

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today. I'd like to present a petition today dealing with the automobile insurance Act.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to repeal the provisions of the personal injury benefits contained in the automobile insurance Act and adopt a return to an add-on insurance system that would provide benefits on a no-fault basis to all victims without taking away the innocent victim's right to seek compensation from the person responsible for the accident but with appropriate modifications to reduce the overall personal injury costs.

This petition is signed by good citizens of Estevan, Regina, and Lacombe.

Mr. Wakefield: — A petition to present, Mr. Speaker.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your humble Assembly may be pleased to repeal the provisions of the personal injury benefits contained in the automobile insurance Act and adopt a return to an add-on insurance system that would provide benefits on a no-fault basis to all victims without taking away the innocent victim's right to seek compensation from the person responsible for the accident but with appropriate modifications to reduce overall personal injury costs.

This petition is signed by people from Estevan and Torquay.

Mr. Peters: — Hon. Mr. Speaker. I present a petition:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to repeal the provision of the personal injury benefits contained in the automobile insurance Act and adopt a return to an add-on insurance system that would provide benefit on a no-fault basis to all victims without taking away the innocent victim's right to seek compensation from the person responsible for the accident, but with appropriate modification to reduce overall personal injury costs.

The petitioners are from Estevan, Eston, and Lloydminster.

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to repeal the provision of the personal injury benefits contained in the automobile insurance Act and adopt a return to an add-on insurance system that would provide the benefits on a no-fault basis to all victims without taking away the innocent victim's right to seek compensation from the person responsible for

the accident, but with appropriate modifications to reduce overall personal injury costs.

This petition is signed by individuals from Estevan, Bienfait, Wakaw, Swift Current, and Bromhead.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a sense of deep responsibility that I also present a petition today.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to repeal the provisions of the personal injury benefits contained in the automobile insurance Act and adopt a return to add-on insurance system that would provide benefits on a no-fault basis to all victims without taking away the innocent victim's right to seek compensation from the person responsible for the accident, but with appropriate modifications to reduce overall personal injury costs.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The petitioners that have signed this one is from Estevan and Swift Current.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the petitions presented at the last sitting have been reviewed and found to be in order and are hereby received, the petitions being those petitioning the Assembly to repeal the personal injury benefits contained in The Automobile Accident Insurance Act.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Monday next move first reading of a Bill entitled The Children's Law Amendment Act, 1999.

Also when I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, can I provide a written question? I give notice that I shall on day no. 9 ask the government the following question:

To the Premier: has any member of the staff of Executive Council been actively engaged in seeking private sector directorship for you in 1999?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to introduce to the House one of my constituents, a supporter and a supporter for many years; but much more than a supporter, one who has tried to understand me and put up with me for 23 years and counting. Glad to introduce to the House my wife, Gail, who is sitting there already in Christmas red.

I appreciate Gail. And those of you who also have spouses and are involved in public life know how valuable the support and understanding of your partner is; and I am very blessed to have Gail as my wife and I'm happy to introduce her to you this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my distinct pleasure and honour this afternoon to introduce to the House, Mr. Yogi Huyghebaert. Hon. members will recall that he is the man who has now lost twice to the Liberals, first as a Tory and later as a Saskatchewan Party candidate. I'd ask all members to welcome him this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the House, 14 students from the Dumont Technical Institute who are sitting in your west wing, Mr. Speaker. Students are accompanied here today with their teacher Sheila Starr and they have toured the legislature, and they're going to take in the proceedings of the House through question period. And I'll have the opportunity to meet with them for a few moments in room 131 after the question period is over with.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all the members to offer them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's not often or perhaps even never that we introduce members of the media but today I think is a very special day. I understand that Jo-Lynn Sheane and her partner, Peter Dick sitting in the . . . Duck, pardon me, sitting in the . . . Peter Duck sitting in the gallery were engaged last evening and I think on behalf of all members would want to offer our most sincere congratulations and offer them the very best in the future.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in introducing today the students, grades 7 and 8 students from W.H. Ford. They're up in the west gallery along with their teacher Louise Krueger. I'm looking forward to meeting with them later at about 2:30, and welcome to the . . . I'd like you to welcome them to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the members of this Assembly, someone that I have known for 30 years; someone who has been a friend over that period of time; someone, more important than that, who also is my wife and also my campaign manager. She's sitting in your Speaker's gallery there. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from Regina Northeast. I'm glad that the member, Mr. Boyd, loves my jacket from my cultural tradition.

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Members will recall that it's not appropriate to address a member by their surnames or by their names, but by the constituencies they serve.

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that the member from Kindersley appreciates my cultural tradition in wearing my vest from Northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I rise of course with the member from Northeast in regards to the students from Dumont Technical Institute. I was the head of Gabriel Dumont Institute a few years back before I ran in the political field. And it was extremely important on the policy of inclusion, you know, by the government of the day on Metis people in this province in terms of education. It's very, very important that the students are here today to be part of this session. So I welcome them and, please, all members welcome them as well.

I would like to say this as well, Mr. Speaker.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

I thank the people on what they are able to achieve in education. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly a member of my constituency, Mr. George Marcotte from Estevan, a very hard worker; helped me extremely hard in my campaign and I'm so proud of him. And he's sitting in the opposition gallery. So please join me in welcoming George.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — Mr. Speaker, through you and to the Assembly I'd like to introduce Bernie Collins, the former Member of Parliament — Liberal Member of Parliament — from the Estevan area, and I would assume also a constituent of yours. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Bernie Collins.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to extend my welcome to Mr. Collins. Mr. Collins and I happen to be . . . had the pleasure of serving together in the House of Commons for the period of the last parliament; Mr. Collins on the other side of the House, but we did work together on some things like fighting gun control. I know Mr. Collins worked very hard on behalf of his constituents in Souris-Moose Mountain, and I also too welcome him to the House this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join my colleagues in welcoming the students here from DTI (Dumont Technical Institute) and I want to give a special message to the students that are taking training. We realize it's always a difficult task to leave your families behind. Some of you may have children; you've got to leave them behind as well.

But I want to encourage you to continue on with your studies, and the reason being is that many Aboriginal people throughout Saskatchewan will indeed be better served by a more intelligent

and certainly more motivated group of young people like yourselves. So I encourage you to continue on.

And also to not get discouraged because grade 12 wasn't the best four years of my life, but GDI (Gabriel Dumont Institute) certainly saved me and I went to a program and they've done a lot to help me get here. So once again, thanks for visiting and good luck.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join my colleagues in welcoming the students here, and particularly the students from DTI.

But while on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce two members, three constituents of mine who are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

We have Walter and Sharon Zaluski and their daughter Deanne and it's kind of a special day for them. Not long ago, they were in Ottawa and did the tour of the House of Commons and sat in the proceedings. And in a discussion we had last week, they became aware of the fact that they'd not done that in their own province.

So Deanne has taken a bit of a break from school to come and do a social studies exercise here. And following some observations of proceedings in the House, they'll be taking a tour of the building. And I'd ask all our members to bid the Zaluskis a very warm welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to revert back to notices of motions and questions.

Leave granted.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Allchurch: — I give notice that I shall on Monday next give first reading to a Bill, The Crown Corporations Amendment Act, 1999 (Referendum).

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Acknowledgement of Elks and Royal Purple Organizations

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge all the Elks and Royal Purple organizations throughout the province for all the charity work that they do for their communities. Particularly, I would like to acknowledge my local Elks club in Bladworth for their hard work. They've been recently awarded the host provincial Corby Cup, a major curling event to be held in Davidson in January of the year 2000.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be there in the year 2000 and I hope that other members will be there as well. Thank you.

Alberta Garment Firm Expanding to Saskatoon

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have some good news. A Calgary manufacturer is expanding to Saskatoon. The eastbound lanes — that's lanes plural, Mr. Speaker — on the Trans-Canada are going to carry some traffic. Someone from Alberta is going to have the exquisite experience of paying tax.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, Alberta Garment Manufacturing of Calgary is coming to Saskatoon, taking an existing firm and equipment and doubling the current staff of 76 over the next two years.

I'm also pleased to tell you that this is a shop represented by my former union, United Food and Commercial Workers. AGM (Alberta Garment Manufacturing) is one of Alberta's top producers of casual pants, uniforms, and safety work wear. Much of its work is for private label clients. Significantly, AGM markets extensively to retail stores in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, this is good news for Saskatoon and for Saskatchewan, but it's not just good luck. As the president of AGM says, Saskatoon has the necessary skilled labour force to meet its production needs for the ever-growing export market in the US (United States).

And, Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Dewdney said yesterday that our economy is diversifying. The growing textile industry consisting of 400 companies, including 1,800 people with annual sales of 45 million is another example. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Labour Farm Safety Poster Contest

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to rise in this Assembly on behalf of one my constituents from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Markus Wilson is a grade 5 student from Red Wing Elementary School, which is just north of Prince Albert. Marcus took the initiative to enter the Saskatchewan Labour Farm Safety poster contest.

Mr. Speaker, with the plight of farmers that we are currently facing, it is absolutely crucial that our youth are aware of the struggle that their parents must contend with just to put food on the table. It gives me great pleasure to have one such young man in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. Markus's ability to demonstrate the day-to-day dangers that his family and friends encounter is rather poignant.

Mr. Speaker, there were over 2,000 entries, and I would like to congratulate Markus on being the grand prize winner for his message about farmers lowering their grain augers when working near power lines.

Mr. Speaker, members of the Assembly, please join me in congratulating Markus on this remarkable achievement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Federal Standing Committee on Agriculture

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Federal Standing Committee on Agriculture came to Regina to hear directly from those affected by the agriculture crises. The Liberal Chair in this committee heard in graphic detail the same stories we heard in this House on Tuesday.

Their announced intention to report back to the parliament could be seen as negative. However, Mr. Speaker, let's be optimistic. After all, if a glacier moves two feet in year, it is considered a major advancement. From some of the statements made by the Chair of the committee, we hope that our message, repeated over and over again, may finally be making an impression.

For instance, Mr. Speaker, the Chair of the committee admitted that its AIDA (Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance) program has failed to recognize a large group of farmers. He has also admitted that some people would call the resulting feeling "alienation."

Some, Mr. Speaker, would call it desperation at this point. But he did say that, quote: "We have got to find a way of relieving most of the pain. And whatever we do has to be quick — very quick."

So, Mr. Speaker, did the federal glacier move an inch? The Minister of Agriculture thinks so. The opposition Agriculture critic thinks so. I suggest that the state of good intentions of the committee be accepted for now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

By-election in British Columbia

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I notice in today's issue of the *National Post* that all is not well for the NDP (New Democratic Party), not only in Saskatchewan but in British Columbia.

In a by-election held recently in the constituency of Delta South, the NDP managed to gain 2.4 per cent of the vote. The near-death experience of the NDP in Saskatchewan has translated into certain death for the NDP in British Columbia. Or as one political consultant put it:

I would strongly suspect that that's the worst byelection result for a . . . (governing party) in Canadian history.

Or put a little bit differently, there are more people in British Columbia that have seen Elvis recently than are going to vote for the NDP in the next election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — And in Saskatchewan after the so-called coalition scored on themselves in overtime, certain death seems likely in the next election as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Stories of Rural Saskatchewan Women Published

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to tell all members of the House about a new publication that I received recently. The booklet, *Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary Women*, profiles the lives of 13 rural women in Saskatchewan. Thirteen different occupations, ages, origins, and outlooks. It's a truly beautiful book containing great pictures and heartwarming stories.

The work of the Women's Secretariat made this booklet possible. I'd like to thank the staff for their hard work on the publication that so accurately depicts the way Saskatchewan country women work, play and face everyday obstacles on the prairies.

I'd also like to thank the 13 women who shared their personal stories to make this book so interesting, unique, and touching. I encourage all members to pick up a copy of this book that celebrates the lives of our rural and farm women of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Doctors Named To Innovators List

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with pride to share with all members of the Assembly that two doctors from my home city of Saskatoon have recently been recognized for their talents and outstanding work.

Dr. Mark Baltzan and Dr. Harold Johns have been named to the list of greatest Canadian medical innovators. This list was compiled by *The Medical Post* and includes 35 medical professionals that have broken new ground in their fields. Some of the other well known names on the list include Dr. Roberta Bondar and Dr. David Jenkins.

Dr. Baltzan was named to the list for his work in the area of kidney transplants. He has been practising medicine for 40 years in Saskatoon and was on the team that performed some of the first kidney transplants in the world.

Dr. Baltzan is one of the founders of our world renowned kidney transplant program and has made an enormous contribution in this field.

Dr. Johns is known for his invention of the cobalt-60 machine, a machine that allows radiation therapy to reach deep-seated cancer cells under the surface of the skin.

His invention has saved the lives of many cancer patients not only in Saskatchewan but around the world.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, Dr. Johns passed away last year after a battle with Parkinson's disease, but his work will continue to better the lives of cancer patients everywhere.

I invite all members of the Assembly to join me in recognizing the work of Dr. Baltzan and Dr. Johns.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ministers of Agriculture Meeting

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, my first question is for the Premier. Mr. Premier, yesterday's Agriculture ministers' meeting in Toronto was an unqualified disaster. In fact the other provinces and the federal Liberals were actually proposing less money for Saskatchewan farmers.

Well, Mr. Premier, it's not hard to understand why federal Liberals don't care about western farmers — they are following the lead of the NDP government here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Premier, just two days ago you told the media that when push came to shove, you wouldn't stand up for farm families if it meant ruffling Jean Chrétien's feathers. Mr. Premier, you spent a considerable part of your public life working to build a stronger Canada. Well right now Saskatchewan farm families need a strong Canada to work for them in times of crisis.

