

EVENING SITTING

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Prebble, seconded by Mr. Forbes, and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. Toth.

Mr. Brkich: — It's nice to be appreciated. I just want to recap some of the things we talked about in my speech. One of them . . . I think maybe some of the members opposite . . . start right from the start again because I think a few of them missed it.

But the main thing, when I go around talking about the constituents, the main thing they bring up is agriculture. They know this government now. They don't expect any help from it because they know they're not going to get any help from it. So one of the things that we talked about at the meetings, our Grow Saskatchewan meetings, was value added. They know that we can't keep shipping raw product out of this province continually because behind it goes the jobs and the people with that.

And what the people of Arm River and what the people of Saskatchewan want, they want diversification out there. They want value added out there. They want a plan from the government how to do that. They haven't had one for 10 years, how to grow this, whether it's feedlots, ethanol plants, infrastructure, and irrigation. Do you know that we import 93 per cent of our vegetables that we need here in Saskatchewan? You know with the land around Outlook, the sandy soil, the irrigation, and with some promotion from this government, we could be growing vegetables here, Mr. Speaker. That's just one thing.

Another thing we've talked about . . . they've talked about is ethanol production, Mr. Speaker. And even the few NDP (New Democratic Party) members that I've got — and if you check the polls I don't have that many of them — even they are telling me, I hope this government does not — and I repeat, does not — use government money or build them through CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan). That's coming from the NDP members in my constituency that I've talked to because even they know now, after the repeated failures that CIC has been involved in, that it won't work.

Another thing they want is livestock. We ship, I would say, 80 per cent to be finished in Alberta. At least 80 per cent of the cattle, calves that are shipped out of here are gone to Alberta to be finished. They should be finished here with the jobs. That would increase the feed barley, feed wheat, give a little more money into the farmers' pockets.

Another thing they've talked about is how to get some of the investment money rolling in here, some incentives from this government on maybe some tax cuts or something, somehow some kind of tax credit — somehow to get some investment capital back in this province or even some of the money that's

already in this province for some of them to invest in rural Saskatchewan.

Another thing that the people have talked about at the meetings, they would like to see some initiative from this government moving in some kind of a direction like that to have some kind of a plan, some kind of a vision, how they would build rural Saskatchewan and so far, Mr. Speaker, there hasn't been one from this present government.

And that's all that people would want right now is a plan and a vision, and that's why they voted for us. We had 40 per cent of the popular vote in '99, and that's why we're going to have more in the next election because it's just not rural Saskatchewan. You talk to the people in Regina and Saskatoon; the population in Regina has dropped. The capital city of Saskatchewan the population has dropped. Every other capital city in Canada is growing. Why isn't this city growing? You know, that's one of the things that the people in this province have expressed through the numerous meetings.

You know another theme that seems to come up when you talk to the people here is that they say a bigger government . . . if bigger government and Crowns were the way to grow the province, we would be the richest province in Canada instead of the poorest one. So obviously bigger governments and trying to grow the province through the Crowns does not go. It doesn't even sell to the people any more.

Basically the socialist view of the members opposite just isn't growing this province any more, you know, and this province basically is on the brink of disaster. You talk to the people out there, Mr. Speaker, and it is getting close to the brink of disaster. We're running a deficit government. We cannot . . . we have less than 460,000 taxpayers left on a province that's almost as big as Texas.

There's no way that we can keep up this infrastructure and never keep up our health and our education commitments with a shrinking tax base and a shrinking population, Mr. Speaker. And basically this government is old, and it's tired, and it should be getting out of the way. And it's going to be getting out of the way next election, Mr. Speaker, when we move in with our plan and our vision to grow Saskatchewan.

And that's what the people want. Whether it's from urban to rural, Mr. Speaker, they want a plan to grow this province, and that's what they haven't got from the members opposite. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, that I will support the amendment brought forth by the member from Moosomin, and I can't support the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, as I enter this Throne Speech debate of 2002, I will be making some commentary in regards to my transition period, you know, as a person from moving from a field of education, politics, and possibly back into education. And as well the Throne Speech which talks about the need for hope and optimism even in a period of uncertainty.

Of course we had met with it when the Devine government was

around — you know the devastation of that period, and we were able to bring this into very many years of balanced budgets and also hope for people, not only for the people with big dollars, but the people who really needed help in this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll be talking a bit about the Saskatchewan Party's position as well, and basically talking about why it was the same, very similar to the Grant Devine formula.

But first of all I'd like to say this. Last fall I made a statement that I was retiring from politics, and I will not be running in the next election. I said that I would probably be working back in the field of education. I did 19 years in education. I got my Bachelor of Education and my master's degree in education, worked at the university level, worked at the colleges system, worked at Gabriel Dumont Institute. And so I had many areas . . . As a matter of fact, I was . . . this summer, Mr. Speaker, I visited some of my students in Ontario. I taught there 34 years ago in this one community, in this Ojibwa community. It was very, very interesting because, as I went over there and I told them that I was coming to town, I met some of the students, and it was interesting to see that one of my grade 2 students was now the chief. And she had her daughter there, coming to meet me as I visited there for a short time.

And later on, I went to this other community where I taught school there for two years. In the first community I taught grades 2, 3, and 4. Then I taught grade 6 in this community for a couple of years. And I had the same greeting, and it was a great time that I had, visiting the places where I used to teach a few years back.

Now as I talk about the need for myself in terms of a transition, I'd like to say a tremendous thank you to the people of northern Saskatchewan, to the people of Cumberland constituency particularly.

I have been very, very lucky to have been born in the period of time right after the war, and many of our people fought and died for this country. I had a time as a politician, knowing that many of them were buried in Europe and died for this land, and them coming back and trying to get a sense of hope. It was tough times in the world; 45 million people died in the war. And there was a lot of devastation, you know, in Europe and all over the many parts of the globe. And in that sense, a lot of our people saw what had happened in those places. They came back. They knew how tough it was, and we were in a fishing, trapping, and hunting economy, from where I was and some of our people were now getting into mining and forestry. So it was something that I was brought up and raised with, as I was in that period, that I knew that some of those people that were leaders at that time, that experience internationally, protecting democracy, and growing up with that idea of bringing back the hope, although there was devastation during that time.

So as I look at this Throne Speech debate we hear about, you know, the idea of the US (United States) economy going down. We see the September 11 situation. We see the drought, you know, from last year. And we see the prices here and there of uncertainty. But in time we wanted to present a picture, you know, this time around that there is still hope out there. Uranium prices were a little bit better you know than last year. There is possibilities that there might be a diamond mine in this

province. We have an excellent plan on forestry, which I will talk about later on.

