the educational community and the Aboriginal community in the general improvement of the circumstances.

I can tell you in many parts of the larger centres of this province, in the inner core where there are Aboriginal people — First Nations and Metis — there's a wonderful job being done by teachers and community groups in the early childhood development programs: detection, prevention, in parenting, getting them to school and keeping them in school. The budget's about \$55 million outside of the education budget on that program alone.

So we're doing it on an off-reserve basis. We need to do more. And we need to do more with the community and we need to do more with the shared responsibility of the Aboriginal community I would argue for the obvious reasons, that at a cultural level in any event, there needs to be some connection and some buy in to the program.

But on the on-reserve issue, it is the problem that I've identified which is the challenge which is before us.

Now having answered the question, at least to the best of my ability, I want to say a few words about the general preamble that the member has said.

I said that the Minister of Education, the Leader of the Liberal Party, and the purpose of a coalition government is to come together on those things that we can agree on in order to improve our community and our province and do it in a climate

of stability.

I tell you in this budget, this budget, the first budget where the Leader of the Liberal Party has served as Minister of Education, the record is very good. For the 2000 calendar year this government is providing \$416 million to school divisions — an increase of 18.5 million.

(1830)

Now that may not be enough in the members' minds but that is a significant amount of money. That's nearly 5 per cent over the '99 grant and far more than twice the rate of inflation at 1.7 per cent. Not enough? I agree. Important and substantial? I think it is.

We have increased grants in lieu of taxes by \$1.9 million and increased the capital budget by \$5 million. Another factoid. Basic per pupil rate was increased by \$262 per student — \$262 per student.

We increased pupil funding for high-cost, special needs students. Level 1 to 5,000 from 4,752; level 2 to 10,000 from 7,088; enhanced pre-kindergarten programs to include an additional 13 community schools; additional 40,000 per school for northern community schools; additional 300,000 for — coming back to the original point — Aboriginal elders outreach program, \$18 million. The additional that I referred to or the 4.7, nearly 5 per cent, shows the commitment to K to 12.

I can tell you about our commitment to education with respect to post-secondary, but I'm assuming that's not within the parameter of the question that you're at.

That is a substantial, substantial bump up that the Leader of the Liberal Party has brought to the coalition. And in Treasury Board, as a Treasury Board member and as Minister Education, in concert, and I would say in co-operation and in agreement with us as members of the coalition, have provided for the concerns and the needs of students. I want to work to, as the Leader of the Liberal Party does I'm sure, to this 60/40 balance. That is obviously an objective.

If I may be permitted one small, perhaps last reminiscence. I remember in 1982 in that election campaign, when the Treasury of the province permitted, with a balanced budget, that the provincial portion could be upped to 80 per cent within four years.

Well we know what happened. In 1982 we lost. And that promise was gone like that with that loss to the Conservatives in 1982. And you know what happened from 1982 to 1991. We've been over this and over this. You don't like to hear me say it. I'm getting tired of it myself now, today, of saying it over again, but the facts are there and the historians will repeat it. That's what happened to the 80 per cent.

And now we start all over again in 1991 in eliminating the deficit and making the balances for education and for health and for taxes and all things that I've talked about. This is a wonderful record.

Is it enough? Never enough. And do we need more? We need

more.

We have a teachers' strike — we do not have a teachers' strike — we have a teachers' strike looming . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Look, it can be looming. The fact of the matter is that the teachers and the trustees and the government are back at the bargaining table or about to be going back to the bargaining table and negotiating. And unlike the members opposite, who we know about their attitudes about industrial relations, I am confident — I'm hopeful, I'll put it that way in any event — that a satisfactory conclusion can be made. But keep in mind that there is a very, very strong commitment to education.

And finally, I want to make this last point, finally, if I can. Just because you've been critical of us on a political basis, I want to just sort of remind you and the public about what your position of your party is. Contrast what I've described with what you promised you would do if you had won on September 16 and if these benches were being occupied by your members.

Promised the following. Well, shortly, fair enough, there they go, braggadocio and hubris, keep it up. Here's what you promised — how exciting and visionary it is, Mr. Chairman — one, they'll launch a comprehensive K to 12 curriculum review to ensure students are graduating with the tools they need to compete nationally and internationally into the 21st century.

Well, sorry to tell them there's an ongoing review all the time within the Department of Education and the professions. But that's what they're going to do: launch a review.

Secondly, going to launch a comprehensive analysis of Saskatchewan's post-secondary education system. Yet another analysis. They didn't want to use the review word twice, so it goes from review to analysis, leading to the implementation of a long-term education and training plan for Saskatchewan people and businesses. Great idea.

And finally what they're going to do is reform the student loan program so that all academically qualified students have access to funding for post-secondary education.

That's what their committed to. That's it. Sum in total.

And I know you don't like me saying it, Madam Member, but I will. Coupled all of these great reforms of education with a five-year freeze on spending. Teachers of Saskatchewan take note: a five-year freeze. Trustees of Saskatchewan take note: a five-year freeze if these folks opposite get the treasury benches.

Farmers of Saskatchewan take note: a five-year freeze where the property taxes will skyrocket and the debt of this province will be increased.

People of Saskatchewan take note of the questioning in these estimates: more for education, more for health, more for highways, more tax cuts. More, more, more, more. I'm tempted, when I listen to all of this cacophony of contradictory and irresponsible promises to quote *The StarPhoenix* editorial one last time.

Mr. Chairman, I say to the members opposite, demonstrate that you are a responsible opposition. Mind you, I know you won't

because you're not capable. You are too disparate, too divided. That's too bad.

But in the meantime, we're going to build as we are building, the best education system for the people of Saskatchewan we can.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. To the Premier. First of all, I'd like to thank my colleagues for their part in asking questions. I've been a student of the political arena for quite a number of years — not as many as the Premier. A lot of people would say the Premier's been around for too many years.

But I've got to say that of the many parties, the many governments and oppositions that I've seen functioning, there's none that I've seen that is any better than the Saskatchewan Party and I believe that the performance of my colleagues underscores that.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — I'm proud of each one of them and the work that they have done and the way they have held this government accountable. They tell me that on the evening news tonight the media are saying that the Saskatchewan Party cleaned up on the government in this session.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Or as my kids would say, we really kicked butt, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, I know that there's other business tonight that we need to undertake, but I do have a couple of more areas that I want to question you on. I'll try to be as brief as I can but I do want to get through them and perhaps you might want to adjust the length of your answers. We know this is perhaps your last time and so we've been pretty generous and not complaining about the length of the answers.