Mr. Premier, it's time to stand up for Canada. Will you stand up for Prairie farmers and prove that Canada works for every province and for every family?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition's report of the ministers of Agriculture meeting, as I'm beginning now to quickly learn in the three or four days of this session, is inaccurate.

The Minister of Agriculture will be in the House tomorrow and will give a full report on this. And the issue here is a question of less money directed by the Conservative government in Ontario. The Ontario government under the premiership of Mike Harris has said that they are insisting on \$30 million more, which I find rather a surprising figure. It's a lot of money, but not a lot of money for 11 million people, the wealthiest province in the country. Thirty million more for agriculture and that somehow they're going to try to lever this as against other governments and other regions like Saskatchewan and Manitoba seeking to get more.

Our position has been, in answer to the members opposite, consistent with the coalition straight across the piece. We are there to fight for the billion dollars for Saskatchewan, the \$300 million for Manitoba, and to represent faithfully those people who were here on the floor of the House saying so.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, those are interesting comments. How can we expect the rest of the country to stand up for Saskatchewan farmers when our own Premier refuses to take a stand, a stand like the Premier in Ontario is taking. He is standing for his farmers, and agriculture isn't nearly as important to Ontario's economy as it is to ours.

In Newfoundland, Brian Tobin, pulled out all the stops to support the East Coast fishery. So what's your excuse, Mr. Premier?

You're a constitutional expert. You've been around the block a lot of times. Why aren't you using every possible instrument to get help for Saskatchewan farmers, help so desperately needed? Are you afraid of putting too much pressure on the Prime Minister? Is it going to hurt your chances for a fancy federal appointment when you retire next June?

Mr. Premier, please put aside your own personal interests, take off the gloves, and get serious about supporting Saskatchewan farmers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I note and I would hope that the public notes very carefully, the premise of this question. The premise of this question is that I should stand up for the farmers of Saskatchewan, which I believe I have been, equally with the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party and the farm groups. And I think that is a taken and noted fact.

But he says it this way — like the Premier of Ontario. And what the Premier of Ontario is saying in standing up for his farmers is that if he doesn't get what he wants, he, Ontario, is going to pull out of agricultural programs.

Now are you telling us that the Saskatchewan Party says that our government's position should be to pull out of Saskatchewan programs — the very programs he urged us to join? That may be your position . . . Saskatchewan Party's. It is not ours. We are standing with our farmers and our coalition, fighting for a billion dollars and fighting for family farms.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1400)

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate the Premier is expending his energy pointing his finger at the opposition, the party that's been working the hardest in Saskatchewan for our farmers.

Time to come clean and admit that you've been too busy cozying up to the Prime Minister in lining up your next corporate appointments to really get serious about Saskatchewan farmers.

Well, Mr. Premier, you aren't alone when it comes to avoiding the good fight. Why is it that while the rest of the country's Finance ministers are busy meeting in Ottawa yesterday and today, our Finance minister, our NDP Finance minister has decided to skip the trip in favour of tea and crumpets and Christmas parties here in Saskatchewan.

Wouldn't you agree about the most important thing our Finance minister could be doing this week is lobbying Paul Martin for a billion dollar trade equalization package.

Mr. Premier, will you get your ministers busy, and you yourself, and with them work full time to get the much needed farm financial assistance for our struggling farm families?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance was in this legislature for what I would have thought would have been a very useful and very good purpose sustained by the Leader of the Opposition, and that is to listen to the presentations of the farmers not only in terms of hearing their stories first-hand, but in fashioning whatever ideas could be fashioned with respect to the Saskatchewan solutions of which we advocate.

Moreover the deputy minister of Finance, who was at and is at the conference representing the Government of Saskatchewan, is talking about the issues which are before it: farm aid — the subject of the premier's letter; the question of the finance payments, transfer payments for health and education; and on an infrastructure. That Saskatchewan position has been communicated by letter and by the officials.

Now the Leader of the Opposition stands up in his seat and says that he's the only party working for Saskatchewan. Some working for Saskatchewan. March 6, 1995 from the *Rosetown Eagle*, quote, this is you: "There are benefits" . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I will, I will.

"There are benefits to losing the Crow benefit," Kindersley-Lloydminster MP Elwin Hermanson said.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Formation of Coalition Government

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, on September 29, 1999, in a private ceremony the Premier and the Liberal leader were joined in unholy matrimony. The Liberal leader promised to love, honour, and obey the Premier, forsaking all others including his own voters and his own platform.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader now admits that the Liberal platform was nothing more than political rhetoric — political rhetoric, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier paid big money for his new mail-order bride. He has no intention of letting him think for himself.

My question is for the Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, what credibility can you possibly have when you freely admit that the election platform was nothing more than political rhetoric?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, please. Hon. members, I hesitate to interrupt during this important part of our business session because it does take away from this valuable time. I would ask, please, to allow the questioner to be heard and the answerer to be heard as well, for everybody's benefit. I beg you to please . . .

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Minister of Education yesterday, in not only answering a question by one of the members of the opposition and in his what I would say was a very excellent maiden speech to the House, explained fully what the coalition relationship is.

And what the coalition relationship is — and I want to add my word to this and this is why I'm answering this question at this point — is an agreement of those areas where the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party can find common ground because we believe that, in a minority House, the people of Saskatchewan want stability in their government policies and they want progressive policies.

They don't want the Conservative policies of an old era and a gone-by era. They don't want the 1980s returned. They don't want spend, spend, spend, and a huge deficit.

They want us to go ahead and deal with health; they want us to deal with education; they want us to deal with infrastructure; they want us to deal with farm families; and they want us to create jobs. And we are doing this from two separate parties, finding common ground in those areas to advance the cause of the coalition movement and the coalition government.

And what is so painful to the people opposite and that member and the Leader of the Opposition is that's it's working and they know it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, just because the Premier lets you keep your maiden name doesn't mean you're not married. The only difference is, instead of having a wedding ring, you have a nose ring and he's been leading you around by the nose ever since.

Mr. Minister, you promised to cut government travel, you promised to cut government advertising, and you promised to cut government hacks. And you've abandoned every one of those promises. After all, it was just political rhetoric anyway.

Mr. Minister, how on earth can we believe anything you say when you now admit that your entire election platform was a sham?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely incredible, this line of questioning. It's incredible. The budget for 1999 and 2000 is fixed and set and now is about four months, three months away from being completed.

We are now in the process, now in the process — with the Liberal leader now a member of the Treasury Board — we're in the process of setting forward a new budget for the year 2000-2001 which will embrace in that budget the platforms of the New Democratic Party and the platforms of the Liberal Party in the best interests of the province of Saskatchewan.

And one thing I can assure the hon. member opposite: whatever we agree to we will never ever agree to the dark days from whence you come. And you talk about marriages and names which are adopted, you can call yourselves whatever you are but the people of Saskatchewan know full well where you came from and who you really are.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, September 29, 1999, was a dark day for the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, let's make

one thing very, very clear. You were bought by the NDP; you've joined the NDP; you sit with the NDP; and you are an NDP.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — And now you're following the NDP's long-standing practice of breaking all campaign promises the minute you're elected.

Mr. Minister, yesterday our leader and our caucus introduced 30 Bills. Every one of them was based on the Saskatchewan Party election platform. That's why our leader got 99 per cent of the vote when he had a leadership review and we didn't have to bus in teenagers to save his hide.

Mr. Minister, for once in your life will you make one honest statement to the people of Saskatchewan? Will you admit that you have joined the NDP?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, this is a . . . this is a funny . . . this is a funny question. They didn't have to bus . . . they didn't have to bus in any delegates to the Saskatchewan Party convention. You know what? There was nobody who wanted to go to the Saskatchewan Party convention. That's why they didn't have to bus anybody in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — I had more . . . (inaudible) . . . people at an NDP meeting in the central east — your area — two weeks ago, more people than they had in the entire convention. No wonder the bus companies are begging for business from the Liberals and from the NDP, because we have people coming to our conventions.

Look. I say to the hon. member opposite, you judge this coalition by what we do. And what we will do is enact progressive laws for farmers and progressive programs for farm people and for business people and lower taxes.

And that we will do over all of the heckling and all of the yelling of those people opposite. And the people of Saskatchewan like this coalition, and what hurts you bitterly is that you know that it's true — you know that it's true.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education. The phony-baloney election platform of the Liberals included a promise to put every penny collected on fuel taxes into our highways, our streets, and our roads.

Now the minister is not only contradicting his own platform, he's contradicting the deputy minister of Highways. The deputy minister of Highways says there's going to be more money spent on highways. The NDP Minister of Education says, no there isn't. It's hard to say which one of the clowns over there is running the circus.

My question is for the Premier: who is actually running the

Department of Highways these days — the Minister of Highways or the new mail-order bride?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Boy, I tell you, this is a . . . I think it's supposed to pass off as humour, Mr. Speaker. So being somewhat of a gentleman, I have to smile at that, but I think she needs a better speech writer.

You know, Mr. Speaker, what I find very interesting, I have a clipping here dated September 22 . . . very hard to hear me speak, but I'll try in any event, Mr. Speaker. I have a clipping here dated September 22, 1999 in *The Watson Witness* where the report is that the hon. member wins the election. The hon. member asked a question. And here's what the newspaper report says, quote . . . I'll read it all:

Draude hopes the new Legislative Assembly will see the different parties working together. She said voters are tired of all the bickering that goes on in the legislature and hopes this election will lead to better co-operation between all parties (better co-operation between all parties). People want us to get on with governing and stop playing this childish game of name-calling.

Those are your words. Take them to heart; take them to heart. The people want you to take them to heart.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Education Policy

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier also has a bit of a credibility problem. During the leaders' debate he said that the Liberal leader can't run his own caucus, let alone the government. During the election campaign he called the Liberal platform an operating manual on how to make government stupider. He also said the Liberals have no plan for K to 12 education.

So what does the Premier do? He makes the Liberal leader Minister of Education. Talk about making government stupider.

Mr. Premier, you called the Liberal leader incompetent. You said he has no plan for K to 12 education. How on earth do you justify making him the Education minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I know that the coalition government is working, and working well. And I tell you why I know it's working well. Apart from the first two questions or three questions from the Leader of the so-called Saskatchewan Party, just remember this, Mr. Speaker, and I ask the public to remember this, every other question has been dealing with this question of the coalition.

In the light of the farm crisis, in the light of issues dealing with the taxation, in the light of the question of what we can do to improve our education system, in the light of a highways program which needs obvious repair, in the light of a whole number of provincial and national issues which need to be

addressed, and these men and women get up, and this is the level of the opposition that they provide to the people of Saskatchewan.

You know something? I hope you use the balance of your question period asking these questions because it will prove something else that I said during the leader's debate. And that is that this Saskatchewan Party is no more, no less, than the old Tory Party reincarnated with absolutely no new ideas and no solutions for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I have to admit it is unfair . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I have to admit it's unfair to say that the Liberal leader knows nothing about K to 12 students. After all, he knows how to get them on a bus and ship them to Saskatoon to save his leadership.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Premier, the fact is Saskatchewan people do not support your decision to buy the Liberal caucus and to form a coalition government. Today we are releasing a poll showing that. And if I were you, I would listen to our polls.

The majority of Saskatchewan people oppose the decision to form a coalition government. A majority of Saskatchewan people think overturning the election results . . .

An Hon. Member: — Was wrong.

Mr. McMorris: — Was wrong. That's right. And a majority of Saskatchewan people think the Liberal MLAs got bought off.

Mr. Premier, that's what Saskatchewan people think of the deal to buy off the Liberal members and that includes a lot of people that also voted Liberal and NDP. Mr. Premier, when and why can't you admit the deal was wrong?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1415)

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I think all members will appreciate that these days I am a little bit wary of any poll from any source and will continue to do so for quite some time and particularly wary about that.

What the people of Saskatchewan want is a stable government — one that works, one that is inclusive and listens to people. And I think this legislature has gotten off on a very good start in this regard with respect to the farm crisis. Some of the ideas of the Saskatchewan Party which are good, we want to incorporate.

But I find it very strange and I find it very, very telling, Mr. Speaker, that not only will they not let me answer the questions because of their constant heckling — that's fair enough, I've been around this House long enough, and I've had hecklers who

are a heck of a lot better than those people — but what's interesting about this is not one defence of their platform, not one positive idea, not one attempt to try to put aside victory, nothing whatsoever at all.

They say they tabled the Bills. Nothing new about those Bills; they're the same old Bills that the Tories had in the 1980s and the Sask Party had before the last election. Far out and far right. That's all that opposition is. Far out and far right. Nothing new.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Formation of the Coalition Government

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, even your coalition partners, they don't seem too sure about this deal that you have created.

I have a copy of the November 21 Battleford *Telegraph* which quotes the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs speaking to the North Battleford Chamber of Commerce. The minister said, joining forces with the NDP was "the worst possible alternative except for the rest." The worst possible alternative, Mr. Premier. What a ringing endorsement.

My question is to the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs. Mr. Minister, the people of North Battleford voted against the NDP. Two weeks later you joined the NDP. Why did you betray the people who voted for you?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from the Battlefords, North Battleford, can give an answer if there's a . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order, please. Order. We continue to cut into this valuable time by the interruptions, and I hesitate to interrupt so please allow the questions to be heard and the answers to be heard as well, please.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the hon. member opposite again and I want to report again to the people of Saskatchewan: not one word about their five-year freeze on health care. We know why. Not one question about their five-year freeze on education. We know why. Not one word about farm families except for the two opening questions that the Leader of the Opposition. Not one whatsoever.