But before I do anything, I would like to say a special thank you again to the people of Cumberland constituency, and some of the people that work with me. I would like to say thank you to some of my staff, who work with me.

There was in my staff, as the minister, I've had Cheryl Stecyk, who worked with me for many years, right from the beginning, from '92. And Adele Ecarnot. And there was Brenda Husli, Gail McNab, Don McKay, Dale Robison. And I had somebody from, a couple from my home town, who came to work for me as well: Elaine Deschambeault, and Brian Chaboyer. There was also a guy from Pelican Narrows, Ron Merasty, who worked for me. There was Maggie. There was Laura. There was quite a few people that had experience working in the legislature. You know, many of our people haven't had the opportunity to work in many different situations, and this presented, you know, an opportunity for some of our people to be able to work in different situations. The legislature was an important part of their experience.

So I thank these people because, in many cases, as you are a minister, as you are an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) doing the work, you're only as good as what your staff put forward for you. So a special thanks to my staff in that regard over these years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Thank you also to all the workers of this province, whether they work in the highways to fix our roads, or whether it is the social services worker dealing with, you know, very stressful cases, or whether we're dealing with the teachers, or whether we're dealing with nurses. You know it's a special thanks to all those people because in many ways, as we're talking about change, we're talking about hope. These are the people who are on the front lines dealing with the actual cases as we're dealing with policy in this legislature. So a special hat off to all the people who do the hard work in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — I'd like to thank as well some of those people who work with me. I've been through four campaigns, four elections. I've had . . . the first time I ran, I had a little over 60 per cent of the vote. At my highest point, I had over 80 per cent of the vote, and that comes along because there's people that are working for you at the community level.

I'd like to . . . there's many, many I could mention. I could probably stand here for many years, but I'll mention a few. There are people like Earl and Barb Cook that are from my hometown who lived in La Ronge, worked with me there for quite a while. There's Lyle Brooks and Lorna. There's my sister Josie and her husband George Searson, Jimmy and Tammy Searson-Cook, Ordean and Francis Goulet. There was Harry and Adelle Morin in Sandy Bay. There was, as well, people from Montreal Lake: Ed and Shirley Henderson, Christian Nelson and also Caroline Nelson. In Creighton, we had Moyle Barkhouse, Janice Irmrie and her late husband Bob and also

Nestor and Vicky Dolinsky. I had also in Beaver Lake, in the Denare Beach, the late Rod McDermott and his wife Marie and the late Thomas Morin.

So I had many supporters, you know, that are out there over the years dealing with the issues of making sure that there was a hope out there, that they believed in democracy. They believed in the process of politics, and they believed that you needed representation in the system.

I'd like to, as well, mention another special worker for me. She's been with me from, pretty well right from the beginning, and her name is Cec Allen. She went through an operation a little while ago. She's slowly recovering but I wish her, you know, the best in her health but also that she's worked with me all these years and did a bit of experience at the federal level, but she is . . . hopefully she goes a little bit better through the operation that she had had.

(19:15)

Now on this Throne Speech, we deal with many issues, and I'd like to reflect them back on the time that I was being raised, on this hope and optimism idea and reflecting back on education and a need to focus in on economic development and jobs.

When I was growing up my father, Arthur, died when he was 75. He got to see me become a minister in this province, a cabinet minister. And I was at a co-op gathering one time and this elderly gentleman came up to see me and he showed me a picture. He said, do you know these people that come from your own community? I looked at the picture and there was my dad at a co-op school in 1951. He became to be the first co-op store manager in Cumberland House and also later on we ran our own confectionery and café. And we also dealt with tourism, bringing in people from the United States, and we also did trapping and fishing and hunting as well.

But just to give you a little bit of an idea on him, he not only worked in our community, but he travelled in different situations. One year he left us to go to the United States to work with one of the people that he was guiding for, in a heating place in Waterloo, Iowa. So he lived there during the winter months to make some more money so that we could survive during the year. And so he worked in the DEW (distant early warning) Line as well. So many people figure, you know, when you're doing hunting and trapping and fishing in one community that you never get out of there and go to different places. But he worked in the Territories, he worked in BC (British Columbia), he worked all over in the United States as well.

But as well, my late mother . . . I was quite lucky in a sense that when I was growing up we had seven sisters, four of us brothers. And I lost my mother when I was fairly young. I was 16 years old. But she had a dream for all of us. As we're doing the budget and we're talking about education and change, you know all of us know that we have come through some educational experiences. My mother had wanted me to become a teacher. Her dream, that one day I would become a teacher. And as I was there growing up I never thought that I would become a teacher. You know you don't think of those things.

You lose your mom and you're sad, and your brother is there with you. Then you lose your brother that's there with you when you're in grade 12. But you keep on going. There is a sense of determination that they instill within you, your parents, and you move forward with it. But she had interpersonal relationship skills that were excellent. She was in charge of . . . the president of the Catholic Women's League. She was as well the head of the school trustees in the community.

So both my father and mother were from a leadership background and both of them were very, very strong-minded people. So in that sense I was fairly lucky. And I might say that with a lot of our uncles and our friends in the community who dreamt the same things as we did, you know, trying to make sure that we had a good education and to move forward into the future.

So that dream that we lost on an Easter Monday, you know, when I was only 16 years old, it came to be fulfilled. We were growing up with seven sisters and it ended up that four of us got our degrees in education, and we did consulting work. My younger brother, Ordean, right now is a regional coordinator for the colleges up in northern Saskatchewan and I was a principal of a college at one time, community college, as well at Gabriel Dumont. And my other sister works on pre-language development programming for the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, one of them, Millie. And Josie works into northern Saskatchewan. And I also have another younger sister, Arlene, who works for the federal government, who works for Indian Affairs. And I also have another one who works for the Manitoba government in the field of justice in making sure that we have a community approach to justice in northern Manitoba. And so I was very, very lucky, you know, growing up in the midst and being with brothers and sisters and other people from the community who were able to be successful in instilling that pride and determination as we moved forward.

And in this budget, as . . . I mean in this Throne Speech I look at the aspect of education which was so critical, you know, for us. And as I became a cabinet minister, there was about 1,000 people from northern Saskatchewan who were getting a post-secondary education. And when I was growing up in 1965 I went to university. And I was the only one that I knew of, excuse me, at that time that was at the university from northern Saskatchewan. There was only about four of us Aboriginal people at the university that I knew of. There may have been a couple of more, but those were the only ones that I knew back in 1965. But then '65 to about '90, '91 when we come into power there was over 1,000 people. In the past 10 years now, in northern Saskatchewan, last year we had over 2,500 people in post-secondary education.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — So we're seeing a trend in regards to the education; the feeling of optimism that you see that indeed the Throne Speech is. It brings hope, you know, for a lot of people. So when you're talking about this hope, I'm looking forward.