But, Mr. Premier, first of all, I want to talk about First Nations poverty. Now, Mr. Premier, the NDP has always purported that it is concerned about the plight of the Aboriginal people.

And I listened to your speech on health care, and it was a moving speech. You've still got that knack. You still have that ability to present your case very well. The problem, Mr. Premier, as always, the facts don't line up with the statements you make.

And, you know, all these platitudes about Aboriginal people and the plight that they're in and the fact that you care and your government cares and you want to do things to improve their lot, rings so hollow when year after year after year of NDP government goes by and in fact the plight of Aboriginal people have diminished.

The whole SIGA affair, and I don't have time to go into it tonight, but that whole SIGA affair, the problems that your government is having with the liquor and gaming commission

in the regulation of SIGA, the fact that your party is taking money that was directed and supposed to go to Aboriginal people, is despicable, Mr. Premier. And it certainly is not helping the situation.

Mr. Premier, I've door-knocked in your riding. I ran and yes, I lost in that riding. I won part of the riding, but I lost the other part of the riding. But I door-knocked in your riding. And, Mr. Premier, it was heartbreaking. The housing, the crime, the prostitution or child abuse if it's young people involved. Mr. Premier, Aboriginal people whose standard of living is far, far too low. And this is in your very own riding. In your own backyard, 20th Street.

And my office, my campaign office was on the corner of 22nd and Avenue P, and I was about a block away from the stroll, Mr. Premier. Right near St. Paul's Hospital. You know the area very well. You know the poverty. You know the crime. Mr. Premier, the heartbreak. If you don't know, Mr. Premier, perhaps you should go into your own riding and check it out.

Mr. Premier, these are people and they are a growing percentage of our province's population. They're important people. They're people that right now are hurting. They're disadvantaged people.

Mr. Premier, are you seeing the problem? Is your government seeing the problem? I don't think it is, because you're not doing anything. And you can get up in your chair now and you can give some more platitudes and say you're doing some wonderful things, but Aboriginal people know that tomorrow their lot is going to be just as bad as it was today, if not worse, under your government.

Mr. Premier, our Aboriginal population should be an asset to this province. They are people. And as people, everyone is an asset to this province. But economically they have been underprivileged. And they have been a liability simply because they don't have jobs, their unemployment levels are high, their social . . . the social problems they face are despicable.

Mr. Premier, the conditions are Third World conditions in your very own riding. Third World conditions. You should be hanging your head. Your government should be hanging its head in shame.

Mr. Premier, I've seen it; I hope you've seen it — something needs to be done. What is the vision of your government? What are you doing? What practical things are you doing to improve the lot of Aboriginal people, important people in our province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, the words of the Leader of the Opposition will be long remembered by the community leaders of Riversdale when he describes them and their efforts as being Third World.

Since just a few days ago they . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no, you're the one who said that. You're the one who said it and they'll know it. You're the one who said it and it is false and it is inaccurate and it is incorrect.

In the face of community leaders at Pleasant Hill and Montgomery and in King George community park and in the community schools that are active at King George where I visit and see and where only a few days ago — and I'm trying to get that press release located — they themselves were very proud and are very proud of coming to grips in co-operation with us, and not only us, others, to fight the issue of poverty. That is the truth.

How dare you get up and tell those people who live there . . . you don't even live there. And you tell them they're Third World. I don't live there but I work there. I'm in my riding there. I get elected by there. You get defeated by there. You get defeated by there.

They'll never vote for you because they know that you don't have an ounce of compassion in you at all. They know that and you getting up and saying to those people who work morning, noon, night, and day to make their community work and call it third-rate, I say it is despicable — to use your words. To use your words, despicable.

Now the question is, Mr. Chairman, what do we need to do? We need to continue working at this situation not only in my riding but in every riding. And we are. We're doing it with the children's action plan, the national child tax benefit program. The children's action plan is working to the point where it is the only plan recognized nationally, nationally — if I may just, to the member from Humboldt, finish.

Nationally. We're the only program recognized nationally. The children's action plan in this regard . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . nationally as being the best program and the only program. No Conservative government has instituted it. They've got these problems in spades and if you don't believe me, all you have to do is believe the Canadian Council on Social Development, StatsCanada survey of . . . it was this year, actually released this year. The rate of child poverty now, this:

Saskatchewan is the only province where the rate has decreased. The number of poor children in Ontario in contrast has doubled.

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Has doubled. Those aren't my numbers. Those are the Canadian Council on Social Development in Ontario, your friends out there. Doubled. You're proud of that? That's your policies? Decreased in Saskatchewan. And I say to him . . . I say to him . . .

**The Deputy Chair:** — Order, order. Order, order. Order. Order. I'd like to ask the member for Rosthern and the member for Humboldt to give the Premier, who has the floor, the opportunity to speak without undue interruption.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, in the light of all of the business we have yet to do and the like, I've made my point; the Leader of the Opposition has made his point. We have to continue working at this. I don't think there's anything further I can add or should add at this particular point.

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

(1845)

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. I would just point out to the Premier that in fact we have met with Aboriginal leadership from your riding and they're the ones that are telling us that you failed them. Mr. Premier, just a few weeks ago they were in our caucus office and they were saying the NDP government has failed us and, by extension, their own MLA, the Premier of this province has failed them. They, the leadership in your riding, were telling us that.

So, Mr. Premier, don't give me that line. Don't give me that line. It doesn't work because it's not true.

And, Mr. Premier, I want to talk about your attitude and your record towards business in Saskatchewan. In order to have more jobs in Saskatchewan — in order to have more jobs in Saskatchewan — we need more employers. It's employers that hire people, Mr. Premier. And yet the NDP continues to treat the business community with outright contempt.

We saw it the other day when PIMA (Prairie Implement Manufacturers Association) was up in the gallery and members opposite — and, Mr. Premier, I don't think you were one of them but your Deputy Premier and others — were laughing at the business leaders of this province. Laughing at the business leaders that hire people in this province, and hire hundreds of people who are taxpayers in this province.