The release of some phoney poll or whatever documentations they have. Their belief is that they have nothing constructive to ask about or to advocate. Can you believe the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan having a coalition agreement written and a coalition government operating with a Speech from the Throne which every objective observer says has more detail than ever, and that's the best they can do at day 4 of the legislature? That's the best they can do? Are there no legitimate questions of this government they can ask?

Mr. Speaker, these people are like the old Bourbons — they learn nothing and they know nothing and they represent absolutely nothing with respect to new policy. None whatsoever.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Next question.

Mr. Wiberg: — Mr. Speaker, obviously the Premier needs to find someone who can get a little better understanding of the Saskatchewan Party election platform, although he tried his best certainly to get someone to interpret it for him in the Throne Speech. It was just a little bit off yet, but with a little effort, he should be able to do very well.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is the member for North Battleford got bought. The Premier waved a cabinet salary at him. It was like waving a Pokémon card in front of an eight-year-old-child.

Mr. Speaker, the minister went on to tell the chamber that he will use his position on the CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) Board to influence where government-owned businesses should locate. I think you know where I think would be an awfully good place, he said.

Mr. Premier, your minister is flat out admitting he intends to use his position in cabinet to curry favour for North Battleford, at the expense of Swift Current, Estevan, Weyburn, and every other place.

The Speaker: — Order, order, order please. The member has been quite lengthy in his preamble. Would you go directly to the question please?

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, do you allow your ministers to use their cabinet position to give their riding an unfair advantage in getting government projects?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the question's been . . . You know, Mr. Speaker, if this opposition has its way, they do not want debate at all. That's really it. They talk about democracy and they talk about respect for democracy, and since this question period has started, they have been the most obstreperous, noisiest opposition that this House has probably seen in many years. Don't lecture me about democracy.

I do want to say this, Mr. Speaker. I say this on behalf of the government — the coalition government — of every minister and every MLA. Our job is to provide the best that we can — we make mistakes to be sure — in policy and in programs for every constituency in this province, whether it's on this side of the House or that side of the House. And that includes the minister from North Battleford. It includes you as the MLA from that particular district that you represent. It includes everybody in this House.

We are, so long as we're government, determined to do the very best for the people of Saskatchewan in a progressive, humane, compassionate way. A lot more than what you people have promised the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, and following up on comments which were made in the question period, I believe, by the member for Saskatchewan Rivers, I would ask you to review the record.

Because as I heard the member, he was casting . . . he was using language that in my view was not appropriate to this Assembly. In fact if I remember correctly, he said, in referring to the member for North Battleford, that the member was “bought” or something of that nature. If so, that, in my view, is outside of the language and is a serious reflection on the character of the member for North Battleford.

So, Mr. Speaker, in short I would ask you to review the record and make a ruling on that point of order. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I take the point of the Deputy Government House Leader and I will review the records and report back to the House.

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before orders of the day, I'd rise to ask leave of the Assembly to move a motion to establish a special committee on tobacco control.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Special Committee on Tobacco Control

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, before I move the motion, I'd like to make a few remarks.

Mr. Speaker, tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of disease and premature death in Canada. Smoking kills 1,600 Saskatchewan people every year. It kills more people than AIDS, illegal drugs, suicides, murder, and traffic accidents combined.

What is particularly troubling is the impact on our young people. Half of all smokers in Saskatchewan begin to use tobacco by the age 13. Most are smoking daily before they are 18 years old.

Mr. Speaker, this Assembly must provide leadership in protecting the well-being of young people throughout Saskatchewan. To demonstrate that leadership we must take steps to prevent our young people from starting to smoke. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I'll be moving that this Assembly appoint a special all-party legislative committee on tobacco control. This committee would have broad authority to examine the impact of tobacco use, especially on children and teens; and to look at ways to prevent and reduce tobacco use; and to protect citizens from the dangers of second-hand smoke.

Mr. Speaker, I feel very strongly about protecting the health and well-being of Saskatchewan people, particularly our children and teens. Saskatchewan people have told us they want us to take action to protect our young people from the dangers of tobacco.

As members of this Assembly we need to work together on this vital issue. We need to speak with a single voice and we need to involve and include the people of Saskatchewan in these important decisions.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce the following motion:

That the members Kowalsky, Higgins, Wartman, Addley, Eagles, Bjornerud, and Bakken be constituted a Special Committee on Tobacco Control and that the said special committee be authorized to consider and report in the spring of the year 2000 on matters related to:

The impact of tobacco use in Saskatchewan, especially children and youth; the need for, and content of, provincial tobacco control legislation protecting children and youth; strategies to protect the public from the health risks of second-hand smoke including considerations of smoke free public place designations and jurisdictional authority related to tobacco use bylaws; effective and appropriate strategies related to enforcement, pricing, education and public awareness as they contribute to prevention or reduction of tobacco use especially by children and youth in Saskatchewan.

And that the said special committee have the authority to sit during the intersessional period and during the legislative session except when the Assembly is sitting; that the committee have the power to send for persons, papers, and records; to examine witnesses under oath; to receive representations from interested parties and individuals; to engage such advisers and assistants as are required for the purposes of the inquiry; and to hold meetings away from the seat of government in order that the fullest representations may be received without unduly inconveniencing those desiring to be heard.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move, and seconded by the Member from Melfort-Tisdale, the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as the seconder of the motion to voice our support for this initiative by the Associate Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, everyone in this province, and certainly in this Assembly, knows that the issue surrounding tobacco and its use, particularly among our young people, is a very serious issue indeed.

Mr. Speaker, it is our intent to co-operate fully as participants in this committee, and we trust that as the committee does its work across this province, that people will come forward and freely give their opinions and their concerns about the issue. There certainly are people that have many concerns about how enforcement and how heavy-handed potentially enforcement may happen.

We have to understand that many people are indeed addicted to the use of tobacco and that this committee's work has to be done in a very thorough and compassionate way.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this motion and look forward to the report of the committee in the spring of the next year.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Addley, and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. Hermanson.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a pleasure to again stand in this Assembly and to represent the constituency of Moosomin and to speak on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to begin just by raising a few points about some of the debate that took place today in the Assembly and some of the comments the Premier is making and the recognition. And, Mr. Speaker, I think what we saw in the Assembly today was another attempt by the Premier to try and have the people of Saskatchewan believe he is something more than he actually presents himself to be on many occasions, and to try and present that caucus as being the nicest most pleasant group of individuals.

(1430)

But I remember, and I don't want to hold this against the new members. I do know there are a number of members sitting on the front benches that I happened to observe when they were in opposition side of the Assembly. And, Mr. Speaker, there aren't enough words to describe the actions of those members.

However that is a debate that took place a number of years ago and we'll leave that in the past. And I would like to see the Premier begin to look ahead to the future because the people of Saskatchewan are looking for some leadership into the future — into the year 2000 which is just a few days away rather than belabouring the facts of — of the early 1990s or the '80s or the '70s and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, what we were looking for — what the people of Saskatchewan were looking for in the Throne Speech was a Throne Speech that had a vision for tomorrow — for the year 2000 and beyond, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would have to suggest to you the only vision that we saw in the Throne Speech that was presented the other day by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor was the vision the Saskatchewan Party presented to the people of Saskatchewan in the past election of September that . . . and the results that were seen on September 16.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at this Throne Speech and we examined the Throne Speech very carefully. Unfortunately, while the Throne Speech seems to give a lot of credence to the Saskatchewan Party platform, the fact is, I think a lot of the

Throne Speech was more or less a lot of platitudes to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, having been in this Assembly for a number of years, I certainly want to thank the constituents of Moosomin for their support. Mr. Speaker, you can appreciate the fact that being elected through difficult times as to be elected in good times. And one thing that I can say, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that I have been elected by individuals in the constituency of Moosomin who have placed some trust and some faith in my abilities to represent them, and to speak on their behalf, and represent the issues that are very important to them.

Issues such as highway maintenance and repair and construction in our constituency. Issues such as health care. Issues that relate directly to individuals and the crisis we are seeing now in the area of agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I don't doubt that there isn't a member in this Assembly who has not been contacted by one or two of their constituents, or many of their constituents, in regard to the situation in agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, we are just a week or so away from what would be considered the most joyous day of the year, Christmas Day. But some of the conversations I've had in the last few days haven't had a lot of joy in the expressions that have been given. Family members have been calling me and they have been calling my colleagues—and I am certain they have been calling government members as well — in regard to the difficult situations that they are facing on the family farms.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's not just the family farm; its business, men and women and individuals in our small communities who are facing the same affects as a result of the difficult agricultural economy we face today.

Mr. Speaker what they were looking to this Assembly for at this time, what the people were looking forward to from this Premier and from this government was some direction that would not only give them some hope, that would give them a reason to have joy and gladness, and to express love and understanding at this time of year.

And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I feel as an individual I talked to this morning, that they have been left out in the cold. And that there may not be the joy that they would love to share at this Christmas season that they normally would.

However, Mr. Speaker we also have to acknowledge the resiliency of the Prairie farmer and people that have grown up on the Prairies and their ability to work through the difficult and the hard times.

Mr. Speaker, as the member for Moosomin, I will continue to work with my colleagues to put forward ideas and to put forward issues that we would hope the Premier and his colleagues would listen to very carefully. Issues that we believe would create some resolve to the agricultural crisis, but also help build the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as individuals in this Assembly, there isn't any one of us that have taken this position of responsibility on our

shoulders lightly. There isn't any one of us that have just come here for the sake of saying we've been elected and had the privilege of being elected an MLA.

Every person that put their name forward to seek the nomination and eventually run in the provincial election did so because they had a burning desire to work on behalf of individuals, because they had a belief that they could offer something to represent the issues and the concerns of their constituency, and to go beyond the constituency to work with their colleagues to build a better province.

And one would have to ask, when we look at the Speech from the Throne, have we really achieved that? Certainly there are a number of ideas that have been put forward and everything on the surface, Mr. Speaker, looks good; and that's all fine and well.

But I guess the judgment will take place in the next months and maybe even years. As the Speech from the Throne indicates, the only reason for the coalition at this time was to guarantee the Premier a term of government that would be a full term of four years rather than possibly a minority situation of eighteen months to two years.

This Speech from the Throne is basically saying to people this is what we hope to achieve. And I think as I talked to individuals in my constituency, on election night and shortly after when the results rolled in and we were in a minority government position, there wasn't one person — not one person — who didn't say to me, well it isn't quite what we wanted, but it might be a pretty good government that we have to work with. A minority situation. It might be the first time in a long time that we've been able to hold the government truly accountable for their actions.

And interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, as well I was asked about my opinion. And I had indicated to a number of individuals that the Premier had been around for a long time. And I had a vision of him offering some cabinet positions — not really believing that he would — but I had a vision that he would. And that we indeed would not have a minority situation, but we would have a coalition government that, for all intents and purposes, would be an NDP government.

You can imagine my consternation when about three days later the Leader of the Liberal Party said he would never, never sell his soul, never sell his soul to form a coalition . . . be part of a coalition government. He was going to represent his constituents and work with a minority government in a minority position to bring the best possible government of the province of Saskatchewan. And I can remember, Mr. Speaker, being on coffee row and the local editor of the paper saying well, what do you think now. And I said . . . the comment around the table, the comment I made was, well it's not over; she ain't over till it's over.

Sure enough, two days later, what happened? We have a coalition government. Three days later at the coffee table, you know what people are saying? This is no more a coalition. It is an NDP government. It is Roy Romanow — pardon me, Mr. Speaker — the Premier at his best, the Premier at his best, negotiating and forming and basically guaranteeing himself

another mandate.

Now he's trying to tell us, as he did today, that he has been given the mandate to govern . . . to provide good government for four years — for a four-year term.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan did not vote for the NDP government majority we now have in front of us. The people of Saskatchewan voted for change. Sixty percent, over 60 per cent of the population of this province voted for change. They didn't vote for a coalition. They didn't vote for the Leader of the Liberal Party to sell his soul. They voted for change. They voted for something new and something exciting.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the Leader of the Liberal Party and I think back to the days of the election days and I think to all the promises the Liberal Party was making, and certainly when you went on knocking on the doors and, I'm sure, maybe my colleagues found the same thing, people were asking, well how in the world is the Liberal Party going to keep all its commitments. It's just promising the world.

Well we now know why. And I quote from a recent article in the Leader-Post:

A Liberal campaign promise to save millions by cutting government public relations hacks was just political rhetoric, Liberal leader Jim Melenchuk now says.

Liberal rhetoric. Mr. Speaker, people believed that then and they still believe it today, and the papers confirm exactly what they believe.

Mr. Speaker, as the representative for the Moosomin constituency, I will hold this government responsible and the Minister of Health responsible for the commitment to the town of Moosomin regarding a new hospital.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, how the . . . just prior to calling the election, all of a sudden . . . The people of Moosomin have been working for a number of years for a new health facility in their community and it just seems to be sliding them by. But just before the election was called, Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Minister of Health announced there would be a new hospital.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as the MLA for the constituency, I'm working with the people in that community to guarantee that the minister and this Premier are true to their word and that that facility will proceed, rather than being told no, unfortunately, we don't have enough money to do it anymore because of the election results.