In many cases when I was making the shift . . . As I say, I'm going back to education. I'll probably do my Ph.D. later on. At least I'm talking about it; whether or not I actually do it is another question.

Of course I went through that experience with my master's degree. But I did my master's degree in 1986 and I did oral history. It's interesting one of the Supreme Court cases finally acknowledged that our people's stories could be truthful. And it took many years for people to understand that the story is no different than the stories from Europe or from Asia or from Africa or anywhere else can actually be truthful. And in many cases, that was finally recognized in the Supreme Court decision. But I already did this oral history master's back in '86.

So I'm trying to go back and get some of that critical Cree language concepts that I was born and raised with that is not written down. I know what's written down in the anthropological, historical, and sociological texts but they're incomplete in regards to the knowledge that the people have from northern Saskatchewan. So I want to get back at some of that.

Our institutions, our Gabriel Dumont Institute. We have the Dumont Technical Institute, the SUNTEP (Saskatchewan urban native teacher education program) programs. We have Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. We have Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. These are top-level, indigenous institutions in the world; and there is no question about that, that the knowledge that they create there is better than anywhere else you will see in the different situations in the world. We will be taking a leadership role with a new building, you know, going up over here at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, Gabriel Dumont Institute. The history will become a little bit more complete, you know, as we move forward because that's where it'll be.

I think the new challenges that I see for First Nations and Métis people is in the educational sphere. We've done well on the law program. Eighty per cent of the people, interestingly enough, in Canada went through the law program in Saskatchewan, you know, created here in Saskatchewan in co-operation with our people. Something to be very proud of. And also when we look at the social work programs, the educational programs, some of the administration programs.

But the areas where we fall short on are in the science generated area. We are starting to move . . . we're moving to the health sciences. We're starting to move into the nurses training program, the LPN (licensed practical nurse) programs, and we're starting to move into these programs. But we need to do a lot more in those areas, not only in the health sciences areas, but into the environmental sciences, into the engineering areas, into the many areas that are very, very important for the future — genetics, neuroscience, etc.

So this is an area that needs to be worked at over the future, but I think that the hope that we have learned from our parents and who fought in the wars, saw what was happening in the world, showed us that we needed an education, and whereas this government follows through a strong program in education it's something that we can really look forward to. I'm seeing those 2,500 people now, you know, last year that graduated. I mean, they'll create hope. You know, they'll create a feeling, yes, Saskatchewan is good a place to live. Not only Ontario, not only Alberta, not only the Territories, not only United States. Saskatchewan is a good place to live.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — When I was doing the . . . so I think it's very important on the Throne Speech that we did focus in on education. The other thing that I thought about was this, you know, to focus in on health.

We are recognized internationally, of course, as the birthplace of medicare, and in many cases people are looking at us in regards to our Fyke Commission and the consultation processes that took place after that and to see where we were at. Now we're beginning to see that the Saskatchewan plan is something that we will be looking forward to.

I thought that the combination, the teamwork approach, a very, very strong value in the Aboriginal community, you know, the value of co-operation and teamwork, and in many cases the concept of "we," you know, rather than "I" only. I think "I" is very important and the "we" is very important, but to put them together is going to be the key in the future.

You know, the key . . . the teamwork process that you're seeing and we're developing, which will be a Saskatchewan base, is very similar to, you see, in many of . . . even the successful areas of business. I looked at the key corporations who were competitive in the industry and I looked at places . . . companies like Microsoft and others. It was not the individualism only of paying higher money for the ones at the top, you know, that counted. It was a dynamic teamwork approach that made it possible for the development of that company to be as competitive as it was. And many of those people who decided to go on this dynamic team approach were the ones who benefited over the long run and who survived. You know, the top-down authority system just didn't bode well, you know, for this new century; you needed a new dynamic. But it was already being created, the basis of it, over the last century. And we saw that for ourselves, you know, with . . . on a social area with health development, and now we're seeing our new phase on the teamwork approach.

So I was very, very pleased with the action plan, you know, lacing out that idea — and also dealing with concrete problems on waiting lists and moving forward with that.

For me in the North, and I see Aboriginal people with high levels of diabetes, we have a lot of problems. I, you know, sometimes visit the communities. I see people, you know, close relatives and people who are not relatives, who lose their eyesight. You know they struggle, you know, on a daily basis. You know they lose their toes, they lose their feet, their legs, and it's a very, very tough thing, you know, to experience.

And as we're looking at the health development, we're seeing a greater co-operation and teamwork in the North between the three health boards and the tribal councils. And I see that as a good possibility, as something that will be very important for future development in tackling . . . you know, the federal government, the First Nations government, and the provincial government working together on the field of health development — dealing with concrete issues of diabetes and FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome) and FAE (fetal alcohol effects).

So I think that that's, you know, the way of the future. But I

also know that as I was growing up, the idea of . . . We still have community gardens. And in many cases, as I was growing up, we used to have the gardens and we used to share these, and somehow along the way that became lost. Now I'm visiting the communities and they're coming back. And there's hope back there again because, you know, a proper diet and good exercise makes for good health. And in many ways that's what's happening in addition to the quality health care system that we do have.

I might say this on the health. I was proud being part of a government who gave the actual control of health back to northerners. We used to run things on a quantitative sense from the government departments, etc., which was fine in and of itself, but we needed to have a sense of people's control on policy-making in the North.

(19:30)

When we were a government in the NDP (New Democratic Party) in the '70s, we did control, northern control on education; we did northern control on municipalities; and now we bring northern control on health. And it really bodes well in regards to what is possible in this province.

And while we were doing that change, that is in that capacity of health with our action plan, it really bodes well for not only First Nations and northerners, but for people in this whole province.

When we look at the issue of economic development and jobs, there is still a long ways to go in economic development and jobs front with Métis people, and First Nations people, but we've seen some very positive changes. We've seen the corporate circle, you know, that was being held, and we're seeing the youth in the developments, and we're seeing the very importance of tying with business and business development with First Nations and Métis people and, for that matter, for people in this whole province.

When I was growing up we were involved in fishing, hunting, trapping; we were involved in, you know, the small-scale contracts — sometimes doing the brush cutting, you know, sometimes doing a bit of the harvesting of the trees, but not very much more than that.

Now we're seeing a . . . over the past 10 years I'd like to report that we used to have about \$20 million worth of contracts in the mines, and last year we had approximately \$200 million, you know, for northern businesses. And to me, when the opportunity for entrepreneurs was provided for northerners, it was there — lo and behold it went by tenfold in a 10-year period. And many times people thought it wouldn't happen but it did.