Today the NDP passed one of the most anti-business Bills that we have seen in years, the forced unionization Bill. Mr. Premier, you had every member in here; we had every member in the House but because you have a coalition with the Liberals you were able to force that legislation through. We did everything we could to stop it, Mr. Premier. We gave you openings to withdraw it but you wouldn't take it. You had to push that through to satisfy your union boss leaders.

Mr. Premier, not only did you insult business in that regard, but you taxed them at exorbitant rates and why? Why do you do this? Why do you get involved in business? The SPUDCO fiasco, Mr. Premier. Government should not be in the business of raising potatoes.

There's the NST, Channel Lake. There's just a number of cases where the NDP have been involved in business, and they shouldn't. Yes, we need to create an atmosphere where business thrives, but governments themselves should not be in business. You need to step out of the way and let business go forward.

I think, Mr. Premier, with your government, profit is a dirty word because there are few high-income people in Saskatchewan. We're far below the national average. You're chasing them out. And when you chase them out, you chase out the jobs, you chase out tax base, and as a result the province suffers.

Business people have told us that they're giving up on this NDP government. They can't wait for you guys to get the boot. They are becoming more and more outspoken. You know, Mr. Premier, they used to be afraid of you. They used to be afraid of you because of your heavy-handed ways.

But they realize it doesn't pay to be afraid of you any longer. They got to stand up against you and they are starting to stand up. You know they are, because they're writing you letters just as they're writing us letters. We get copies of many of those letters. They're sick and tired of a high-taxing, big-spending, big government that interferes in business and supports unfair labour legislation and unfair labour climate.

Mr. Premier, we need to reduce the small business tax. Will you commit today to reducing and hopefully even eliminating the small business corporate income tax so Saskatchewan business can move forward?

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Well here we go again, Mr. Chairman. More for highways, more for education, more for health. Now lower the taxes yet again. Do something, do something, they say. It's going to be over a billion dollars.

And then he says the attitude with respect to business, in the face of statistics — business investment increased by 3.3 per cent in 1999; total public and private capital spending, \$6.8 billion in 1999.

And my answer to the Leader of the Opposition is simple. These aren't my words, see this — "Sask. job market sizzling hot." Sizzling hot. Do you understand that? Sizzling hot.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I suspect that the Premier's reading from a 1962 paper because the economy is not sizzling hot in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Premier, business is like Doepker Industries, like Bourgeault Industries. They're seriously considering leaving the province, and with that they would take hundreds of jobs. Mr. Premier, business is not sizzling hot in Saskatchewan. And if that's a recent headline, it's simply an inaccurate one — must be that awful Conrad Black newspaper, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, I want to end this discussion as I began it, and first of all I want to make it clear that my attacks on you, Mr. Premier, are not personal. They are addressed to you as the leader of your government, Mr. Premier, the leader of your government because the responsibility for what your government does, the responsibility for the actions of your government rests on your shoulders.

Yes, I know you had a long and distinguished political career. But, Mr. Premier, you also have a long record, and that record is not a very positive record.

And right now, Mr. Chairman, the Premier's record speaks of a government that has lost its way. Every day as a result of the actions of your government, more harm is being done to Saskatchewan than good is being accomplished. And the gulf between those two are becoming greater and greater as each day rolls into each week and month and year.

Mr. Premier, we think your time is up. You say tonight that it's not; you're going to stay around forever. But we don't think

you should. Perhaps we can give you some good advice here — maybe you should pull the pin before it gets any worse. Maybe you should get out while you can, before you're lynched, Mr. Premier, because it's serious.

You're losing friends in every corner of this province. It's not just rural Saskatchewan that's not happy with you, Mr. Premier. Urban Saskatchewan people are concerned about your anti-business stance. They're concerned about the failure of education, health care, and all the important areas under your watch, Mr. Premier.

People are sending you a message — you lost the popular vote. You got to admit that — you lost the popular vote in the last provincial election. You wouldn't have lost the provincial vote if you'd been supported in urban Saskatchewan. We almost won some seats in urban Saskatchewan. That's a wake-up call for you and your government.

The member, your Minister of Liquor and Gaming won by 117 votes. That's a very, very, very narrow majority. People of Regina — this is government city — were telling you that your performance is not very good, and you better shape up.

Well what did you do? You didn't shape up, and so we've had the Wood River by-election, and there you got trounced. You're below, Mr. Premier, you're below your rock-bottom, solid support. You're losing your most trusted supporters, Mr. Premier, because your record is so bad.

Mr. Premier, it's time that you step aside and let somebody else come forward and make perhaps . . . We don't think there's anybody over there with better vision but it can't be any worse than what you've been giving us.

Mr. Premier, we think that you'd better consider that there are real people living in Saskatchewan. You know, we've talked and I know that you've waxed eloquent as you often do, but the one point that you've missed in this whole debate tonight is the fact that there are real people in Saskatchewan that are watching, real people with real needs and real problems. There are real people considering leaving Saskatchewan. There are real people on hospital waiting lists. They are real people. Their heart beats just the way your heart beats. And they're watching you, Mr. Premier.

There are real business people that are having problems making a profit. They can't make ends meet any more. There are people having problems in social areas and we talked about your own riding. Mr. Premier, they are real people with hurts and needs, with dreams and aspirations that aren't being met. And they aren't being met to a large degree because of the actions of your government.

Mr. Premier, you haven't been able to keep your promises. You haven't kept your promises on lowering taxes. You know, your Finance minister promised that 70 per cent of the lowest income tax people would be at a par with Alberta after his budget, paying income tax. That's already gone by the boards and your Finance minister says he can't keep that promise. Alberta is again outstripping Saskatchewan. We're going to have lower taxes.