Mr. Speaker, we'll also be holding this government accountable for the highway situation in our corner of the province. My colleague and I, the member from Cannington, certainly do have some highways that need major, major repairs, and we will be raising . . . bringing those areas forward. I realize that the colleagues on this side of the Assembly have the same problem with their highways, but mine are first.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, when we look at this, look at the debate here, and I would have to say that for each

and every one that are sitting in this Assembly today, and having been elected a number of years ago, as elected members we certainly do give up a lot. And people don't . . . many people don't really realize that but I am fortunate to have many individuals in my constituency who recognize the things that we've given up: missed my son's hockey games or missed the ball games, or missed the volleyball games.

When I was elected to this Assembly, I had boys age 9 and 7 and a daughter age 2. Mr. Speaker, today two of them are away from home and my daughter is in grade 10. That's, that is almost a scary thought — to realize that when you realize how quickly families grow up and the fact that I've missed some of the most important years.

But I don't apologize to this Assembly and I don't apologize to my constituents for the fact that there were times that I said, no, I'm sorry, I can't make that event. My daughter's got an important program that I need to go to. I've missed too many, or my sons.

And you know what I find very interesting, Mr. Speaker,? Is my constituents have commended me for that — that I have placed my family ahead of the reasons I've representing them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that's why my constituents have continued to show faith in my abilities. Not only in the fact that I have the pleasure of standing in this, in this Assembly to debate the issues, not only for the fact that I've been out at numerous constituency events and functions and represented now our party as well as the province of Saskatchewan, but for the fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I've made a commitments to my constituents. I've made a commitment to represent them to the best of my ability, putting in mind I've made a commitment to my faith, my family and my constituents — in that order.

And I appreciate the fact that many constituents have commended, commended me for that, for that commitment and indeed following that order. I would suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we all followed an order somewhat similar, the constituents that we represent would certainly acknowledge it and would show it.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in view of the fact that there are so many other individuals who want to take place and indeed speak to the Throne Speech in front of us, I will take my place.

But before I take my place, seeing as we are at that time of the year, I'm going to extend to each and every one of the legislative members here this afternoon and certainly to my constituents who may be watching, a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like my colleagues before me, I rise to offer my support for the Speech from the Throne. I'm happy and honoured to be here and proud to be elected as the representative from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take a few moments to tell you about my constituency and my constituents, but before I do I want to congratulate you . . . oh, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sorry. I'd like to congratulate you on your election to office of Deputy Speaker. I have every confidence that you'll carry out your duties in a firm manner.

Mr. Speaker, I've been a political enthusiast since a very young age. And I'm awed and almost overwhelmed by the honour that my constituents have bestowed upon me. I want to assure them that I will work hard to deserve the trust that they have placed in me to represent their interests in this government, in this the twenty-fourth legislature of the province of Saskatchewan.

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines democracy as, government by the whole people of a country, especially through the representatives whom they elect. And democratic is defined as, in accordance with the principle of equal rights for all. The word itself comes from the 4th century Greek philosopher, Democritus, which literally translates as the people's choice.

This learned scholar was called wisdom during his lifetime and has often been referred to as the laughing philosopher because he laughed at people's vanity and the folly of our human ways.

But history shows that Democritus was no mere scoffer, and historians agree that in many ways he is ranked with Plato and Aristotle in terms of genius and common sense.

For it was Democritus who differed from his colleagues in the sense that he carried his theory into practical philosophy and concluded near the end of his life that happiness consisted of having an even temperament and good friends.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1445)

Ms. Jones: —Mr. Deputy Speaker, I came into this House blessed with the friendship of many of my colleagues, and I look forward to the making of many more friendships as we go about the people's business.

I also congratulate new and returning members on their election. Saskatoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a diverse and challenging constituency to represent. We have a population which spans both the economic and the age spectrums.

We have two districts, if you will, separated by the mighty South Saskatchewan river which highlights some of the accomplishments of the Meewasin Valley Authority. Contained within its boundaries are the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College and the marvel that is Innovation Place.

My constituents live in historic City Park, North Park, along the river on beautiful Spadina Crescent, in River Heights, Lawson Heights, Forest Grove, and Silver Springs. Some of the areas are very old and some, like Silver Springs, are still developing and growing very quickly.

I was especially pleased, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to hear in the Speech from the Throne this government's continuing commitment to elementary and high schools. The good

constituents of Silver Springs have been lobbying hard for both the separate and a public school in Silver Springs and they deserve to have them. The area is growing rapidly and it is estimated there are close to a thousand elementary school students in the area who are required to be bussed or driven to other schools outside of the community.

Community is a key word for our government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Although we recognize that we live in a global village, the Saskatchewan way is to build upon the community values of caring and sharing and looking out for each other.

And a school, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the heart of a community. If your neighbour's children are bussed to a different school, they do not know each other and they don't play together and they do not have a sense of community. If your community association has to compete for gym time or rink time with a neighbouring association, the community's children are deprived of more than a close proximity to a classroom.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in spite of many competing priorities for public funds, I'm proud that this government is working hard to provide financial support for school construction and renovation projects across this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: —Saskatoon Meewasin, according to the report of the chief electoral officer, boasts the largest number of electors of any constituency in the province at 13,587 eligible voters. It increased in numbers by over 1,800 electors since 1995. When I sought the support of my constituents, I told them that for me there are a half dozen bottom line positions which I believe are non-negotiable. These are: we must continue to lead the nation in educating our young people, we must play an active role in job creation, we must care for the sick and the elderly among us, we must feed hungry children, we must legislate a safe and fair workplace for all workers, and we must protect our environment for future generations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — I've already spoken about this government's commitment to elementary and high schools. And in addition, I'm proud of the consultative process announced in the Throne Speech to determine the best way to implement our initiative on making post-secondary education more accessible.

The Throne Speech described the new economic strategy, Partnership for Prosperity, that will allow us to continue building jobs and growth. The Speech from the Throne outlined the government's plan to protect and improve health care.

Tax fairness for families, family leave, working with the federal government to make the national children's agenda a reality, increased funds for child care, and support for the enhancement of the community schools program will help to meet the needs of hungry children and their families.

Plans to improve and update The Labour Standards Act will further address a fair workplace for workers. And the announced forest renewal program is an important environmental initiative.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I grew up on the family farm and members of my family are still active in farming today. On Tuesday we supported the gold ribbon campaign and participated in an historic agriculture debate on the floor of this Chamber. As stated in the Speech from the Throne, the issues are both complex and daunting, but we will take steps to address these issues.

I began my remarks today with a reference to the philosopher Democritus and I referred earlier to the importance of friendships. It seems fitting to close with the thoughts of Aristotle who wrote these words about friends:

Without friends, no one would choose to live . . . (though) he had all other goods.

Friends help the young to keep from error. Friends aid older persons by ministering to their needs and supplementing the activities that are failing from weakness. Especially do those in office need friends, for they stimulate noble actions. And with friends, those officials are more able to both think and to act.

To think and to act, my friends. To remember our priorities. To help each other adjust to change. These are the things we must keep in mind as we move forward to implement the course of action outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

As the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow has stated, we were instructed to do good things. And we will, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will. I'm happy to support the motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour for me to rise in this twenty-fourth legislature, and to have the opportunity to be part of this legislative process and to be able to contribute to this debate. It's a very unique occasion when a newly elected member first takes his turn to express his thoughts, his concerns, his position, as well those of his constituents.

There are many possible reasons that entice people to launch them into public service. I'm a proud resident of this province. I was born and raised here, educated in its fine institutions. Except for a few years during my working career, I've lived for the most part in Saskatchewan, and this is where I want to remain.

I wish I could say the same about the opportunities, however, that face my children, and face maybe my grandchildren. I want them to remember they're the fifth generation in this province. I want them to be able to look forward to the opportunity, to prosperity right here, and to be able to build and contribute in their time to the fabric and the promise of this great province, a province that has such great potential.

Unfortunately, this may not be possible. For the present and maybe the future, the future citizens of Saskatchewan, opportunity seems elsewhere. Prosperity is only a promise, and personal and professional achievement only a dream that will come true only outside of our borders. It does not have to be that way because we are the ones right here in this legislature

that can make the difference.

We can and we must make those changes and set the course that will attract and keep not only these young people, but our educated and talented people as well, our trained and committed workforce. But as well, our retired and our seniors who have lived here as well, they've invested in this province and they wish to stay. Unfortunately this has not always been the case.

And living in the Lloydminster constituency, this has been seen in spades.

One of the root causes of the lack of confidence is lack of opportunity. The resulting exodus from Saskatchewan has undoubtedly been the high tax burden placed on our people. One of the highest burdens in any province. And as our people continue to leave the province and our tax base shrinks, each of us is expected to carry even a greater burden.

The old way of doing things in this province has not worked. We must dedicate ourselves to becoming competitive, not only with our neighbouring provinces, but with states as well. And we have to encourage and attract both our young and old to remain here. And by building a confidence in the business sector that Saskatchewan can be, and is, a good place to be.

We must take every opportunity to reduce our tax disincentives and change them into incentives for all of our people as well as for the businesses.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, living in Lloydminster, of course where the border splits the city, it allows one a very unique opportunity to witness first-hand where most people prefer to live and where most businesses prefer to locate, and to realize what the main reason is for that difference. And in a word, that difference is taxes.

No matter what good things this government says about the economy and the opportunities in Saskatchewan, people and businesses alike have figured out for themselves what seems best for them. And in Lloydminster and the area, the Alberta side of the border is the beneficiary, and there is no doubt about that.

Lloydminster is one of the most vibrant and commercially active communities in either Saskatchewan or Alberta. And it's more than just being dependent on the oil industry, although that is a key sector. Lloydminster is a manufacturing . . . it's a fabrication centre, has one of the biggest oilseed crushing facilities in Canada. It has a farming and a cattle ranching base second to none.

Businesses and major chains and franchises are being attracted. And especially encouraging, young people and families are being attracted and want to make our region their home. But, funny thing, all of this activity and the development is on the west side of the border.

For every housing start on the Saskatchewan side, there is 50 or more on the Alberta side, and this is in the same city. Every one of the new business franchises and the big box store chains are built and are being built on the Alberta side of the border. Even the new city hall office, it's being relocated from the

Saskatchewan side to the Alberta side. Virtually the only new business opened on the Saskatchewan side of downtown this year is my constituency office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, Lloydminster, Saskatchewan is stagnant. As economic development critic, this to me is alarming. The number one factor in this huge difference in development and location is, as I said, the tax difference.

All statements by this government about the fallacy of the Alberta advantage is demonstrated wrong. There is a difference. People make their decisions on that difference and the results are dramatic and indisputable. It has become so apparent, that if Saskatchewan wants economic development, our taxes and incentives, they must be reasonable, they must be competitive and available. And now that shouldn't be hard to understand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me give you another example of the urgency of the needed changes. One of the agencies of the Saskatchewan government's Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training called New Horizons — in fact I believe now it's called Career and Employment Services — will be moving out of a facility leased by the Saskatchewan government, and in conjunction with a similar Alberta agency, and the Canada Employment Centre, is relocating to a different facility in the city, but on the Alberta side of the border. Apparently even the Saskatchewan government recognizes the Alberta advantage.

Because of the uniqueness of this Lloydminster border situation, there are many constituency issues that have been brought to my attention that require either special consideration or unique solutions.

First however I must commend the several administrative entities in the city as they deal with this dual jurisdiction. For example, the city council and its administration; the public school boards; the separate school boards; the Lloydminster hospital board; the Lloydminster housing authority.

In a very difficult administrative environment of two very often conflicting provincial sets of directives and policies, these local boards and councils have made the system work effectively, often with local initiatives and compromise, but always with local support and confidence. Their tasks are considerably more complicated compared to any other community using a single administrative policy and procedures. But in fact it is working, and quite often in spite of this provincial government.

(1500)

Lloydminster too often is considered by this government as only being a Saskatchewan portion of the city and policies and directives are often issued accordingly. Lloydminster is not just a Saskatchewan city of about 6 to 8,000 people. It's a vibrant city of over 20 to 25,000 people.

But it is one community and it is the centre of a very large trading area that draws nearly a hundred thousand people. Accordingly the services needed to be provided, especially in

education and in health services, must be focused on Lloydminster as a single community and not just a divided centre.

But because of this misconception there are several issues that remain outstanding. For instance, the introduction of a single city 911 emergency service, a service that is usually considered necessary for communities of 20 to 25,000 people, especially communities with a very strong industrial base. This service has yet to be instituted as this government doesn't seem to want to take any of the leadership in this particular issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this dual environment another example of outstanding issues is the unequal provincial funding for any of the facilities and services in the city. Examples such as an unequal funding for the educational capital budgets for Saskatchewan's minimal funding to Lakeland College, which is in fact one of the few regional degree-granting colleges in communities this size, or the unequal funding and requirements placed on the community's hospital and health services. All of these unique issues require unique solutions.

In other parts of the constituency it must be noted that even while the oil industry is such a predominant industry, there are exceptional infrastructure and logistics problems created as a result. Now I'm sure, similar to other oil-producing regions, there are significant provincial royalties generated and extracted from these areas but with few of the extra costs that are created in the municipalities that should be considered for supplemental provincial assistance.

For example, while the municipal roads have been categorized and assigned provincial funds paid in relation to a normal or an average usage by a few hundred farm trucks, in these oil field roads they are presently carrying several thousand heavy-haul trucking units with the associated extra upkeep costs of these roads picked up almost entirely by the municipal taxpayers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if royalties are created for the benefit of the entire province, surely these direct infrastructure costs generated to achieve these royalties must be shared in some part by the province, and not penalizing just a few of the local taxpayers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wakefield: — In summary, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must again reiterate. There are often exceptional problems and costs directed to communities like those of the Lloydminster constituency which have had provincial promotion and, in fact, provincial interest. For example, the bi-provincial upgrader, the border cogeneration electrical plant. But these have had very little consideration from the province for encountering these exceptional costs that they in fact have been creating.