And we then moved it to the next level on forestry. In this Throne Speech we have a special reference on forestry. And I must say that the leadership we took in mining — we had about 900 people working in the mines, from the North, of which 85 per cent were Aboriginal people — that with that success we wanted to move it to forestry.

But we wanted to move it at a new level, qualitative level. It

was important to do the training of people; it was important to employ people, getting them involved in businesses. But we wanted to do the full circle of sustainability which was found in the sustainable development concept that international community took with the environment and the economy.

And that forestry development needs forest management. And the key was forest management lease agreements to do both the business and also the environmental management side. And for the first time in the history of anywhere on indigenous peoples, you now have partnerships, you know, with Meadow Lake Tribal Council chiefs over the years. You have the Métis communities and their partnership; or when they find an industrial forestry partner in their area, they will have their own lease. The one in the central area with the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Zelensky Brothers, they will have their partner, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. So that we're forming not only strong partnerships in the trading side in the jobs and on the business development side, but in the management side, you know, of forestry development.

And I think that really bodes well. I mentioned that at the forestry conference this past year and people were saying great stuff to what we were doing. They said it's breaking new ground. We're going to see what happens there and I know that from experience there will be ups and downs. But I noticed one thing from my experience. People, no matter how tough it is, you have a sense of hope. Yes, there is always people who grumble and complain but there is people who will move forward and create the change. And this is the type of attitude that I was raised with. And this is a Saskatchewan spirit.

You know, this is a type of stuff that built Saskatchewan. I don't talk about whether I go elsewhere or over there. I talk about what we can build in this province. This is the stuff of what I learned in the trapline, this is what I learned when I was growing up when my parents said we need an education. This is the type of stuff that is building. It makes people feel that although that there are stresses out there, though there is periods of uncertainty, they can see it on their TV, they have this feeling yes, deep down, yes we can do it. So this is the spirit that I see in this Throne Speech.

The other thing is that as I look at the housing components we did when we got into government, we had put in about over \$40 million worth of sewer and water developments in the North. And that has been very, very helpful for a lot of people because going a quarter of a mile and trying to chop, you know, through the ice, the way we were growing up, and sometimes three feet of ice or two feet of ice, and getting water in the wintertime was extremely tough. And having running water, you know, getting the . . . washing the kids you know, and grandpa and grandma having a shower, I mean this is great stuff.

This creates a lot of . . . I go around the communities and where we're putting the sewer and water in and a lot of those people thought that after we did the study they said, oh the study, there won't be nothing that will happen. Well we did our study and we followed the plan. We took a little bit of time, but it's now there. People now can turn on the taps. Now that to me is developing hope and optimism and developing the Saskatchewan spirit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — On the Throne Speech you will note that we're trying to do a co-operation. We never give up on things. We never even give up on the federal government. I knew that at one time they were very good in northern development on the housing side. I must add this on the federal government. They do very good work on the RRAP (residential rehabilitation assistance program) program. You know, they help us on fixing houses and so on and they pay 75 per cent of it.

But in the olden times in the '70s they used to pay 60 per cent of the costs on the building and the . . . (inaudible) . . . up in our northern area and because that was a development strategy that the federal government had followed at that time. But they got out of the housing, you know, development side and we now have to put in, you know, our money, the 9 million on our last program to do northern housing and also our housing program in the South as well.

But on this housing strategy, we're trying to partner with the feds. I know that we have, you know, people who are capable at the ministerial level to work with the federal government and push that issue and make sure that we have those 1,000 houses in the next five years. It's part of our planning, you know, to work. I mean that there's always differences between municipal governments, provincial governments, and federal governments. But the dream of people is for us all to work together and to get that plan in place so that indeed, you know, the houses are there, you know, for the people, the jobs are there for the people, the roads are there for the people. The infrastructure, you know, the water quality is there.

So those are the things that they're looking for in regards to leadership but it's a leadership of hope is what they're looking for.

So when I looked at the idea of the Sask Party, and I looked at their strategy, it's a good thing that I've been in the legislature for four terms, otherwise I might have thought it was amusing. But it wasn't amusing. The strategy was quite simple.

When I was in opposition when Grant Devine was around, he said the same thing. I'm going to be cutting taxes. So he made all kinds of great speeches of cutting taxes. And then he would say . . . Or somebody would pressure him whether it was for a road or whether it was for this . . . oh yes, yes there'd be money for spending. But everybody knew after all that fiasco that the interest payments on the debt became to be more money than all the money we spent on education.

Just think of it. The money you pay the teachers up in La Loche, and up in Cumberland House, you know, way to Kenaston, going down to Cypress Hills and all the way . . . the money we pay all the teachers, the heating costs of the schools, when you look at all the universities we pay for, when you look at all the money that is spent in the colleges system, the Grant Devine right-wing debt, the interest payments in that one year stood to be more than all the money we spent in education.

But I'll tell you something. So the Saskatchewan Party does exactly the same thing again, exactly the same strategy. They have this idea of Grow Saskatchewan. Well I saw it with Grant

Devine. All there went was . . . The only thing I saw growing was a debt, and they were scrambling. They started growing mismanagement. Mismanagement became to be the big word, you know, during that period because a lot of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . One of my friends adds, a little bit of corruption as well. And so there was a lot of that going on at that time.

But they get a little bit of pressure and they would spend the money. They didn't have the money but they would spend it. And they would keep on promising all these things. They would speak from one side one day, the next side the next day. And I'm hearing the same thing from the Saskatchewan Party. They're doing exactly the same type of strategy.

But a lot of people are worried about them. It's not only people from the North who are worried about them. I see a lot of people are worrying in the South. I see them worried about their own people . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . oh yes. And the problem they do have is that they're tied in with the Alliance and you know they're tied in with that type of an approach. And their popularity went up when they went up and it went down as they're going down.

A lot of people are worried about them because some of their views are fine, but some other views are a little extreme in certain situations. They don't have that co-operative spirit, you know, that's out there to work with people from all backgrounds and to be able to do those types of things and learn to appreciate that. Because even as I look at recently when there was a meeting and the people always ask me tough questions when I go to the meeting, and I've dealt with a lot of tough questions over the years. But I notice that a member from — the leader, Hermanson — went to the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) convention. And he got a little bit of a roast on there.

Now they wonder why that happens, though. And you can't do an overnight success story. You have to build a certain sense of trust with people. I know that when they ask questions in the House — and I was waiting for a question from the North. I know that the Leader of the Opposition — and I apologize for mentioning his name — but the Leader of the Opposition is talking about maybe going to La Ronge, etc. But a lot of people know this one thing. Ever since I was minister of Northern Affairs — of course I was very happy to be the minister of Northern Affairs — I had worked as the associate minister of Education, I was also a minister of SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) when we made the big change on no-fault insurance. So we did quite a bit of the change. Now I've got them talking from across over there a little bit.