You promised there would be no more bed closures in Saskatchewan hospitals, and that promise was broken. You promised 30,000 jobs and no matter how you tried to jig the numbers, it never did add up to 30,000, Mr. Premier. You fail and you fail and you fail. Yes, you act eloquent. That's the only area you don't fail in. You can speak as eloquently as they come. You've got a national audience. But your record, your record which is the most important thing, does not match your eloquence. Actions speak louder than words.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Mr. Premier, I think we're coming to the end of a session. Mr. Premier, nothing has changed. Same arrogant attitude over there, same lack of vision. Same we can't do any better; we're just old Saskatchewan. You know, don't expect us to fix things. How do you think you can lower taxes and fix health care? You said that tonight. You don't think it can be done. Well if you don't think it can be done, get out of the way and let somebody do it, because we can do it. We know we can do it.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — We have the strength to do it, we have the vision to do it, we've got the people to do it. Get out of the road and let us do it because we want to do it. We love Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Mr. Premier, if you can't do it — if you can't do it — stand up in your seat, apologize to the people of Saskatchewan for your failure. Apologize, say you're sorry — say you're sorry, sit down, let's leave, get out of there, and let us do it.

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Chairman, that was one of the funniest performances I've ever seen in my entire life.

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

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — And if I may say so, with the greatest of respect to the Leader of the Opposition, this is nothing personal, but please don't get carried away because I want you here in this Legislative Assembly next year. Please don't get carried away at all.

And, Mr. Chairman, as I close my remarks I'm going to table, because he said it was probably some newspaper from two or three years ago — I know that he's all right in this regard but some of the caucus may have difficulty in reading this — it's June 12 the year 2000. I'd like to table it: "Sask. job market sizzling hot".

**The Deputy Chair:** — Order.

**Hon. Mr. Romanow:** — Oh, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done that, I apologize; but it is sizzling hot in any event. And my last words I say with the greatest of love and the warmest of respect to the Leader of the Opposition and to all of his dear, united

comrades that are there behind him, in support of him — all of them. All of those who fight in the defence of freedom, like the member from Wood River. The ever vigilant voices of the . . . by the way, I'm looking forward next session to your sermonettes on how things are in Eastern Europe and the like.

I'll close with this little . . . I put it out to you humorously but you know, maybe a little bit of truth in all humour. The headline here is in the June 26, 2000, *The StarPhoenix*: "Day supporters rejoice in Saskatchewan victory." That's what the headline says, and I'm reminded after this day of exciting debate. Hermanson — quote:

Hermanson said Day can expect to be under increased scrutiny now.

I don't see the member . . . sorry I can't do that, say that.

Members do not have much time to find out if he can turn his media savvy into trusted leadership before the next federal election, he said.

This is the Leader of the Opposition. Quote:

"I would rather go with the proven performer . . . over taking a chance on someone new . . ."

Mr. Chairman, he's dead right. The people of Saskatchewan want to have a proven performer and a proven government, that's us. He should take his own words to heart — bring his own words to heart.

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

The division bells rang from 7:01 p.m. until 7:11 p.m.

Subvote (EX01) agreed to on the following recorded division.

#### Yeas — 30

Romanow	Trew	Hagel
Van Mulligen	MacKinnon	Lingenfelter
Melenchuk	Cline	Atkinson
Goulet	Lautermilch	Thomson
Lorje	Serby	Belanger
Nilson	Crofford	Hillson
Kowalsky	Sonntag	Hamilton
Jones	Higgins	Yates
Harper	Axworthy	Junor
Kasperski	Wartman	Addley

#### Nays — 26

Hermanson	Elhard	Heppner
Julé	Krawetz	Draude
Boyd	Gantfoer	Toth
Stewart	Eagles	Wall
Bakken	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
McMorris	Weekes	Kwiatkowski
Brkich	Harpauer	Wakefield
Wiberg	Hart	Allchurch
Peters	Huyghebaert	

Subvotes (EX02), (EX07), (EX04), (EX03), (EX08) agreed to on division.

Subvote (EX06) — Statutory.

The division bells rang from 7:17 p.m. until 7:27 p.m.

Vote 10 agreed to on the following recorded division.

**Yeas — 30**

Romanow	Trew	Hagel
Van Mulligen	MacKinnon	Lingenfelter
Melenchuk	Cline	Atkinson
Goulet	Lautermilch	Thomson
Lorje	Serby	Belanger
Nilson	Crofford	Hillson
Kowalsky	Sonntag	Hamilton
Jones	Higgins	Yates
Harper	Axworthy	Junor
Kasperski	Wartman	Addley

**Nays — 26**

Hermanson	Elhard	Heppner
Julé	Krawetz	Draude
Boyd	Gantfoer	Toth
Stewart	Eagles	Wall
Bakken	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
McMorris	Weekes	Kwiatkowski
Brkich	Harpauer	Wakefield
Wiberg	Hart	Allchurch
Peters	Huyghebaert	

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

**General Revenue Fund  
Agriculture and Food  
Vote 1**

Subvotes (AG01), (AG02), (AG05), (AG04), (AG06), (AG07) (AG12), (AG03), (AG08), (AG09), (AG10) agreed to.

Vote 1 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund  
Lending and Investing Activities  
Agriculture and Food  
Vote 146**

Subvotes (AG02), (AG03), (AG07) agreed to.

Vote 146 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1999-2000  
General Revenue Fund  
Agriculture and Food  
Vote 1**

Subvotes (AG08), (AG10) agreed to.

Vote 1 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund  
Energy and Mines  
Vote 23**

Subvotes (EM01), (EM02), (EM05), (EM04), (EM03), (EM06) agreed to.

Vote 23 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund  
Environment and Resource Management  
Vote 26**

Subvotes (ER01), (ER02), (ER08), (ER15), (ER04), (ER09), (ER10), (ER05), (ER07), (ER03), (ER11), (ER14) agreed to.

Vote 26 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund  
Environment and Resource Management  
Forest Fire Contingency  
Vote 72**

Subvote (FF01) agreed to

Vote 72 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates 1999-2000  
General Revenue Fund  
Environment and Resource Management  
Vote 26**

Subvotes (ER08), (ER09), (ER10), (ER05) agreed to.

Vote 26 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund  
Finance  
Vote 18**

Subvotes (FI01), (FI02), (FI04), (FI03), (FI06), (FI05), (FI10), (FI08), (FI09) agreed to.

Vote 18 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund  
Debt Redemption, Sinking Fund and Interest Payments  
Votes 175, 176, 177**

Votes 175, 176, 177 — Statutory.

**Supplementary Estimates 1999-2000  
General Revenue Fund  
Finance  
Vote 18**

Subvote (FI09) agreed to.

Vote 18 agreed to.

(1945)

**The Chair:** — Why is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on



his feet?