But more fundamental, however, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the necessary and the urgency to address the issue of tax reduction. This is critical and it's time sensitive. Without making the province more competitive and creating the confidence and the incentive to attract and retain people and businesses, we will continue to be relegated to the position of underachiever, to the position of the province with the worst job creation record, and condemned to a continuation of stagnation in the economy and

a population with a shrinking tax base.

But we can make a difference and we must make those changes to our tax structure immediately. We don't have the luxury of delay. Too many of my constituents have already moved away permanently. Time is not on our side. Immediate action is required. The potential of our province and the opportunity is just too great.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people issue this simple challenge: does this government have the courage and the leadership to carry us into the very possible and the very attainable economic development and prosperity of the new millennium.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on the 1999 Throne Speech at this twenty-fourth sitting of the legislature.

I would like to start, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by thanking the people from Cumberland constituency, thank them for giving me the confidence to represent them for the fourth time.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my wife Linda. We celebrated our 25th anniversary this year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — And also to my daughters Koonu and Danis. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very important to mention the family, because being a dad and a politician or being a mom and a politician are very difficult. And going in on the fourth term, you'll recognize the developmental years of your children. And I know that when they're 22 and 23, at some point when I was first elected, they were 9 and 10 years old. So I've seen them evolve and develop as I tried to balance my time, you know, both as a parent and as a political person.

I would also like to make a commentary on the fact of history as we're entering the new millennium and we're looking to the future, that as regards to political experience, I was lucky to have been part of a government in opposition and being with Premier Blakeney in opposition during that time, and watching the developments in terms of procedures of the House and also making statements at that time in opposition speeches about northern Saskatchewan.

And I also was very pleased therefore when we were elected in '91, and in '92 I became part of a cabinet. I was thankful to the Premier to allow me to part of the cabinet, to be part of a team with cabinet ministers as well as the MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly).

And it's also very important historically to look at the fact that we're entering a coalition. I know from historical readings that it's a fairly regular occurrence in some of the countries in Europe. And it's interesting that, at this point in history, that I would become part of a coalition government.

I know that . . . when I look at the different members putting the

values of co-operation . . . constructive co-operation will be very important as we deal with the issues of the people of Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Last time when I was in opposition of course, the member says I was doing my job with great rigor. And I would take that with some humour because as I look to the future, I knew that when I was in government or when I was in opposition, I did my fair share of what you would call political jousting. And as I look to the future, I know that amidst the talk that we do have, there is concrete action that needs to be done on a daily basis.

As I looked at the Throne Speech, I looked at the general parameters of the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I saw the essence of Saskatchewan at this time in history. I looked at the economic side of the question and I saw the issues of rural development and farm being addressed. And I saw that in there was also commitments in regards to education and health, which are critical issues at each of the regional levels from the North, rural, and urban level.

I wanted to start out by dealing with the farm issue. Some people may be surprised as to why I would be dealing with the farm issue from northern Saskatchewan. When I was growing up, we had, in Cumberland, a farm that was run by the government which the community later on took over.

But when I was growing up in school, we also had a 4-H club. There was a guy by the name of Don Neilson that used to come to Cumberland House and come to the school and we would have this 4-H program. So we were part in parcel of that which was taking place, you know, throughout the province as a whole. My dad was also one of the first Co-op store managers for the Co-op store in Cumberland, and he was very instrumental in the co-op movement in Cumberland.

And when I looked back on those days, I was going to a conference one time with the co-ops, and one of the co-op members showed me a picture. He says are you related to the Goulets in Cumberland House. I said yes. I was quite surprised when he showed me a picture of my dad going to a co-op school in 1951.

And later on I did go to a co-op school myself, you know, and had a discussion not only with the issues of the North, but with rural development in my younger days. As I looked at the issue of that development and as I listened to the speakers the other day, it struck me with not only the great degree of sensitivity the issue was, the great deal of emotion, but also the concrete nature of providing solutions for the future.

The spirit of the people was there as I listened to the speakers. Although there was such a tremendous intensity of the situation that we were in, the spirit of the people from the farm would not be broken.

And that was the essence that I felt as I listened not only to the concrete ideas for future development at the local level, provincial and national and international level, but I felt that that spirit was there which was important as it carries us to the next century.

And I thought that when I looked at the issue and how I understood the issue, well indeed we focused in on the

international arena, recognizing the inequities and inequalities that could occur at the international arena and the importance of democratizing the WTO (World Trade Organization) over the long run, and also dealing with the UN (United Nations) on other international issues, that indeed there was still an inequity in terms of policy from Europe, United States, and us here in Canada.

And that idea came out very clearly as I listened to the speeches. And I knew that, you know, close to 60 per cent of the help that was in Europe and close to 40 per cent in the United States and whereas our government in Canada at 7 per cent was a very important fact, you know, that came out. And I think that as we're looking to the future we recognize therefore that the action had to be both at the, at the different levels . . . at the local, regional, provincial, national, and international level. And it was a very important information to behold as we were dealing with the issue.

(1515)

I also wanted to make some commentary by one particular statement that was made in regard to the speeches yesterday, the other day. And it was a comment by the MP (Member of Parliament) Mr. Kerpan.

I appreciated Mr. Kerpan's comments as they related to the agriculture issue. And I appreciated his comments in regards to the support on pressuring the federal government. But I also appreciated his comments here and there in terms of suggestions at the provincial level.

But one of the things that I did notice his commentary was in relation to Aboriginal people. In that one I had a very, very mixed response. I notice that in his comments he was talking about the Nisga'a Agreement and he was talking to his deputy whip and his deputy whip had said that this was Saskatchewan's Nisga'a. And I received that with very mixed feelings, because as I was listening in my heart, that in that statement there was a feeling that while we had a tremendous united support for the farm and people from a rural area, that there wasn't to be in the case of Aboriginal people on the Nisga'a.

And I thought to me that it was a very mixed message, to compare the Nisga'a situation to the crisis at the farm gate. I thought it was unfortunate; sometimes as politicians, you know, we speak and sometimes we make some comments, and I certainly hope that his comments did not mean that the 1,000 Indian and Metis farmers in this province are not part of the united position, you know, for farming; that, indeed, Indian and Metis people are also farmers and they are also struck hard by the inequities at the international level.

So my simple point is this — that as we support the people in the farm area, we also have to support all people, including Aboriginal people, at the farm gate. That's to be the message I want to give in regards to his commentary.

Because for me as I looked at the history of growing up in Cumberland House, I was always quite aware of the politics of division. People being divided up — Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. And people being divided up — rural, urban,

northern.

I knew from experience that was wrong. I knew that the politics and policies of inclusion have to be the essence of a strategy to counter the politics of division. One doesn't have to go to see in Africa the Hutu and the Tutsi. Or to see the peace that is being finally made in Ireland between the Irish and the English. Or to see what has happened with the Serbs and the Croat people. We know that in essence on our feelings, the politics of hate and the politics of division are wrong.

As I was growing up, I knew that when I went to my first co-op school, I knew from personal experience that people have the same hurts, whether they're in their rural area, the northern area, or the urban area. And that when we're in a united position, it's a united position of all peoples as well. I was taught that because of the experiences that I had.

I knew when our veterans went to war for this country, they didn't have to go because they were exempt from conscription. They did not have to go, but they laid their lives for this country. Many of them died, never to return home like many of their fellow soldiers from this province and country.

When they came back they said they would like to see what happened in the development of Europe. They were very happy to say, they said I was able to walk into a restaurant with a non-Aboriginal person. They said that was a new experience for me; before that, I could not walk into the same restaurants. And they said it was a step in the right direction to see this idea of inclusion and respect.

We know from history that the respect that they got in fighting and dying for this country was there during the war, and when they come back they had to fight every step of the way to gain further respect. Today there is still possibilities of a legal case wherein many of the veterans did not receive the same land grants — treaty Indian people as well as Metis people — as other people did receive. There was still unfinished business in that sense and yet most of them have now pretty well all left the earth.

It is that sense that I am talking about on the politics of inclusion of . . . but how important it is. When I looked at the issue of the Nisga'a and I looked at the personal experience in Saskatchewan, I'm very proud to say that the level of conflict in Saskatchewan did not reach the level that we saw in New Brunswick and B.C. I am proud of that fact here in this province.

But I also know this: I look at the history and I've read the history. If you read Chester Martin, "*Dominion Lands*" Policy, 1938, after the resources transfer agreement of 1930, when you look at the facts there you will know why the importance of inclusion is embedded with the concept of justice and fairness. When you look at the facts you will see that just after 1930, the railroads, when we're talking about the pressures and inequities of the policies from the federal government on the Crow rate and the railroads, aren't the lack of greater consideration for the farm community.

Land policies of the day were such that the railroads and the province received over 15 million acres of land. When you look

at the Hudson's Bay Company alone, they received 7 million acres of land in western Canada, 3.4 million acres of land in Saskatchewan.

On the free homestead Act by 1930 there was 31 million acres of land; on the paid homestead Act there was another 6 million to make it 37 million acres of land.

It is interesting from an historical perspective that as we look at the history there was over 900,000 people in the province by that time, and that there's approximately 40,000 farms in those areas today. There is about 55 or 57,000 farmers out there today, and at that time there was 250,000 farmers.

And when you're looking at the policies, these policies were very progressive, positive policies for settlement and they were very positive also for the companies like the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) who got 6 million acres of land.

But what a lot of people did not know when we did the treaty land entitlement in the province, and I think the reason why a lot of Saskatchewan people supported it was this. Treaty Indian people in Saskatchewan received about 1.2 million acres of land by 1930. The treaties were signed in the most cases prior to the turn of the century. But there was 1.2 million acres of land, and new settlement provided for about 60,000 acres of land . . . I mean 60 million acres of land and 1.2 million for First Nations.

When we did the settlement and we started arguing and debating on TLE (treaty land entitlement), a lot of people started recognizing these facts and agreed that the settlement should be there.

And as we're moving forward into the future, the land base idea becomes important not only for all peoples, but also for Aboriginal peoples.

I wanted to put those facts out because many times those facts are not known by the public. And every time that I speak about them, I will find somebody who knows and somebody who doesn't know about that factual history. So when I talk about the politics of inclusion and policies of inclusion on land to include any of the Metis people, that is what I mean — the understanding of the history.

When I was debating here at some point, I told them, the people, one time when somebody asked me that question, I said, look we have land to drop bombs. The Primrose Air Weapons Range is one and a half million acres, the same size as a treaty land entitlement of the '76 formula. The '76 formula was less than the amount of land that we had for the bombing range.

I think also in Canada there's about five times more land in terms of protection for parks than Aboriginal First Nations on their land. And I think that's a very important aspect also to look at.

I wanted to also move in on the issues of education, excuse me, and health and economic development. On the education side, when I went to school we had about a handful of us going to university. Today I'm proud to report that we have over 2,000 Indian and Metis people going to university.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — On the Metis side as well, on the Dumont Technical Institute, I looked at the figures that were given to me for '98-99 and there was 709 students. Also being from the North, when there was just a handful of us as I mentioned, there are now over 2,000 people going to the Northlands College and university programs right from northern Saskatchewan. So we're seeing progress and change taking place.

(1530)

I was actually very proud of the fact that I was involved as well with NORTEP, northern teacher education program when it started as a developer back in '76. I've seen now over 200 teachers, you know, have graduated from that program.

We're looking at also the health development. When I was growing up and I went back to the North in the early '70s, most of the controls on the North were external and we started to see northern control develop much as we saw in the more longer term on the rural development side. But in the North we started to see a bit of a control coming in when the Blakeney government was there and we saw the controls moving in from the schools, to all the schools in the North. We saw the schools to the community college system being developed in the North.

We also saw municipalities and northern municipal council, and in the early '80s we had municipalities formed in the North. We're now seeing the development of a control in the health area, northern control in health. We know its going to be very strategically important because such issues as diabetes, which takes away your sight, a lot of the basic organs, or where you lose your feet and you can't walk. These types of issues are very important for our people as we try and solve not only the specific attack in regards to the illness question as it stands now but the long-term preventative approach and nutrition and activity.

As I looked at the question therefore of health, I move on into economic development and jobs. My grandfather, who is buried in P.A. (Prince Albert), on my dad's side, worked in the mining development and he hurt himself as he worked in the transporting the ore. Later on he got TB (tuberculosis) and he died in Prince Albert.

But as I looked at the development, very few of our people were involved in the early stage of development. During construction phases a few of us were there but then later on, on development phases most northern people weren't around.

What I would like to report now is this. From the early days of 5 per cent, half of the workforce on the mining sector today is Northerners. It's a combination of Aboriginal people, Metis and treaty Indians, as well as non-Aboriginal people. Out of that total number 86 per cent are Aboriginal people.

So what we're seeing is progress not only in regards to the job site at the labour development level, but also in regards to the apprenticeable trades on electricians, etc.

So we're seeing that development. Another thing we're seeing is the entrepreneurial side of development which was there in

the fur trade period, diminished later on. And we see now, on the mining development, we had about \$20 million worth of contracts in 1991. I'd like to report that last year, we had \$180 million worth of contracts for northern entrepreneurs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — It showed that northern businesses could compete at the world level because uranium development, the essence of uranium development is here in the province of Saskatchewan. It is a high-tech area, is a highly involved area. It shows that northern workers and northern businesses can be successful and be partners of the development in this province.

An Hon. Member: — And they all pay taxes too.

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — And my friend said, they all pay taxes as well.