But as we're doing the overall change in the system, we looked at the concrete aspects of our development and it is so good to be able to come out here with a team of people over the years. And as we're talking I first came in on opposition and I was with a team, Allan Blakeney, was of course our premier for many years. And I learned about, you know, the strategies in opposition. I went through the Meech Lake debate, I went through the Charlottetown accord, and we went through that whole situation. I've learned a lot about being in opposition.

(19:45)

Then I worked with Premier Romanow and that's when the Charlottetown accord took place and learned more about the constitutional talks. But also the premier at that time, we were in opposition at that time, our leader, Roy Romanow, used to say that yes, the constitution is 20 per cent, but it's 80 per cent of the other things that we have to really work on. And in many cases I learned a lot over the years from Mr. Romanow and from Blakeney, and now our present Premier as well, and many of my colleagues over the years.

You know, I started out with . . . As a matter of fact, we were starting out together, the present Premier and I, along with our other member, our friend from Moose Jaw, and also our friend from P.A. (Prince Albert) and from Saskatoon. And we were moving forward and learning, you know, the gives and takes of politics. It was quite the enjoyable experience because when the people were talking as I was growing up, you know, coming back from the war, and us being you know partaking in politics, some of them may have not thought that we would ever make it here.

And when we finally made it here, the people were so happy. And some of the success stories that we've had — there's still unfinished business of course — but there's always unfinished business. You know the next group of elections will get new politicians. There'll be always unfinished business because there's always room for improvement in systems.

Now I also, on the Aboriginal question as it relates to the Sask Party, and also to us, as we build a sense of trust over the years, as I looked at the NDP, the '76 formula was there on treaty land entitlement, you know, with Allan Blakeney. And there was a certain sense of trust built there from Tommy Douglas and the first meetings of the federation on municipal formation were held at this legislature, you know, under Tommy Douglas.

And over the years a sense of trust has been built with the party. A certain amount was built with the Liberals during the '60s period, and then we gained a lot of that in the '70s and '80s period. But a lot of it is because of concrete action. You know, we worked to get the understanding that, yes, people not only needed education, people could be policy makers as well. There was Indian governments to be run, you know, Métis institutions to be governed, and those things — putting power and control in the hands of people to a certain extent, you know — made that possible. And we've seen the changes with the . . . as I mentioned earlier on, on educational institutional development.

So I've been very, very happy, and lucky, and proud as a politician over the years. I've, in many ways when I was working in education, it was also a bit of a microcosm, you know, as a teacher. You have children from different backgrounds, you know, from different levels of economic backgrounds. You know different cultural backgrounds, and in many cases you see a microcosm of society anyway. It's not as complex as what you will find towards the whole because there's a little bit of similarity in certain communities. But you get a sense of that as a teacher. And so it helped me out as a teacher as I come into the politics.

But it is such an important field. I've talked to a lot of young people and I really tell them: I said it's good to become — and I push the science envelope — become scientists and do all of

that and become business people, but also to take part in politics, take part in democracy, you know, move forward. Take part in First Nations local politics, tribal council politics, in provincial FSIN and Métis Nation politics, federal politics, provincial politics, municipal politics. Take a strong part and active involvement in all of those because that's what the essence of change is all about.

Now I'd like to say a few words in Cree to talk about those things that were very important for me, because as I came to this legislature for the first time and I stood in this House, I delivered my speech in Cree and English. And over the years I've watched this develop because all of a sudden I heard somebody speaking in Ukrainian and then German and in the Polish language and so on.

But it's been taking place a little bit better which to me is very, very important. You don't only respect the person in regards to their background, in regards to their dress, but also their language, their culture. It's very, very important to actually do it. Talking about it is not good enough; it's to actually do it. And although in many cases we were taught not to speak our languages in schools, I was lucky enough when I was born in Cumberland that I was able to keep my language and, you know, move forward with it. I'm also extremely lucky as a politician because then I could talk to the elders and the younger people because there are some nuances on certain concepts that I talk in Cree that are not necessarily there in English. And it's very, very important, therefore, to have a bilingual person, you know, as an MLA.

There was certain things that I did learn too, a few words in Dene, you know, for . . . But Dene is a very different language from Cree and I wish I would have learned a lot more of it. As I travel around I learned a few words that were key concepts, but not the way that I should have because one of my communities was a Dene community. So I take my hats off to people who . . . I travelled in Europe a little bit and they speak two languages, three languages, four languages, some of them seven languages. And I look past at some of the history of our people, and they used to do that. They used to speak three, four languages, and so the norm was that. It's only recently in the past 50 years or some in certain committees, that monolingualism, you know, became a little bit of a practice, but never perfect in each community. There's always been people who were bilingual and sometimes trilingual.

So in Cree I'll . . . for the listeners who are out there, some of them I talk to are in the hospitals. Sometimes I will hear a commentary from some elder who was at the hospital. And they say, oh I can hear that voice because you've been speaking in the legislature, he said. And they were very, very, very proud and happy that their issues could be discussed in this House.

And so with that I would like to move forward to say a few words in Cree.

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

My friend said, *egosi, egosi* and the same as hear, hear. Now when I was . . .

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

I guess in my commentary I relayed in a more concise form, in Cree, the commentary that I made, you know, vis-à-vis the comments I made on the importance of economic development and jobs and education, health development, that you see in this Throne Speech, this idea of providing hope for people. You know that's the idea that even though there's tough times you know you can always pull through.

When there are important challenges, there's always people that you can point at that will have even a more difficult time than you and you know that they actually pull through. And they don't talk about only the negative stuff. They talk about what you can achieve, what you can actually do. They talk about hope. They talk about the spirit of the people. They talk about the spirit of this province.

You know there's people who point elsewhere and say it may be better over there, but there's always things that were better in this province. We're the ones who created medicare. We probably developed a team approach 20 years from now that they'll look at in regards to our health action plans. There will be things that we will have learned from it, things we could have improved on it, but we will learn at the next stage of development what it will be. It will be something that people will look at.

There will be things that we will look at on the forestry strategy for the North. They will see how our concrete strategies not only on jobs, on the idea of getting the ownership base, but on the management of the environment and also the management, you know, of the business — those put together, we will see what improvements we will have made and where we will be into the future. It's a sign of hope, you know, for the people.

On the side of education, like I said, a handful of us in education a few years back and when I was growing up. Just in the North alone, over 2,000 — I know that Indian Federated College, they have about 2,000 people at the university; Gabriel Dumont Institute has over 1,000. So these systems, you know, coming through will be where, you know, the hope will be created. I'm seeing a sign of breaking down the barriers, you know, of discrimination and racism, but I see a great hope.