**Mr. Krawetz:** — With leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the members. I'd like to bring to the attention of the members a guest seated in the Speaker's gallery, Ms. Jenelle Wienbender.

Ms. Wienbender is a former employee; and most recently, a former employee of the Regina Chamber of Commerce, who has a very important date planned for sometime in September when I believe she exchanges her marriage vows and will be moving to the United States to work in the United States of America.

I'd ask all members to welcome Ms. Jenelle Wienbender.

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

#### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

##### General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32

Subvotes (HE01), (HE02), (HE03), (HE04), (HE06), (HE08) agreed to.

Vote 32 agreed to.

##### Supplementary Estimates 1999-2000 General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32

Subvotes (HE03), (HE04), (HE06), (HE08) agreed to.

Vote 32 agreed to.

##### General Revenue Fund Health — Transition Fund Vote 69

Subvote (HT01) agreed to.

Vote 69 agreed to.

##### General Revenue Fund Highways and Transportation Vote 16

Subvotes (HI01), (HI02), (HI04), (HI10), (HI03), (HI06), (HI11) agreed to.

Vote 16 agreed to.

##### General Revenue Fund Lending and Investment Activities

##### Highways and Transportation Vote 145

Subvote (HI01) agreed to.

Vote 145 agreed to.

##### Supplementary Estimates 1999-2000 General Revenue Fund Highways and Transportation Vote 16

Subvote (HI11) agreed to.

Vote 16 agreed to.

##### General Revenue Fund Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing Vote 24

Subvotes (MG01), (MG02), (MG07), (MG17), (MG03), (MG15), (MG16), (MG18), (MG05), (MG13) agreed to.

Vote 24 agreed to.

##### Supplementary Estimates 1999-2000 General Revenue Fund Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing Vote 24

Subvotes (MG15), (MG05), (MG13) agreed to.

Vote 24 agreed to.

##### General Revenue Fund Lending and Investing Activities Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Vote 143

Subvote (SH01) — Statutory.

##### General Revenue Fund Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Vote 37

Subvotes (PE01), (PE02), (PE03), (PE04), (PE07), (PE05), (PE06) agreed to.

Vote 37 agreed to.

##### General Revenue Fund Lending and Investing Activities Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan Vote 165

Subvote (C101) — Statutory.

##### General Revenue Fund Lending and Investing Activities Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Vote 153

Subvote (ST01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund  
Lending and Investing Activities  
SaskEnergy Incorporated  
Vote 150**

Subvote (SE01) — Statutory.

(2000)

**Motions for Supply**

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to make a motion as follows:

Resolved, that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2000, the sum of \$212,421,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

And I so move.

Motion agreed to.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to move a motion that reads as follows:

Resolved, that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses for the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2001, the sum of \$4,108,712,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

I so move.

Motion agreed to on division.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that the committee rise and that the Chair report that the committee has agreed to certain resolutions and asks for leave to sit again.

**The Deputy Chair:** — Before I put the resolution, committee members, this is going to be my last chance where I control the microphone. And I do want to thank all hon. members on both sides for your diligence throughout this past session, and particularly, particularly in the last few days when things could have been significantly different than they were. I do appreciate the general co-operation that we received throughout, and I know I speak on behalf of the Deputy Chair when I say that.

And I sincerely wish all members to have a very, very enjoyable time away from the legislature and I hope you'll look forward as much as I do to us gathering again when we do.

The committee reported progress.

**FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS**

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that the resolutions be now read the first and second time.

Motion agreed to and the resolutions read a first and second time.

**MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Debatable)**

**Return No. 1**

**Ms. Julé:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 1 showing:

To the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs: the amount of provincial funding in 1999-2000 that is budgeted to go to on-reserve services in Saskatchewan; and provide what the services are.

And, Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 2 showing:

To the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, hon. member. Just one motion at a time. And may I remind the hon. member that you'll need to name a seconder as well, please.

**Ms. Julé:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that this would be seconded by the member for Rosthern.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask the Assembly to move an amendment to this motion. This motion asks for information about on-reserve services. Everybody well knows in this Assembly that reserve services are primarily, almost exclusively, paid for by the federal government.

And however, this government does enter into some agreements where the . . . with the federal government to pay for some services like policing and fire, but there is no way that records are kept in the way that this question is asked for.

Therefore I move, seconded by the member from Regina Dewdney, the following amendment.

Amend return no. 1 by deleting all words after "Aboriginal Affairs" and substitute the following:

the on-reserve services in Saskatchewan that the province provided funding for in the 1999-2000 fiscal year.

And then we'll be able to provide an answer to that question.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

**Return No. 2**

**Ms. Julé:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 2 showing:

To the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs: The amount of provincial funding that was provided for services on Indian reserves in Saskatchewan in 1998-99.

Seconded by the member from Rosthern.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, for the same reasons that I mentioned in motion no. 1, I move, seconded by the member from Regina Dewdney, that we amend return no. 2 by deleting all the words after “Aboriginal Affairs” and substitute the following:

The on-reserve services in Saskatchewan that the province provided funding for in the 1998-99 fiscal year?”

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

### Return No. 3

**Ms. Julé:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that an Order of the Assembly do issue for a Return No. 3 showing:

To the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs: the amount of provincial funding that was provided for services on Indian reserves in Saskatchewan in 1996-97.

Seconded by the member from Rosthern.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Once again, Mr. Speaker, this is for the year 1996-97. I move the amendment:

Amend return no. 3 by deleting all words after “Aboriginal Affairs” and substitute the following:

“The on-reserve services in Saskatchewan that the province provided funding for in the 1996-97 fiscal year?”

Seconded by the member from Regina Dewdney.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

(2015)

### Return No. 4

**Ms. Julé:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 4 showing:

To the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs: the amount of provincial funding that was provided for services on Indian reserves in Saskatchewan in 1995-96.

Seconded by the member from Rosthern.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, I move the following amendment. We amend the return no. 4:

Amend return no. 4 by deleting all words after “Aboriginal Affairs” and substitute the following:

“The on-reserve services in Saskatchewan that the province provided funding for in the 1995-96 fiscal year?”