Also, the question of wild rice. Some people on the agricultural side may be very interested to know this. Wild rice development started in Ontario and also in Manitoba and also in the Great Lakes area in the United States.

What I would like to report to you is this. Over the past two years, and I looked at the reports for this fall, Saskatchewan is now the producer of 80 per cent of the wild rice in Canada. Saskatchewan is now 80 per cent of production in Canada. And I think that speaks well in regards to the supports that have been there. The partnerships with government, the partners with each other in business over the years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — There is also a fisheries report that I will be dealing with earlier on this year, early into the new year, trying to do a balanced approach between angling and commercial fishing. We'll probably be looking at the policies and ideas and new ideas for development in that area.

The last one I'd like to report on economic development side is forestry. As I was growing up, my father was also a sawyer in the sawmill, as many of our people worked at the sawmills around Cumberland House.

And I'd like to report now that as we were . . . the early stage of development in the '50s, and it evolved into the more development in the '70s, it went up into a little bit of a stagnation and now it's time to pick up again.

What I would say in the forestry is that it was important not only to look at the training, the jobs, the ownership, and the management side, but it was important to take into consideration that on the business development side we are now combined a policy of balancing environment with economic development. Sustainable development is now part of the picture with the new legislation as well as the new policies of government.

What I would say there is that Northerners, as we enter the new century, when we saw self-determination in education, municipalities, and health in this province including the North, we are now seeing the revival of self-determination in economic

development. Particularly in the forestry sector, I would say this: we are now involved not only on the business development side but on the forest-management side.

On the east side we have the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation partnered with Ainsworth and moving forward on development in that area at Deschambault Lake and different phases into the future in that area. La Ronge Indian Band, Zelensky Brothers, partnering with a major company which they will be talking about later on in the future in the central area in and around La Ronge.

On the west side we have Metis people, five Metis communities coming together and they're now searching for a partner to do the development on the west side. And to me this is come full circle from training, jobs, management, ownership, and forestry management as a whole. We are now partners in that regard.

In conclusion, I would like to say this. There are people out there watching, some of them are in the hospital, and sometimes they tell me it is very important for you to say a few words in our language to explain to us what happens in the legislature. Sometimes as they're watching the TV they are very, very pleased when I tell them in our language what is happening in the House, so I will follow up some commentary, quick commentary in that regard.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the policies and politics of inclusion has got to be the mark of the new century. True unity has to occur from all peoples — Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. True unity has to occur from the rural area to the North to the urban areas.

It is my dream, as I look into the future, as I see my children growing up, that they'll be working hand in hand with the people from the farm, people from the trapline, and people from the city. And I think that will be a very important mark, Mr. Speaker, as we enter the next century.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel both privileged and humbled to speak in this legislature on behalf of the constituents of Estevan. I do not rise before you as a professional politician or as a person who possesses great oratorical skills; I stand before you as someone who cares deeply for mankind.

I represent a constituency of very proud but concerned people. They are concerned, Mr. Speaker, at the direction this province has taken. They are concerned about the erosion of democracy. They feel that no one is listening.

My constituents, whether they be farmers, labourers, or business people, are hard-working, proud people. They are, however, pessimistic, and they feel that there is no incentive to work as high taxes prevent them from making ends meet. The people of the Estevan constituency need concrete programs to restore their faith in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to tell you and the members of this Assembly about the constituency of Estevan.

We have vast grain fields that produce the highest quality grains in the world. We have the Estevan, Midale and Goodwater oil fields that are thriving with activity. We have one of the largest coal mining industries in Saskatchewan. Estevan has the Rafferty dam, which incidentally, Mr. Speaker, has very high levels of water in it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — We have the Boundary dam power station, the Shand power station, the Shand greenhouse which starts trees and ships them throughout the province. Estevan has a very modern hospital that was built in 1990-91 and opened in November 1991. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this government cannot take credit for that.

Our SARCAN operation employs numerous physically and mentally challenged people. Mr. Speaker, in addition to the exceptional labour opportunities in Estevan and area, we have prided ourselves on the fact that we promote artistic talents as well.

The Souris Valley theatre is an outdoor theatre that runs for a few weeks in the summer and brings in professional actors and actresses from all over the world, and even showcases local talent. This event is sponsored by Estevan Tourism and plays to packed houses. Mr. Speaker, this event is so well renowned that people from different parts of the world come to take in the talent.

Mr. Speaker, there are very many reasons why I got involved in politics. I was encouraged by my family and friends to help make a difference in this province. I would at this time like to thank my husband, Vic, who has always been there for me with moral support. And I would also like to thank my children, Terry and Trisha, and my daughter-in-law Marnell.

But, Mr. Speaker, there are also some little people who are so special in my life and they are my grandchildren, Beau, Brooke, Shelby and Bailee. Mr. Speaker, these young kids are the future of our province and I just hope that there's something left for them.

I was raised . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — I was raised in a large family and my mother and father still live in Estevan. I am so thankful for the moral values that they have instilled in me. My father is 82 years old, and every day during the election campaign he kept everyone in line on coffee row. My mother was recuperating from surgery, but she did her share of baking for the office, and stuffed envelopes, something I think we can all relate to, Mr. Speaker. But for all their hard work, prayers, and dedication, I thank them.

(1545)

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, constituents of Estevan are

very proud people. Farmers that are fourth and fifth generation on the family farm do not know if they'll be around in the spring. Low commodity prices, high freight rates, and astronomical input costs are making it virtually impossible to continue.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind this Assembly of the farmwives and children whom along with their husbands receive no pay for their work. Every want is met with this response — maybe next year.

Mr. Speaker, as we all witnessed in this Assembly earlier this week with farm delegations telling us their trying stories of the farm crisis, this devastation is leading to families literally falling apart, and even in extreme cases, suicide.

Mr. Speaker, over the past year I have attended a number of farm rallies and I've heard some heart-wrenching stories. Maybe this has had a greater impact on a person such as myself because I live with agriculture concerns every day.

You see, Mr. Speaker, I am a farmer. I know what it's like to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to spray the crop before the wind gets up. I know what it is like to haul fuel to the combine at midnight. I know that a small electronic sensor for the tractor, which incidentally, Mr. Speaker, would fit in the palm of my hand, costs over \$300. I know what rub bars for the combine cost, and I also know how little we are getting for our product.

I realize that some of this is due to international grain wars. But I feel this provincial government must shoulder much of the responsibilities since they are the ones that can lower the education portion of land taxes, they can reduce income tax and fuel tax. They are the ones who are now promising some sort of long-term safety net, but they are also the ones who tore up GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) in the first place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Mr. Speaker, GRIP was bankable; this Throne Speech is not. It has taken eight years of socialism and havoc in rural Saskatchewan for this government to realize that there is a crisis out there.

Mr. Speaker, farming is the only industry where you buy everything retail, sell everything wholesale, and pay the freight both ways.

Mr. Speaker, it has also taken eight years and a near-death experience for this government to listen to people regarding tax reduction, health care, and education.

As I said before, Mr. Speaker, I am not a professional politician, nor do I ever want to be accused of being one. I am not here to take Regina's message to Estevan; I am here to bring my constituents' concerns to Regina. And fortunately, Mr. Speaker, I sit on this side of the House with a party that allows its members free votes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — I take very seriously the trust that has been bestowed upon me by my constituents, and in return I trust

these people.

Mr. Speaker, what I am very skeptical about is trusting a government who repeatedly states in the Throne Speech that the people told us to do this and the people told us to do that. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, what 60 per cent of the people of this province told this administration was that they did not want them to continue to govern.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — But with their arrogance and manipulation that 60 per cent of the people voted against, they brokered a backroom deal for majority status.

They promised tax relief over time, better health care over time, better education over time, better agricultural policies over time, and better highways — although we hope this is happening, because that wasn't even mentioned in the Throne Speech.

What this says to me, Mr. Speaker, is that their plan has not worked. And while I am talking about what was left out of the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, this government forgot to mention our most important link to the history of Saskatchewan — our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to belabour this much longer because just like the past eight years of the NDP government, the Throne Speech has been a complete disappointment. I would, however, like to finish with a statement that I have held very near and dear to my heart for a long time, and I dedicate this to all the farmers of the province.

I believe that a man's greatest possession is his dignity and that no calling bestows this more abundantly than farming. I believe that hard work and honest sweat are the building blocks of a person's character. I believe that farming, despite its hardships and disappointments, is the most honest and honourable way a man can spend his days on earth.

I believe my children are learning values that will last a lifetime and can be learned in no other way. I believe that many of the best things in life are free — the splendour of a sunrise, the rapture of wide open spaces, the exhilarating sight of your land greening each spring.

I believe true happiness comes from watching your crops ripen in the field, your children grow tall in the sun, your whole family feels the pride that springs from their shared experience.

I believe when a man grows old and sums up his day, he should be able to stand tall and feel pride in the life he has lived. I believe in farming because this makes it all possible.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to state that I support the amendment put forth by the member from Rosetown-Biggar. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, thank you. It's indeed an honour to stand in this legislature. It is every time, but I'm always reminded right after an election when I hear speeches

from new members about how tremendously capable Saskatchewan people are, Mr. Speaker. The very finest people in this province tend to work their way up through election and ultimately wind up sitting in this very legislature. And I say that quite sincerely about members on both sides of the legislature.

There are times, of course, when, you know, they're the enemy and we're their enemy. But the motivation of politicians to do well for their communities, for their families, for their province, I think is something that is virtually universal amongst all of us that are so honoured by our constituents to spend some time here in this great Legislative Assembly.

So my first words are words of welcome to all new members and welcome back to those of us that have served one or more terms before this term. I hope that your time here is well-spent and relatively productive for the people of the province of Saskatchewan. So I wish all new members and all members the best of luck.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — My second words, Mr. Speaker, are of course congratulations to you in your election as Speaker of this Legislative Assembly. It is, I know, an honour that you take very seriously and one that I have always had the utmost confidence that you will fulfill that role very well. So congratulations to you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — I go back a little bit to all of us and what it is to be a politician. Because, Mr. Speaker, I think too often in the last — pick your number of years, whether it be 10, 15, 20 years — I think it's too often in Saskatchewan we have said no, I'm not a professional politician. I mean what are we, what are we really saying? We're saying that we want to get elected to be a politician to help our constituents, but no I'm not a politician.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I take exactly the opposite view to that. I think there is no more honourable calling. There are callings as honourable, but there is no more honourable calling in the entire world than that of being elected by your peers, your community, and enjoying the support of your family and the majority of your community — the majority of your electorate — and be charged with the responsibility of standing up and speaking out on behalf of those very same constituents. There is no higher calling.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I've heard tremendous speeches on both sides of the House. My colleague from Regina Qu'Appelle has dared to dream. We've seen people talking about their wishes for the future. Some of the wishes for the future even tie in to the Speech from the Throne, and that's kind of a happy coincidence in some instances. But this being a wide-ranging topic, it's a good opportunity for members to say what they want and for members to describe their constituencies and their own personal aspirations.

I must confess, Mr. Speaker, that I thought as I was preparing for this speech, I should put a little bit of a historical perspective

to, to what the government is about, what things are like in Saskatchewan. This is — I know it's hard to believe when you see such a young guy here — this is my fourth term. I was, I was the kid when I was first elected.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you. Let's . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, now I'm the grandpa of the place. I don't think I'm entirely washed up yet or at least I hope not. I can tell you all that the first term I was in this House, Mr. Speaker, was an opposition term and it was relatively easy, relatively fun, relatively challenging because I was busy learning the operation of the legislature. And of course we were concerned. We had some different visions of how the province should be run than they . . . than government had.

The second term, Mr. Speaker, was in government, and the second term was the first term in government. And what it was about was simply, simply salvaging our province and our ability to control our future. There was a . . . urgent would be hugely understating the need to get our finances in control. Saskatchewan was right at the brink of economic disaster and an inability to even meet government payroll cheques.

But we got through that. A million people worked together and, to the credit of all of the good people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we got through that.

And then we got into the third term, which of course led up to the September election. And in the third term, I saw a corner being turned in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, in the third term, by the end of that third term, we had completed five in a row balanced surplus budgets. Admittedly, they were skinny surplus budgets, but they were surplus budgets.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, the debt of the province had been reduced by more than \$3.4 billion, resulting in savings of well over \$200 million a year in interest charges on the debt alone.

So that enabled us in the second term of government, Mr. Speaker, to introduce things like the children's action plan which Saskatchewan pioneered. It's now a national program but started right here in Saskatchewan. And it was the Saskatchewan government that developed it and ponied up the money.

We also were able to take the first few modest steps at improving some services. We were putting some more money into highways and certainly more money into health and education. But we were also, Mr. Speaker, reducing taxes, the first tentative steps of reducing taxes. The PST (provincial sales tax) had gone from 9 to 7, and then two years later to 6 per cent — where it is today. The income tax rate had dropped through that term.

And that leads us now to this term. This September election leads us to those of us gathered in this great Chamber right now. And it leads us, Mr. Speaker, to the brand new day, the Speech from the Throne. It leads us to a coalition government that is working as diligently as any administration I have ever seen, as diligently as any — any — government I have ever seen. To

listen carefully to what it is people have to say, then to formulate a workable plan that is affordable, sustainable, and the best plan that we can possibly have for Saskatchewan people. It is wonderful, from my perspective, to see the approach that is being taken now — the very careful, listening approach.

And I know that I'll have a few words, Mr. Speaker, about the task that my seatmate, the member for Moose Jaw North, has taken on in his post as Minister of Post-Secondary Education and the challenge that he has taken on to find the means to fulfill what I'll describe as the coalition dream — the coalition government's dream.