I'll tell you a little story as I leave. When I was growing up, I went to The Pas, Manitoba. I used to have a 3-horsepower motor. We used to go and get our goods and supplies from there because it was only 90 miles away, but when we had a load on, you know, coming back, it used to take us 18 hours coming upstream on this 3-horsepower. And we used to run this café and restaurant.

But when I was there, I heard about this thing they called a little bit of a theatre, and it's where . . . of course in Cumberland we just called it the picture show, and I couldn't even probably pronounce theatre when I went over there. I was 13 years old.

So I got over there and I go to this picture show and I had been there before, but as a kid, but I didn't know what was going on and how you pay the ticket and how you went in. So I go into this theatre anyway. So I walked in there. Now I watch how they buy the ticket, so I buy the ticket and I walk in. Now as I'm walking in, my goodness, they even have some popcorn in there. I said, popcorn, my goodness. I had some change and I

bought some popcorn and I'm pretty proud. I'm walking into this theatre.

So as I sit down, I see a seat over here and I see a seat over there, and I chose the one to the left. So I chose that seat to the left and I go and sit down. All of a sudden there is a voice behind me, and it says:

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

And translated in Cree, it says, I think that little white guy is lost. So I turned around and I spoke back to them in Cree. And they said, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, they said, you're from Cumberland House. They could tell my dialect in Cree because we spoke a little different Cree from them.

So I asked them, I said, well why is it that you ask me whether I was lost? It appears that I'm in the wrong place or something. He said, yes. He says a long time ago, he says, we were not allowed to go to this theatre, but now they allow us in here, they said. But he says, this side is for us, you know. The Indians sit over here and the white people sit over there — we're segregated, we're segregated.

And when I was, interestingly enough, when the dam was built I was in grade 9 and I was at the E.B. Campbell dam. And we had worked there, we lived in the tents out there — and they had houses, you know, for the SaskPower workers — but we lived in the tents by there. And we tried to get some water this one time, but there was a big kerfuffle that we had to haul our water down the river about a quarter of a mile. But they had running water there and my dad persuaded a family, and we finally got the water and I was so happy because I didn't have to carry the pails way down, you know, the steep embankment on the lake — on the river. But that person that helped us out was chastised. You know, there was in those days they used to say the "Indian lover" or things like that, you know, on helping us out in regards to that whole thing. So we were raised with that type of situation.

One day I came home and I said, Dad, could you go and ask if I could go to school there. I see that they opened a school there and the kids are going to school there. And I wanted to go because I was in grade 9. I wanted to make sure I'd catch up because we were probably going to work there at the dam till Christmas and go back to Cumberland. I says, we're already behind in school and I wanted to see if we could go to school there. But you know what? Lo and behold my dad went back to work, and so he asked around to see if we could go to school there. But you know, they didn't allow us to go to school there. Now these are some of the experiences that I went through.

But I'll tell you something, what I heard from what my aunts and uncles told me, he says, you had it easy. So what it is, is that we've seen a change. The change is improving. It's not where it should be at yet, but it's improving. We're seeing a greater willingness, you know, to tackle that issue; we're not running away from it.

I went through . . . I had this great experience when I was at — the members from opposite would love this — at the, I went to the international conference, The Socialist International. And I would speak of it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And I was

pretty lucky in a sense. And I was over there and one of the modern-day concepts of sustainable development . . . Brundtland was there, you know, from Norway. She was the first prime minister, woman prime minister in Norway at that time, and she was there.

And there was Yitzhak Rabin, you know, tried to create peace in the Middle East at that time, and later assassinated. Yitzhak Rabin was there. And we have another situation in the Middle East right now.

And so I've had a chance to see this situation, and so I'm at the Reichstag, in Germany, and we're dealing with these different issues. And I knew how sensitive it was, you know, talking about the concept of self-determination. I knew what it was like, you know, with the debates, what was going on. Because how wrong for extreme nationalists, the problem of extreme nationalists, but also the problem, you know, that is there for any ultra group that's around.

But I was there at that time, and it was a very, very, you know, good experience, you know, for me to see this format. I would have never expected and dreamed that I would be there, listening to the international debates and talking about sustainable development and talking about the social democrats in development. And in that sense, it was a good, positive learning experience.

And those experiences for me . . . I could talk all night long. I went to . . . when the right-wingers took over in Chile, Pinochet, when the right-wingers took over there, and they dealt things with the hand of authority, you know, top-down control. And I saw people there . . . there was tear gas. Some people got shot and killed. And it was an authoritarian dictatorship. Later on, they changed, you know, on that. But I was there working with them and the indigenous peoples there. And their land, their reserve land, was taken away by the right-wing government.

And in that sense, I learned a lot in my years in politics. I think when my parents were growing up, and they thought I would become a teacher later on, they would have never dreamt, you know, of all the things that I would see. When I was travelling on a dog team, going to the traplines, you know, living in a tent at 40 below — those types of, you know, images, that are still reflected in my mind, and seeing the change, you know, that I have seen over the years was very important.

But the very importance in the world as well, to respect each other. And I have a sense . . . and I see the rural members from the past . . . Some of our people went to work for the farms, you know, when I was growing up. Some of them went to work for the sugar beet plantations in different locations, and we went all over the place. And I sense that sense of respect as well. There's an elitism, you know, that's out there. Sometimes you have an urban elitism; you know, sometimes you have this mixture, you know, the problem of town and country of the past since the Middle Ages, and people start looking at you sort of differently just because they come from the bush, or from the rural areas, or from the city.

And to me, as a government, as a person in the House, you try and break that down. You got to try and respect people whether they come from the farm, the trapline, you know, or from the

chem lab at the university. You got to get people to work together in different . . . you got to give them hope that indeed people can work together.

And that's the type of vision that we look at in this new century. Yes, there'll be ups and downs on this particular issue, you know, and . . . as people tend to blame things easily, you know, on situations from time to time.

But one of the things that was taught to me, you know, as I was growing up, yes, things were tougher, you know; the racism was tougher before — but things are improving. You know, we're moving forward; we're trying to get at the key issues. In the Throne Speech we dealt with the economy, you know, the jobs, the health, you know, the education, and the modern aspects of the Internet.

You know, these types of issues are the issues of this new century. A dream that my parents had for me when my mother . . . you know, after my mother died, you know, of . . . being part of change, and being part of hope. That's a dream that I still have for me as . . . For me, possibly, as I make the change as the politician, you know, back to working, you know, in the field of education.