Seconded by the member from Regina Dewdney.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

### Return No. 5

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 5 showing:

To the Minister of Executive Council: (1) The role that the Department of Executive Council plays in calling and examining requests for proposals from communications firms, marketing firms, market research firms, and polling firms for work done by all government departments and Crown corporations and please give a complete rundown on the government’s policy in awarding contracts to such agencies for this type of work. (2) The contracts of this nature that have been awarded by the government through Executive Council during the 1998-1999 fiscal year. (3) Whether the tendering process in each case followed government policy. (4) The number of companies that tendered for each project. (5) The company that got the final contract. (6) The amount that the contract was worth. (7) The number of other companies that bid on the contract, in each case.

I move this, seconded by my colleague from Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, I recommend that we pass this motion. It took a little while to compile all of this information, but I am very pleased on behalf of an open, accountable, and responsible government to give you this for homework over the summer holidays.

Motion agreed to.

### Return No. 11

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Humboldt, an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 11 showing:

To the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation: (1) The organizations that each of Saskatchewan’s CIC Crowns have contributed money to in 2000 and the amount. (2) The organizations that have applied to each of these Crowns for contributions but were rejected.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, I’m going to recommend to the Assembly that this motion be defeated on the grounds that this is a motion which requests information that is protected under the freedom of information Act. We have to be careful to protect the right of third parties, Mr. Speaker, because section 19 of the freedom of information Act obliges the government to obtain written consent from any third party to which any information relates. And a corporation must refuse under these conditions to give access to the record of the written consent of the third . . . if the consent of the third party has not been granted.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I recommend this motion be defeated.

Motion negatived.

#### Return No. 12

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In an effort to gain some information from this government and to ensure it has the opportunity to be open and accountable and transparent, I move, seconded by the member from Humboldt, that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 12 showing:

To the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation: (1) The organizations that each of Saskatchewan's CIC Crowns have contributed money to in 1999 and the amount. (2) The organizations that applied to each of these Crowns for contributions but were rejected.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — For reasons that I have just mentioned, Mr. Speaker, I recommend this motion be defeated.

Motion negatived.

#### Return No. 13

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 13 showing:

To the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing: (1) in 1999-2000, the events and/or organizations that were approved by the Saskatchewan Arts Board for funding; (2) in 1999-2000, the events and/or organizations that were rejected by the Saskatchewan Arts Board for funding.

Seconded by the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — A very good question, Mr. Speaker, and we now have the answer and I recommend we pass the motion.

Motion agreed to.

#### Return No. 14

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 14 showing:

To the Government of Saskatchewan: during the 1998-1999 fiscal year, the names of all the employees of Executive Council; and for each employee, their title and the amount they were paid during fiscal year 1998-1999.

Seconded by my colleague from Kelvington-Wadena.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, being open, accountable, and responsible, we will pass this . . . recommend this motion be passed so they can table the information.

Motion agreed to.

#### Return No. 15

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 15 showing:

To the Government of Saskatchewan: during the 1999-2000 fiscal year, the names of all the employees of Executive Council; and for each employee, their title and the amount they were paid during fiscal year 1999-2000.

Seconded by the hon. member for Arm River.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Right after we pass this motion, Mr. Speaker, I'll be very happy to provide the information.

Motion agreed to.

#### Return No. 16

**Mr. Gantefoer** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 16 showing:

To the Government of Saskatchewan: the total number of trips made by ambulances to St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon for the month of April, 2000, and whether detailed ambulance logs could be made available for this period showing such trips.

I move this, seconded by my colleague, the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't know what they're going to do with the answer but here it is. Let's pass the motion.

Motion agreed to.

#### Return No. 18

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no 18 showing:

To the Minister of Health: whether any of the 1999-2000 annual Health District budgets initially submitted to the Minister of Health for approval were altered by the Minister or Department of Health officials prior to their approval; if so, the districts which had their budgets altered and the specific changes made or ordered by the Minister in each case.

And seconded by my colleague from Swift Current.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, I recommend this motion be passed and we will be able to give the member the answer she wants.

Motion agreed to.

#### Return No. 21

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for a Return No. 21 showing:

To the Minister of Highways and Transportation: in the last fiscal year, the amount of revenue that your department received from the sale of road building equipment either through private sale or public auction; and please provide detailed information on each item sold and the price.

Seconded by the member from Cypress Hills.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from that member, and I want to give him the answer. So let's pass the motion.

Motion agreed to.

#### Return No. 22

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 22 showing:

To the Minister of Highways and Transportation: the amount of money that your department spent in this fiscal year on purchasing road building equipment and provide detailed information on what was purchased and what was the cost.

Seconded by the member from Cypress Hills.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Roads and highways are important to us, Mr. Speaker. The opposition should have answers to questions about roads and highways.

Motion agreed to.

#### Return No. 23

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 23 showing:

To the Minister of Health: (1) whether the Department of Health has sold the provincial database of personal health and drug records to drug companies or health market research companies; if so, provide the names of the companies; (2) whether the Department of Health has sold the provincial database of personal health and drug records to any other company; if so, provide the name of the companies; (3) also, the amount that the Department of Health received for those sales and where the funds go upon receipt of payment; (4) the safeguards that are in place that will ensure confidentiality of those records representing Saskatchewan health care clients.

Seconded by the member for Swift Current.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, a very significant question and I want to make a comment on this.

Saskatchewan Health has not sold the provincial database of personal health and drug records to drug companies or any other companies. Saskatchewan Health responds to requests from researchers, including those from pharmaceutical firms, for use of selected information from portions of the databases. Upon receipt of a full description of the request and purpose of the research, Saskatchewan Health will compile edited and aggregated non-identifiable information for researchers for approved research studies.

(2030)

Costs for staff time and data processing charges are paid by the

researchers. The data per se are not sold. Depending on the complexity of the request, extensive work may be required to extract information needed for an individual research study and to aggregate and summarize it to preserve confidentiality. Researchers pay for the costs involved in compiling the information and preparing it in a format that can be released in a non-identifiable manner.

In the last fiscal years, Saskatchewan Health received \$505,610 for costs incurred for the research project and requests for aggregate reports on overall use on certain drugs. All revenues received go to the General Revenue Fund. Strict criterion and procedure ensure confidentiality is maintained.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be pleased to submit the total answer once again in writing after we pass this motion. But it should be clearly understood that the databases are not sold and everybody's personal record remains confidential.

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

Motion agreed to.