(1600)

There was two, two parties, Mr. Speaker. In the last election there were two parties that spoke to post-secondary education; that spoke to accessibility of post-secondary education — the Democrats and Liberals. Two parties.

The opposition spoke to education. Their answer was, of course, lower taxes and students will be able to afford post-secondary education. Well it might work, might work. But I want to point just one thing out to all opposition members. When you're in the business of talking about lowering income taxes so that your constituents presumably can afford to go to post-secondary education or can afford to do whatever it is they want, the little fact that I want you to think about and ask about and perhaps see — well over 75 per cent of the income tax paid to the province of Saskatchewan comes from the cities.

So an income tax reduction, an income tax reduction, an income . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm reminded, Mr. Speaker, of a former colleague of mine in the House that said, you know, if in the dark of night if you throw a rock and you hear a yip, you know you've hit a dog. I think we struck a sore spot.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Anyway, I simply leave that and invite all members on both sides of the legislature to check that out and see what it is, what the real situation is with respect to income tax.

And that's certainly not an argument that we should not lower income tax. Indeed, indeed, in the Throne Speech card that we are handing out as far and wide as we possibly can, Mr. Speaker, the very, very first thing says: helping families make ends meet. We will work together. And it says, and I quote:

We will reduce personal income tax to help families make ends meet and to build a fairer, simpler tax system.

Mr. Speaker, that's the commitment in the Speech from the Throne. That's a commitment that we have made. I hear some heckles saying when. Well, isn't it interesting. The process for all members for the province of Saskatchewan has always been you have a Throne Speech debate, and in March generally, some time in March. Occasionally it's been as late as June . . . May or June. 1986, the Grant Devine Conservatives — was it May or was it June when they tabled the budget? It was very late, May or June. June.

Outside of that little piece of history, the budget has come down in March, possibly as late as early April. That's when we find out the details of income tax reductions and so on.

But I want to do this. I want to congratulate both the Premier and the Minister of Finance for putting together the group to go out and ask the people of Saskatchewan, to hold public meetings, to seek input, to find out what it is that people of this great province think is needed to form a fairer income tax system, a fairer tax system in all. So my congratulations to the Premier and the Minister of Finance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — The debate on the taxes, of course, is going to turn, Mr. Speaker. It is going to turn into a debate of — is the report acceptable in this area, in that area? Do we like what they have to say about the provincial sales tax? Do we like what they have to say about the reduction of income tax? Do we like what they have to recommend in that report about funnelling some rebate, a tax credit, of \$15 million to the lowest income people.

Those were all absolutely fair questions. Those are questions that quite frankly we're going to debate on the government caucus side, and we'll have that debate before the resolution or action comes to the floor of the Legislative Assembly. But more importantly, I'm hoping that the discussion takes place right across the province of Saskatchewan. Because this is how this consultation process is how we can bring out the very finest as we're about to make changes. And this proposal is a fundamental shift in the tax system of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in the brand new day Speech from the Throne, we talk about a bright future for our young people. We will act, it says, to make post-secondary education more accessible for families. Mr. Speaker, I've mentioned that my seatmate, the Minister responsible for Post-Secondary Education, is in a broad consultation process right now, is in fact starting to put together and meld the proposal of the coalition partners where the New Democrat side are part of the coalition.

We're saying we will pay first-year tuition fees at post-secondary institutions such as community colleges, SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), and university; and the Liberal proposal which was a thousand dollars for each student in each of the first two years of post-secondary education.

Obviously the two promises, if I can describe it that way, or election platforms, don't exactly fit. You can't do both. We could do one or the other. Or maybe there's a third way to skin the cat, so to speak.

And this is part of a challenge that my seatmate has, and I want to wish him all of the very best. And I know that he is going to be up to the challenge. And after the consultation process and the consideration process of discussions that go on, I'm very confident that this spring we will have a proposal ready and brought before the Legislative Assembly. I very much look forward to that.

Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne we talked about fighting for rural families, and I quote:

We will speak with one voice to urge our federal government to meet its responsibility to our farm families by negotiating aggressively at world trade talks for elimination of export subsidies and by providing an immediate trade equalization payment.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's the commitment that the government brings to this operation. Indeed we disrupted, if I . . . or took a break in the Throne Speech debate to invite representatives of farm organizations to this very Legislative Chamber — this very Chamber.

And why did we use this Chamber, Mr. Speaker? Part of it is the symbolism; part of it is the vast area where people could come and watch; part of it is the media services that are right here. Part of it, frankly, is we've got the ability to televise what is said.

We went for the whole day and late into the night, got nearly 50 pages of verbatim text from people who made, and groups who made presentations here. Mr. Speaker, speak with one voice — we will speak with one voice, standing up for the farm families of Saskatchewan.

I just want to get a little bit . . . I guess maybe it's viewed as partisan; I view it as more standing up for Saskatchewan farmers and standing up for my relatives on the farm and standing up in memory of my farm background, the farm that I grew up on.

Mr. Speaker, we're committed to standing up and speaking with one voice. The problem, as I see it, is we were very instrumental in organizing an on-to-Ottawa trek. We flew a planeload of people, including some members of the opposition party, to Ottawa.

The idea was to speak with one voice — one voice — saying we need this trade equalization payment; we've been unfairly treated. To say our farmers, Saskatchewan farmers, can compete with any farmer anywhere in the world, if the rules are the same. The rules are not the same, so we need a trade equalization payment from the federal government. There's no magic to it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we got there. The federal government threw a little bit of a curve ball and said, no, here's some new information that you should have had. Well the plane hadn't even landed in Regina and the Leader of the Opposition was saying, the Saskatchewan government somehow withheld information; the Saskatchewan government somehow misled.

One voice, Mr. Speaker — boy, that really builds credibility when you've got one unified voice like that. I just wish that somebody could explain to me how those actions will help get one extra penny into the pockets of farmers in your constituencies. Tell me how those actions get one more penny.

And then, Mr. Speaker, we go on. We see question period, and question period is an opportunity for questions to be asked of government, and this is all fine and good. But it seems to me that there are issues beyond the credibility of numbers in agriculture. We should be using this legislature at this time for what it was called for, and that was to speak with a unified

voice.

Go to Ottawa, continue the pressure from here for this week and next week and whatever other length of time this legislature sits. But use that. That's what we were charged with doing. That's what our constituents expect and think this session is about. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm urging that we do that.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed in the Throne Speech to developing better health care. We're committing to strengthen the regional hospitals, to strengthen home care and emergency services. We're going to be reducing key waiting times.

And, Mr. Speaker, I suspect that all of us in the recent election, all of us had some constituents that expressed some concern about the waiting time for a friend or a relative or just an acquaintance to get into surgery. And I know we all heard some of those stories. We heard them, and we're committed to working and doing what we can to reduce the waiting times.

I wish it could just happen at the snap of a finger. I wish we could just somehow get the Minister of Finance to pony up another \$50 million and the problem would be solved. Of course it's not that simple; it never is. But we're committed to reducing those waiting times, and I'm very much looking forward to that happening.

Part of it is we're committed to train and recruit and hire more front-line health workers; take some of the pressure off. We had a strike in June that was disruptive, to put it mildly.

From my perspective, Mr. Speaker, I know that there are nurses in my constituency that were — I don't know whether it's parliamentarian of me to say — but they were spitting mad at me, at the government, during the last election. I also had nurses that were very, very understanding during the last election. And I mean, you can figure out how the votes went in, depending on which sort of camp those nurses were in.

But we did make a commitment, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to hire more front-line workers. And that's a commitment that we've started to follow through on and one that we will continue to do so.

(1615)

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the opposition has raised, and probably legitimately raised, is that of, I'll describe it as a PURC (Public Utilities Review Commission), to review the Crown corporations' rates. We had a PURC in the Devine government, and the opposition has been calling for a more open accountability, if I can describe it that way, a process that is more transparent on the setting of rates in our Crown corporations.

We are committing to move to a yet more accountable, yet more open method of addressing that. So, Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased about that.

There are other things that we are committed to doing in this Speech from the Throne. But, Mr. Speaker, seeing the time and knowing that there are other MLAs that would like to address this Speech from the Throne, I will be taking my place. But

before I do, let me again congratulate all members on their election to this legislature. I look forward to working with each of you in the coming term.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I will not be supporting the amendment but I will be supporting the motion.

I thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce to you, and then through you to all the members of the House, a constituent of mine, a well-known and well-respected farmer from Davidson, a man who was a great help in my election campaign, Mr. Clark Puckett.

Now that I'm a new member and this is my first week here, I'm going to be asked probably, what's it like. Well so far it's been like going to school. The bell rings, you come to your desk, it's full of papers, there's always lots of homework to do, and you're expected to know everything about anything. You can be called upon any time to answer a question. And like any school there's always a classroom full of kids that think they know everything.

But, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the constituents of Arm River, I would like to extend my congratulations to all the members of this twenty-fourth Assembly of the Saskatchewan legislature. It is my hope that everyone here realizes the faith that Saskatchewan residents have put in us for the cause of democracy and freedom. It is my firm belief that we can, working together, and the co-operation, attain for the people of Saskatchewan the level of honesty, commitment, and above all, action, needed to deal with the serious problems of today.

I must begin, Mr. Speaker, by saying how proud I am to represent the great constituency of Arm River. I sincerely want to thank all those who supported me in the recent election. I am indeed honoured to be here and will work hard for all the residents of Arm River to ensure that their concerns are swiftly addressed.

I would also like to thank all of the volunteers on my campaign team who worked very hard and supported me and indeed continue to support me here today. I thank you, to my constituency assistant, Donna Petit, for all her efforts in keeping my office in Davidson running smoothly.

I would also like to thank legislative staff and the Saskatchewan Party caucus staff for all their help which is greatly appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, the Arm River constituency has always been a place as diverse as any in the province, both in the land and in its people. From its prairie agriculture base to industry, and lake resorts; and from farmers, to ranchers, business people, working people, Arm River continues to be a model of rural Saskatchewan.

As well, my constituency is one of the most visible examples of rural life with No. 11 running the whole length of it, from Regina Beach in the south, runs past Dundurn to the north. My constituency also stretches to Riverhurst in the west and

Imperial in the east.

The residents of Arm River, Mr. Speaker, are people proud of their past, concerned about the present, and quite worried about the future. No two groups represent this concern more than our prairie grain producers and our First Nations people. Farmers are facing economic collapse and the loss of their entire way of life. First Nations, notably the Dakota/Sioux of Whitecap reserve in Arm River, feel increasingly isolated and ignored by big government who are more worried about votes than the future of Native people.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents feel that as this province moves into the 21st century, they're being left behind with commodity prices more in tune to the beginning of the 20th century rather than the 21st. Residents feel that both the provincial and federal governments have abandoned them and left them with trade war prices versus ever high inputs with no end in sight. My constituents are increasingly in fear of losing their whole way of life as no government solutions seem forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this government has no direction to lead us into the 21st century and I believe that this is indeed the worst crisis in agriculture since the 1930s.

It is with serious concerns that I enter this great Assembly for the first time. My roots in politics began as a youth at our farm just outside of Bladworth. My father always said, Mr. Speaker, that politics was always a hot item in Saskatchewan. We spent much time discussing the various philosophies and issues in our province and in our country.

Later on I served for many years on the Bladworth town council and still belong to the local Elks club which has been honoured to host the Corby Cup at the Davidson complex in January, year 2000.

Seems as though public service is in my destiny. With the founding of our party in 1997, my interest in provincial politics grew intensely. I believe this party has a great group of MLAs, an excellent group of MLAs, an excellent leader.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brkich: — With this, Saskatchewan will have a brighter future. And I want to help the people in Arm River and indeed the province realize that vision.

Mr. Speaker, my reasons for running are much the same, I suppose, as many of my colleagues here around me. As a farmer and resident of the small town of Bladworth, I'm deeply disturbed about what I see happening. My hometown was once a thriving community not so many years ago but has since been in decline, losing its school and its businesses including the closure of every grain elevator.

Under this present government, if things continue on, I will see where Bladworth disappears right off the map. All that remains, Mr. Speaker, right now is a post office and the shadow of the population that once was. The same can be said in the country as my friends and neighbours slowly but steadily leave the land.

But all is far from lost. Communities such as Kenaston and

Davidson, as well as others, have continued to miss the economic downturn and to be vibrant and inspired by a spirit of inventiveness and determination. Kenaston for example, demonstrated how a small idea could develop into a community saving enterprise.

The result, Mr. Speaker, is the Kenaston Super Draft has since supported a new town hall, improvements to the local rink, a new roof for the swimming pool. In Davidson, where my office is located, two new concrete elevators and a potash bagging plant help to keep Davidson on the map.

Another example, Mr. Speaker, would be Outlook. Through irrigation they have developed crops such as peas, beans, and potatoes on their own. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we all know too well what happened when SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company) tried to control the potato industry and what followed afterwards.

It would be wishful thinking on my part to want everything the way it was even 20 or 30 years ago. We must think in real terms for immediate future. As we head into the 21st century, a review of the last century becomes necessary. As Saskatchewan became a province, we see the pioneering era at its height. Along rail lines, towns are springing up and communities were born. A rapid influx of people from all over the world and the United States were populating a new land.

Saskatchewan went on to grow and prosper despite two world wars and the Great Depression. And through it all, governments of all political persuasion have managed to keep us in the game if you will. That is until the last decade.

Mr. Speaker, as I talked to people throughout Arm River during the election campaign, the opinions I heard ranged from cautious optimism to outright apathy. Through it all, the message was that this government wasn't listening and that they believed the government was abandoning rural Saskatchewan.