To me, that's what I hope to see more of. You know, that's what I believe will happen though. Because as more and more people know about what's happening — not only internationally, but locally — things will improve.

And so it's not I . . . of course I stand up here to support, you know, the Throne Speech, and also to oppose the amendment. So to the members, I guess, thank you for this . . . who knows, this may be my last Throne Speech debate. I may have another year, you know, next year, but there might be another . . . another member said there might be another three more.

But to all the members of the House, I was in opposition — it was a very, very good period for me, a learning of the whole thing; and how to do the opposition and then being in politics. But it's good to play both roles. You know, I knew the importance of being in opposition and the role that you play as an opposition member; but I also know the importance of being in government. And in the latter I must confess my bias that I prefer being in government, you know, rather than being in opposition.

So with that, thank you very much, and again, Mr. Speaker, those are my comments.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank you for . . . my best wishes to the previous speaker, the hon. member from Cumberland. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say how pleased I am to be speaking this evening. And first of all I would like to point out how happy I am to be joined in the House this evening by our leader, David Karwacki, who is also here with Debbie Ward.

Now Debbie Ward will be well known to colleagues on this side of the House. She is representative of so many, many people in this province who joined the Saskatchewan Party,

thought this might be the way to go, thought this might be the way to build the province, and after a stint over there decided that that was a mistake and joined the Liberal Party and is running as a Liberal candidate.

Now it's unfortunate that I'm speaking tonight as North Battleford is playing in the seventh and final deciding game of the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League against the team from Kindersley — I believe that's the Kindersley Clowns — and this is the deciding game. And I expect that we will see the championship come home to North Battleford tonight.

(20:15)

Well, Mr. Speaker . . . well, Mr. Speaker, the last election was 1999 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Some people are sore losers, I know. But last election was 1999. At that time, the NDP promised us 500 more nurses, 200 more police officers, and 30,000 more jobs. Well, what did we, what did we get? What did we get?

We got, well, we are told now that our nurses are leaving; we have fewer nurses than ever before. They're leaving the province. We have the Minister of Justice saying, "I'm sorry; I'm sorry but our promise of 200 police officers cannot be met." And we have job losses and population in this province which now is the highest since statistics started being recorded during the Great Depression.

And what has been the government's response? Well the government has come up with the most novel job-creation strategy, I think, in the history of the free world. Last year, they hired 500 civil servants, and this year they tell us they're going to lay them off. That is the job-creation strategy, Mr. Speaker.

Well in the Throne Speech, her honour the Lieutenant Governor, told us we were lucky we had the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. I was surprised that the Lieutenant Governor would be talking about the Fiscal Stabilization Fund that the Minister of Finance told us last month no longer existed, that it's gone.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm having trouble being heard. The member who used to say to Aboriginal members of this House, "you always stand there with your hand open," seems to have the same thing about me now. I don't know what the problem is, but I know he used to always heckle Aboriginal members by saying "you folks always have your hands out."

Well Mr. Speaker, on the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, two years ago, the Saskatchewan Party said they were opposed to us having reserves in the provincial government. They said we shouldn't have reserves. They claimed there was a billion dollars swirled away somewhere, and it should be instantly spent. Well they non . . .

An Hon. Member: — What do you say?

Mr. Hillson: — I said it made sense to have some reserves, and as it would so turn out, the Saskatchewan Party has now gotten its wish; there are no reserves, and the Minister of Finance has confirmed we have no reserves. So this must be good news to the Saskatchewan Party that we have no reserves, however I don't know what . . . while this certainly is very bad news for

those who say we need to build the economy, build the employment base, build the tax base, I frankly don't know what this does in terms of the Saskatchewan Party's promise of massive tax cuts and how that will figure in to their plan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, previously there is on the books the balanced budget legislation and it says first of all that in determining whether or not we have a balanced budget the government must use the same accounting rules from year to year, and if they change their accounting rules the question of whether or not the budget is balanced will be determined on the former rules and not the new rules. And we will be interested to see if that is observed this year.

I also note that the government is saying that they have had a major event that has thrown the economic strategy and the economic plan off track. Well I note that the balanced budget legislation says that if there is a major, unanticipated, identifiable event or set of circumstances which has had a dramatic impact on expenses or revenues in a fiscal year, the Minister of Finance is required to present to the Assembly a special report identifying those circumstances and the financial implications of the event and a plan for dealing with the situation. So if it is the position of the government that there has been a major, unanticipated, identifiable event, then I would anticipate that that legislation will be followed and will be respected.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you have heard me speak of Crown investments and it was interesting to see a list recently of the full Crown investments in the province . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, and I opposed them as you will no doubt recall, Mr. Speaker. Hon. members sitting opposite will no doubt recall my opposition. However what do we have now? What do we have now for Crown investments? What do the taxpayers of Saskatchewan have for their money?

Well here is a partial list of the companies in which our government has now invested: Schneider's Popcorn Parties, a company called Pastryworld, another company called Rinkles, an insurance company in Toronto, another insurance company in Charlottetown, a cable company in Newfoundland, a gas company in Chile, a pipeline company in Mexico, a sound stage in Regina — similar ventures in Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton are all losing money, but let's hope that the Regina one does better. *Ag Dealer*, a farm equipment magazine; broadband communications provider in New Zealand and Australia, Starstruck Enterprises, a women's apparel manufacturer, and the Information Services Corporation. That is the one that started out with a budget of 20 million and it's now gone to 80 million, and which has spent so much time trying to market around the world before we get it operating here in Saskatchewan.

And I ask how much it would have cost us to take the software from the province of Alberta when they automated their land titles system and how much it would have cost us to adapt that to Saskatchewan? I suspect a lot less than even the 20 million, much less the 80 million we are now spending.

This is to name but a few of the investments totalling hundreds of millions of dollars that are being made.

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, Prairie Alliance for the Future, that was attempting to establish a not-for-profit short-line railway on abandoned tracks, was rejected for financing by this government on the grounds that the venture was too risky.

There have, I admit, been some positive investments for our province. I do congratulate the government for the clean coal research that they are initiating. I think that's a very positive move. I also congratulate them on moving on the ethanol issue. I think that's very positive.

I am concerned, though, that the provincial government has set up a strategy where we now appear to have about 40 communities around Saskatchewan looking into setting up an ethanol plant, and I am worried that our government is reluctant to announce where the two or three or four ethanol plants will be located because inevitably they will have a few communities happy and many communities unhappy. So I hope that this is not holding back an ethanol announcement because they have now set up a process in which there will be more unhappy communities than happy ones.

I would also like to mention the bio-diesel initiatives spoken of by David Karwacki. I think that is an excellent one, and I commend that to the minister for his consideration because I think that is something that stands the prospect of building this economy.