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

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — With leave of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, with respect to all the questions, there were 210 questions asked by the opposition members this year and I want to thank everybody in all the departments that assisted in compiling the answers to these. It takes considerable work.

I want to also compliment the members opposite. We were able to answer 206 of the questions. We only had to amend only four of them because of the way they were asked and only had to defeat two of them to protect people's confidentiality. So they're getting better. They're getting better.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, it was very much my pleasure to provide 206 answers, along with the deputy whip, to the government . . . to the opposition members from the government on behalf of an open, accountable, responsible government.

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

#### APPROPRIATION BILL

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly I move:

That Bill No. 87, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Years ending respectively on March 31, 2000 and on March 31, 2001 be now introduced and read the first time.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to and the Bill read a first time.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly and under rule 55(2), I move that the Bill now be read a second and third time.

Leave granted.

The division bells rang from 8:35 p.m. until 8:42 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

#### Yeas — 31

Romanow	Trew	Hagel
Van Mulligen	MacKinnon	Lingenfelter
Melenchuk	Cline	Atkinson
Goulet	Lautermilch	Thomson
Lorje	Serby	Belanger
Nilson	Crofford	Hillson
Kowalsky	Sonntag	Hamilton
Prebble	Jones	Higgins
Yates	Harper	Axworthy
Junor	Kasperski	Wartman
Addley		

#### Nays — 26

Hermanson	Elhard	Heppner
Julé	Krawetz	Draude
Boyd	Gantfoer	Toth
Stewart	Eagles	Wall
Bakken	Bjornerud	D'Autremont
McMorris	Weekes	Kwiatkowski
Brkich	Harpauer	Wakefield
Wiberg	Hart	Allchurch
Peters	Huyghebaert	

The Bill read a second and third time and passed under its title.

#### ROYAL ASSENT

At 8:48 p.m. His Honour the Administrator entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bills:

- Bill No. 55 - The Land Titles Act, 2000
- Bill No. 56 - The Land Titles Consequential Amendment Act, 2000/Loi de 2000 apportant des modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Land Titles Act, 2000
- Bill No. 57 - The Land Surveys Act, 2000
- Bill No. 58 - The Condominium Property Amendment Act, 2000
- Bill No. 64 - The Fiscal Stabilization Fund Act
- Bill No. 59 - The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2000

**His Honour:** — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these Bills.

Bill No. 87 - An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Years ending respectively on March 31, 2000, and on March 31, 2001.

**His Honour:** — In Her Majesty's name, I thank the Legislative Assembly, accept their benevolence, and assent to this Bill.

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 8:51 p.m.

#### MOTIONS

##### House Adjournment

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, by leave I move, and seconded by the member from Cannington:

That when the Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, it shall stand adjourned to the date and time set by Mr. Speaker upon request of the government, and that Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven days clear notice if possible of such date and time.

I so move.

Leave granted.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the session closes, I would like to make a few comments if I could please.

We must not forget that it takes some time . . . to take some time and express our sincere thank you's to those that have helped us in our daily lives in this legislature for the last three months or so.

A special thank you, Mr. Speaker, to the Clerks at The Table; the Sergeant-at-Arms; the Law Clerk's office, both Allison and Ken; to the pages here in the Assembly, a thank you; to the Legislative Library staff; the *Hansard* personnel; the security staff and commissionaires; my special favourite, Mr. Speaker, the cafeteria staff; tour guides, maintenance, and other legislative staff members. We'd like to thank them on behalf of both myself and the rest of the opposition of caucus.

Please accept our very sincere and heartfelt thank you's for a job well done. Your assistance and support is greatly appreciated. We look forward to working with all of you again in the next session.

A special thank you also to our colleagues in the NDP and Liberal caucuses, especially the Leader of the Liberal Party, for the assistance in formulating a disastrous session for the government. Your attitude, Mr. Minister, and your ineptitude has made this a very good and successful session for all of us. Without your contribution this job would have been much more difficult. You have certainly been of value to us.

To the Minister of Education, even the member for North Battleford says that he is seriously reconsidering . . . has some serious reconsiderations to do on the coalition and has some

serious soul-searching to do about staying in the coalition. Perhaps the Premier will release his soul from political limbo so he can make that decision.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, the member for Regina South, and the member for Regina Dewdney for giving us all the reasons to stay here, the reasons and the incentive to carry on this fight against the NDP government.

To the member for Saskatoon Southeast. Thank you to our much beloved and special MLA. Thank you for the help. You have been an invaluable asset.

To the Speaker, thank you. You have kept the sessions interesting and you have kept me on my feet with points of order.

A very large and special thank you to our staff who have been of outstanding assistance to us and support, and especially as my colleague from Swift Current said, even he needs their help to look good.

To everyone in this Assembly, to the people of Saskatchewan, have a good and safe summer. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, before I move adjournment of the House, I want to take a few moments to join with the Opposition House Leader in thanking a number of people.

And I must say his comments are a little bit unusual. I've been here 23 years, and the normal process is to, I think in a very camaraderie way, thank each other for the work that we do together. So I just wanted to comment that this is the first time in 23 years that I've heard that kind of a negative speech at the end of a session.

First of all, I want to thank all hon. members — you most of all, Mr. Speaker, for the great job that you have done in making sure that the decorum is kept in the House — and to all members of the opposition for their work. I know they work hard. I know their families put up with a lot when we're away from home. So I want to thank each of you sincerely for the work that you do.

And as I said, Mr. Speaker, to you and your staff, it's great to work with each and every one of you.

I also want to thank the Opposition House Leader, the member from Cannington, for the work that he did with his staff on a daily basis in getting the House work ready, and making sure that everything flowed on schedule.

It's my pleasure to . . . as well to thank the Clerk of the Assembly, Gwenn Ronyk, and Deputy Clerk Greg Putz, as well as Clerk Assistant Meta Woods, and all of their hard work during the session. And I know many days during estimates when things get a little raucous, you have to put up with a great deal. And I wish that you would also say thank you to Monique,

Kathy, and Sandra in the office, who work behind the scenes for us.

To our pages — Brooke, Rachel, Carla, Terry, and Charla — thank you very much, and especially for your words of wisdom. And I think all of us would want to give you a round of applause for the kind words that you give.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — To the dedicated staff in all three caucus offices, and in the minister's office as well as Executive Council, who have assisted us in our daily duties, as well as constituency assistants — many of them who, behind the scenes, work quietly and diligently in making sure that things on the home front are kept in order.