They told me that while they realized that debate in this Assembly is a cornerstone of democracy, at the same time action is also needed as a fruit of the debate process.

Simply put, this government has talked about agriculture for years; they've talked about health care for years; they've talked about high taxes for years; and we've been bouncing over crumbling highways for far too many years.

The people of Arm River are not asking this government for miracles, but they do expect action, Mr. Speaker. These residents only want to make a decent living in the rural Saskatchewan they love. They look forward, hoping for brighter future in the 21st century. It is my hope that the beautiful constituency of Arm River remains a vibrant and integral part of this great province.

My predecessors, Mr. Harvey McLane and, particularly, Mr. Gerald Muirhead, established a solid reputation as men of the people by listening and acting on the concerns of their constituents. I will work very hard to maintain that level of service to all Arm River residents. My office door will always be open and I will always be just a phone call away.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the new millennium offers great promise for Saskatchewan and that I will put forth the maximum effort in weeks, months, and years ahead to realize a bright future for this province. To begin this brighter future, we must address the many vital concerns in Saskatchewan today. By taking action on vital issues, I believe that the key, our destiny, can be forged.

And finally, one last thought. I firmly believe, as my colleagues around me also believe, that public service begins at the grassroots level and at the grassroots level it should stay.

I would also like to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It is with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to state that I support the amendment put forth by my colleague from Rosetown-Biggar. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — It is with great pleasure I rise to speak and give my maiden speech in this Assembly. I'd prepared a speech but I've decided to set it aside and instead speak from the heart.

I'd like first to start by thanking you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulating you on your election as Speaker. And don't mistake it, you were elected. You were elected because of your reputation and conduct in this Assembly and your 25 years that you gave to the people of this country serving as a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Make no doubt.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — As I heard the rhetoric from the members across, that you were not elected, I didn't see any of them put forward their name to stand opposed to you. This leaves you with the complete faith, in my mind, of all members of this Assembly. Because if they had chosen, they could have ran against you.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank the Premier and the Leader of the Liberal Party for having the courage to go beyond their own differences, their own biases, and having the courage to form a coalition government. It gave us an opportunity for a brand new day.

Leadership, Mr. Speaker, requires courage. And the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Premier of this province were able to step outside the normal boundaries, their biases, their feelings, and the past to create a brand new day.

I'd also like to thank all my colleagues from both parties in the coalition for working together to find common ground to establish a platform that we were able to put forward in a very dynamic Throne Speech.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank the constituents of Regina Dewdney because, Mr. Speaker, they've elected me not once but twice in the past year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1630)

Mr. Yates: — I want to talk a little bit about the constituency of

Regina Dewdney because many of you, particularly in the opposition, may not have much reference or background about the constituency that I represent.

I'd like to tell you it is a constituency of middle-class, working people. It has men and women who labour all day in industries around and in Regina. It has seniors who have put their time in working in this community. And yes, it even has a large number of farmers. Within two blocks of my own home, I can count no less than a dozen farmers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have heard references that the agricultural crisis is only a rural issue. I want to correct that myth because as I speak with my constituents, they all understand the devastation, the hurt, and the pain being experienced in rural Saskatchewan. Many of us who live in the city are only a generation or two off the farm. We all have relatives, friends, colleagues, who farm for a living and are experiencing that pain.

We understand the problems faced by subsidies created by national treasuries of some of the largest countries and most profitable countries in the world. It's not fathomable that the province of Saskatchewan can compete with the treasuries of the United States or the major countries of the European Union. It isn't. Only our national government can compete for the massive treasuries of the United States and the European Union.

So, Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest challenges that we face as a government is to make the federal government take responsibility for the issue of trade subsidies and in fact provide the \$1 billion to the farmers of Saskatchewan that they need.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank four people who are very, very close to me: my wife, Sheila; my daughter, Catherine; my son, Christopher; and my daughter, Deanna. As you all know public life takes a great deal from each and every one of us. Fortunately I have the support of my family, as I hope all my colleagues on both sides of the House have the continued support of theirs.

An Hon. Member: — I don't know how my wife votes.

Mr. Yates: — Well as the hon. member from North Battleford has indicated, he's not sure how his wife votes. That may be the case in many households.

But, Mr. Speaker, as a member of this Assembly, I have great pride in the tradition of this Assembly. The decisions made in this Chamber over the past 70 or 80 years have shaped each and every one of our lives. It's made a difference in how we think, it's made a difference in how our children think, and it will continue to make a difference how our grandchildren think.

Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to a number of things I've heard in debate about the Throne Speech, and I want to start by perhaps having a fairly harsh criticism of some of my colleagues. Because as I heard opposite, I am supposed to be told which way to vote, that I don't have the ability to have a free vote. Well whoever is responsible to tell me which way to vote — you didn't do your job — and as the deputy whip, I

want you to come see me because we have to have a discussion. Or it may be my colleagues give me the benefit of having enough common sense to vote the right way, to vote with my conscience, and vote what's best for my constituents in Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Speaker, I also have a number of concerns about comments made about the Throne Speech. So I took a few minutes to talk to the Minister of Health, to consult with her, and it may be that we will have to amend an Act of this legislature. Because, Mr. Speaker, I have found that hearing aids are not fully covered under the health plan, and I think we may have to make an amendment so that hearing aids are mandatory for all members of the opposition, because none of them heard the Throne Speech.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, there were many great things in this Throne Speech. It was a new day. A day of optimism and hope. As was indicated in the Throne Speech, this is a new voyage, with new eyes, and a new vision. A fundamentally different government. A coalition, a coalition government that's going to take this province into the 21st century.

I want to talk about a number of things we did promise or did bring forward in the Throne Speech. We made some very, very important announcements in the Throne Speech. And the detail — as it always is — will be followed up in a series of Bills put forward before this House and in the budget in the spring. That's been the common practice for many, many years.

But first I'd like to touch on a number of the issues that we talked about and brought forward in the Throne Speech. They're issues that we heard on each and every doorstep in our constituencies, and I know I heard them in my constituency. And our first commitment was to help families make ends meet.

As I walked and knocked on doors in my constituency, I heard people telling me about the difficulties they've been having in the last number of years paying their bills, getting ahead month to month. And we're not insensitive to that.

I heard seniors talk about how it was difficult to maintain and remain in their homes. We brought those issues back. We talked about it. And we have put forward a commitment to reduce personal income tax in the Throne Speech. And you'll hear the details of that commitment in the budget.

Mr. Speaker, we also know the benefit of economic development, and each of us looks at that from a slightly different perspective, but we each know and understand that benefit. And we have, in the Throne Speech, introduced what will become a very clear piece of legislation for people in the future — some of the most aggressive economic development strategies that this province has ever seen.

Those things are good for the people of Saskatchewan. But I also want to point out that with the exception of the agricultural sector, this province has done very well over the last number of years. Our economic growth has continued to build on previous growth and we have, through many of the last number of years, led this nation in economic growth.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — And I think that in itself, Mr. Speaker, that in itself is a major accomplishment. But I want us for just one second to think about what we would have been able to do had we not been handicapped with a noose around our neck when we became government in 1991.

There's no use finding blame, but the reality was we had extreme deficits and we had a long, established debt. We had built a debt of nearly \$15 billion dollars before we were able — an NDP government, mind you — was able to turn the corner and start dealing with that debt.

Today we pay more than \$700 million annually on just the interest on that debt. If we didn't have that debt, what could we do for the people of this province?

It is not that every member on this side of the House — and I'm sure every member on the opposite side of the House — does not want to help in every way possible deliver the programs the people of Saskatchewan want. If we weren't paying the \$2 million a day debt accumulated in the 1980s, we could do a great deal for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, my children will have to pay that debt off because that debt is going to be around for a long time. Eight to ten years of mismanagement can cost 30 to 40 years to pay back. And that's unfortunate.

We must ensure that we never again put ourselves in a situation where we mortgage our children's future, and perhaps in some cases, our grandchildren's future.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to talk about our commitment to young people. We want to create a province where there's a bright future for young people. And in fact we have created a province where young people have advantages over many areas of the country.

We will act to make post-secondary education more accessible to all students. There was a time when a grade 12 education prepared you to enter the workforce. Mr. Speaker, I would say to you today, as my children are preparing to enter that workforce, that a grade 12 no longer sets you up in a situation to be able to seek employment that will allow you to raise a family in this economy.

So we are going to act on that. And we haven't decided which of the platforms — New Democratic platform or the Liberal platform — we will actually implement or maybe some new amalgamation or idea. But we have a solid commitment to make post-secondary education more accessible.

Mr. Speaker, we have indicated in the Throne Speech, that we are going to assume, as finances permit, a greater share of the education tax and the education portion of spending for K to 12. And if we didn't have this debt today, we could probably assume it all. But unfortunately, we still have \$2 million debt a day.

I want again just touch for a second on rural families. Because there is no doubt in my mind that the greatest problem we face today is in rural Saskatchewan. The families living on farms in this province are in desperate situations in many cases. And we have made a commitment to work to help those families. Everyone in this Assembly — I mean everyone — knows that the solutions cannot be found within the confines of the provincial treasury. You know what money's available. We all do.

But we will do what we can. We will continue to push the federal government for \$1 billion, but we will also look to see what innovative things can be done within the province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk for a minute about health care. The NDP and CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) governments, the CCF under Tommy Douglas invented and brought in health care to this province. We've had the responsibility and subsequent NDP governments continue to build on the health care model.

We're making some very strong commitments in the area of health care. We will strengthen regional hospitals and emergency services, particularly in rural Saskatchewan. We've identified a need to increase emergency services in rural Saskatchewan outside of Regina and Saskatoon. We'll increase funding for home care. We'll make it more accessible for people.

We have a commitment to reduce key waiting times for surgeries within this province. And we will do that. It's not easy. There is no simple solutions. We can't get surgeons to go to every community by just snapping our fingers. We can't build new operating rooms overnight. We can't find staff to man them simply by wanting it done. It requires work. It requires time.

Mr. Speaker, we've also made a commitment to recruit, train, and hire more front-line health care workers. We need them. Nobody is denying that. We need more health care workers. We've made that commitment and we intend to live up to it.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are going to deal and simplify the governance issues in health care. Put more money that currently is going to administration and put every available dollar into front-line services.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1645)

Mr. Yates: — And perhaps our most important commitment for democracy is that we're going to make government more open and accountable.

I want to talk a little bit about the first time I came to this Assembly. I was 11 years old, in grade 6, and sat in the galleries and watched question period. And the one difference that strikes me and strikes to what I believe in is the fact that I did not see, when I came here as a young child, the banter, the interruptions, and the disrespect during question period. And that is something that as a child I remember.

And I saw today the students from an elementary school sit up in that gallery and watched their reaction as they watched question period. And quite frankly they were dismayed. And we expect, as children, our parents and our leaders to lead by example. And, Mr. Speaker, I hope that in the future we can be a better example for those children who come to us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about some of our other commitments around accountability. We are going to establish a permanent body to review utility rates in the Crown corporations, something that the members opposite have been asking for. And the members opposite have made a point of making that an issue as many years as I've followed the debate in the last few years. And we are going to do that, Mr. Speaker. We have heard, and are willing to take ideas that are good from all sources. A good idea is a good idea.

We are also going to implement a comprehensive program of government accountability with goals and accomplishments clearly, and benchmarks clearly, laid out in annual reports to the people of Saskatchewan so that people can judge for themselves the government's record on delivering services.

We are also going to clearly put clear accountable benchmarks on health care so the people of Saskatchewan can, in fact, judge the accomplishments of the government over this four years.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to talk about our commitment to Aboriginals and First Nations people. We are going to continue to work with First Nations people to make progress in the future so that Aboriginal people can feel that they are truly partners and involved within our society in this province. Aboriginal people for too long have looked inward from the outside. This province, if it wants to be inclusive, has to include all people as equals to move forward in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk for a minute about public safety. We made a commitment that we were going to hire an additional 200 police officers, and, if the members opposite follow the paper, they will know that the Minister of Justice has indicated we will live up to that commitment.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to do all these things in an environment of co-operation and openness. We heard loud and clear on the doorsteps in my constituency, and I'm sure in many of the constituencies around this province, that people no longer wanted us to yell at each other, criticize each other, heckle each other, but in fact wanted government to be open, work together to solve the problems that face this province.

And I think we have one good working example so far and I hope there are many more over the next four years. I wasn't in the room, but I think it probably took a great deal of effort on the parts of all three political parties to put a united front together on the issue of the agricultural crisis. It's not easy for people, who spend their time talking about their differences, to build a united position and an united front, to move forward on an issue. But my challenge to all of us is to not let one issue be the end of this resolve. Let's build and look for other issues that we can build a common ground on to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents sent me to this Assembly to represent their interests, as did every member in this House, and that is what my task will be over the next four years. And I will carry through with that task with a respect that I think every member in this House deserves.

Each and every member on both sides of this House came here wanting to represent their constituents to the best of their abilities. And, Mr. Speaker, I think we should allow each member the dignity to do that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the members opposite for the opportunity to make this speech without being interrupted or heckled. I understand that's a long-standing tradition, and I think that's an excellent tradition.

And I thank the members opposite and hope they continue in that tradition. One freebie, as people say, one shot — I would hope that type of rapport could continue on, but that will be determined by the members of this House.

Mr. Speaker, I would think that it's obvious to the members opposite and to my colleagues that I support the motion but not the amendment, and that I hope that we move forward together to make Saskatchewan a better place to live. Thank you.

I would like to move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