To you, Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms, Patrick Shaw, for your humour and for your involvement in the Assembly. I must say again in my 23 years it's a very, very breath of fresh air, your involvement, not only here in the Assembly but around the building. And I know that you and your staff do a wonderful job, and in a very, very professional manner take care of the security of the building.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, a special thank you to the staff in *Hansard*. And I don't know why I'm the one that gets a message from them every day I'm up in question period, for the spelling of names. That was never one of my strong suits.

And I must say that they work hard and do a great job.

As well to the Journals staff, Visitor Services, Library staff and as well to all of those who have helped us as members and caucus staff.

I'd also like to thank the Law Clerk, Ken Ring, and his staff for their work. And also to Ian Brown in the legislative drafting area, and as the member for Cannington has mentioned, of course the staff down in the cafeteria.

Finally I would like to recognize the contributions of the staff of the officials from all government departments who have come here with us for estimates and Bills, and in passing 85 Bills and all the estimates.

As well as going through an election, forming a coalition government, a session last fall and a session this spring, I think all of us should give ourselves a round of applause for some pretty impressive work in the last nine months.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Now finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the media and you know the tough hours they keep. You see them all up there in the gallery watching. I know they keep track of our attendance here in the House on a daily basis. But I do want to say, although they don't always get the story straight, a thank you to them for coming and being with us during the session.

Finally I want to ask a very, very . . . or to say to members in all areas of the province to have a very, very safe and good trip home. But most of all, that you take some time to relax with your family and friends.

And I know we'll be back here sooner than you think. And to members of the opposition, three and a half years will go by very, very quickly.

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

(2100)

**The Speaker:** — Hon. members, before I put the motion forward, I beg your leave, hon. colleagues, to allow me to say a few words. You have not allowed the Speaker to say very much, and I would beg leave to make some comments as well.

Leave granted.

**The Speaker:** — Thank you so much. And before we leave, I have a number of people, some that have already been mentioned, to thank sincerely. Our director of Visitor Services who greets the people and the public that come to our building. And Marianne, who's the tour coordinator, and all the tour guides.

As well as those, and you've mentioned the Sergeant-at-Arms, who provide the security for the building — Mr. Ben Block, who's the head of our sessional security and who has been with the Legislative Assembly here now for 20 years, and the rest of his crew that so very capably and in a dignified manner take care of all of us.

Also to Mr. Ken Ring, the Law Clerk, and Allison for all their help.

And I also want to recognize people that we don't often see or express any appreciation to. Folks like Steve Bata and the SPMC (Saskatchewan property Management Corporation) staff who look after the building. Trent Brears and the cafeteria staff who keep us in pretty good shape.

And Marilyn Borowski from financial services and her staff, Linda Kaminski in personnel administration and human resources, Marilyn Kotylak and Pam Scott in Journals. These are the people behind the scenes that make things really work, hon. members.

Judy Brennan and Donelda Klein and the staff at *Hansard* who listen very intently to every word that's spoken in this House. A special mention to Barbara Lindenbach, the *Hansard* indexer who has served this Assembly and has been recognized for 20 years of service.

Jeremy Phillips, our LAO (Legislative Assembly office) system analyst — his computer expertise ensures that the Legislative Assembly web site is current and accurate and up-to-date. Marian Powell and the legislative staff — they certainly provide a great deal of help to us. And of course all the Broadcast Services people — Gary Ward, Ihor Sywanyk, Kerry Bond.

Once again our pages, and we pay tribute to our Clerks and I

sincerely want to say thank you to Gwenn, to Greg, and to Meta — very capable work and understanding and interpreting the procedures, the procedural rules of the House. And also the staff at the Clerk's office, who serve them so well.

I also want a special thank you to our Deputy Speaker and Deputy Chair of Committees for your work, gentlemen, to interpret and apply the rules of this Assembly. I thank you for your diligence and your wisdom. It's been a privilege to serve with you.

And now I want to thank the government and opposition House leaders. Their attention to detail ensured I carefully monitored questions, answers, and statements. I'm especially grateful for the points of order that were raised. This gave me the incentive to delve deeply into Erskine May and Beauchesne's (1st Edition, 2nd Edition, 3rd Edition, 4th, 5th, and 6th Edition. I owe my new-found knowledge of parliamentary procedures to you, and I thank you sincerely for that.

Seriously, I do want to congratulate all members for their participation in our system of democracy. I recognize your passion and commitment to make this province a better place, better place to live. You may not always agree with each other, you may not always speak one at a time, and sometimes I've noticed you even interrupt one another.

However, I do know and we all know that you have a strong shared belief in this institution, a strong belief in our system of parliamentary democracy, and a love of our country and its people. We may not agree on everything that is said here, but we do agree on the importance of this institution and our right to speak out freely here in this Chamber regardless of our beliefs. This is a place we come on behalf of our constituents to speak out. Commitment and passion are always appropriate and welcome in this Hon. Assembly.

Before we adjourn tonight, I want to tell you that I acknowledge and respect your respect for this institution. I acknowledge and share your respect and commend you all for your hard work and dedication in this first session of the twenty-fourth legislature.

And now that the House will be no longer sitting, I know you're anxious to get back to your constituencies, to your families, to meet with your constituents and other groups throughout the province.

On that note I would like to acknowledge your constituency assistants as well as mine, Kim Emerson, who takes care of the shop back home while you're here diligently working on behalf of the people of this great province of ours.

I and my office have had the good fortune of inheriting some very special staff, and I want to acknowledge them as well: Margaret Kleisinger, who is the assistant to the Speaker; Linda Spence is the secretary; and Garva Gottfried who's come to assist while our real good friend Rhonda Romanuk is home looking after her new son.

And, hon. members, I sincerely want to wish each and every one of you a tremendous summer, a tremendous time with your family, your friends, your loved ones, and I do really want to see you all again back safely. I want to wish you all the very



best of luck.

And on that note I would ask the Assembly if they would take the motion as read from the Government House Leader.

Motion agreed to.

**The Speaker:** — This House now stands adjourned until the call of the Speaker.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:06 a.m.