But on the whole, Mr. Speaker, the investment strategy of this government stands in stark contrast to the investment strategies of every other province. Now the fact we are doing something very different than all other provinces makes this a textbook laboratory situation in which it's easy then to test whether what we are doing is right or wrong.

Well, what do we see? I understand the thinking of the government. I have followed the reasoning that it is important to strengthen SaskTel by competing with companies in the private sector even if that is at the price of driving out private companies from this province, be they in the home-security-system market or be they in the system of cable providers. I understand they're saying that's strengthening our province because it's strengthening the Crown corporations. I also understand the thinking of the government that when we invest 160 million in Australia, the benefits and dividends come flowing back to province, and we all can clip the coupons and be rich ever after.

I understand that thinking, but I think when we're going to assess whether this is the right strategy or the wrong strategy, we have to say, well if we're doing something different than everybody else and we're right and they're wrong, then obviously we're rich and they're poor. Obviously we have investment coming into this province. Obviously we have jobs coming into this province.

Well tragically, Mr. Speaker, we know it ain't so. We know. We know that what is happening is we have more job loss than any other province. We know that we are desperately short of investment capital. We know that we have population loss unparalleled since the Great Depression.

So if this investment strategy was right, Saskatchewan would be

growing. But I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, if this investment strategy is wrong, then our economy will be contracting. Our jobs will be going elsewhere. Our young people will be moving out. Mr. Speaker, the investment strategy of this government is wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong. And that is not a mere opinion; that is the empirical evidence. That is the statistical evidence of a failed investment strategy on the part of our Crown corporations.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak for a moment, if I may, about the North Battleford water inquiry. Last month, by order in council, the government paid \$2 million for the water inquiry. At the time, our mayor and city council was trying to meet with the minister and he wouldn't meet with them. He told me that there would, unfortunately, be no money for North Battleford for fixing our water problems, beyond the Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program which North Battleford would get in any event.

So let's run by this again, Mr. Speaker. We have at least \$2 million to study a problem. We have nothing to fix it. How does this work? Mr. Speaker, we were told in North Battleford at the outbreak of our water problem that annual maintenance had been done on the system. Part of the system was put back not correctly and cryptosporidium was able to come into the water. We knew that a year ago, and yet we have spent millions on an inquiry while the minister says: sorry, times are tough, money is tight, nothing to fix the problem.

This is a stark example of where the problem is not lack of money, but lack of priorities, misplaced priorities that says it's more important to study a problem than to fix it.

I also want to speak for a minute on the Fyke Report and about the new health initiative announced by the provincial government in December. At the time it was announced, the Liberal Party said that we were basically pleased with the announcements made by the provincial government; we supported it. Since then, the government has told us that the new health regions are going ahead, but the rest will be done as money becomes available. And I'm very much afraid that the rest of the health action plan is little more than a wish list.

(20:30)

Well, I hope I'm wrong, but I recall in 1996 when there was a by-election in North Battleford, they announced a \$25 million nursing home. There was a by-election, and nothing more was heard about the new nursing home. Then in the year 2000, there was an announcement of renal dialysis in the Battlefords Union Hospital. And nothing's been heard since.

And now they've announced a CT (computerized tomography) scan for Battlefords Union Hospital and other regional hospitals in the province. I supported that. I hope that that announcement will not turn out to be of the same quality as the earlier announcement. I hope that the health action plan is not a wish list. It's not a campaign document, but actually a blueprint for action. And if it is, I can assure the government that it will have my support and have the support of the Liberal Party. But I'm not encouraged when I think of the 500 new nurses and the 200 new police officers that were promised to this province a couple of years ago.

Well, Mr. Speaker, federally we have the Romanow Commission looking into the future of health care. And I would like to say that I wish that commission well. We know that the right wing would like to — what they call — reform Medicare, and most of those reforms sound like an introduction of two-tier medicine. And I think that most of us want to see the single-tier public health system preserved.

However, if we are going to preserve it, we have to do something about three-year wait lists for surgery. We have to do something about the long lists for diagnostic and other services. And it's my hope that the Romanow Commission will point out practical ways where we can modernize and update our health plan to the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, in that regard, I want to tell you about one constituent of mine who had extremely serious headaches. She was told she needed an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) for proper diagnosis. She was told that her MRI would come through in approximately 12 months. She did, I think, what almost any of us would do under the circumstances. She went to Edmonton; she paid her \$1,000, and had her MRI done the next week. Unfortunately that cost about \$1,000 out of her own pocket, and more sadly she did indeed have serious health problems — serious health problems which our public system wouldn't have even diagnosed for another year.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say that I believe — the Liberal Party believes, in the five principles of the Canada Health Act. We believe in one-tier medicine; we believe in public health care. But public health care will not survive in this country or this province if we are going to go on putting people on one year waiting lists for basic diagnostic services or three year waiting lists for surgery.

I also want to speak, Mr. Speaker, for a moment about the issue of the community-based organizations — the CBOs (community-based organizations). In 1991 the NDP said that they wish to pay parity between the wages of those working in group homes, shelters, sheltered workshops, and other such community-based facilities and they should get parity with those people who are working for health districts and in the formal public service.

We now have a situation in this province where group homes run by the Department of Social Services have a pay schedule sometimes 25 to 50 per cent higher than group homes run by the community-based organizations. This inevitably creates resentment and tension and now I think is very close to creating a serious labour disruption in this province.

These workers are giving service in areas where, if there is a strike, the clients served by them will be very, very hard to service in other facilities or an extreme hardship on the families. These are very high needs individuals. But when they say they are getting 7 and \$8 to work in a group home whereas in a nursing home under the health district they would get double that, we can certainly understand their frustration. The government has been promising to address that issue for the entire term of its office, unfortunately little or nothing has been done to date.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that we are now faced with a

situation where group home workers are very likely to go on strike this spring. That will create serious dislocation in this province and I call on the government to finally address this and so many other outstanding issues that need to be addressed in this province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, some of the speakers have already referred to the *National Post* article titled, "Saskatchewan: not the biggest but the best".

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — I appreciated that article. It underscored that there are values and a sense of connectivity and community that sustains this province and its people. And I think those of us on this side of the House should be honest enough to admit that these values are in part both the cause and an effect of this province having had many years of NDP government.

However, Mr. Speaker, we now have a crisis where if people are to live here and enjoy the quality of life we have, there must be economic development, there must be a renewal of our infrastructure. We have to start celebrating success and not be suspicious of it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — I say with all sincerity to my NDP friends, it is time to let Tommy Douglas be history. Douglas was a visionary and a great man who did much for this province and this country. He was also a man, however, who distrusted success, who did not want private investment in this province, and who thought everything should be done by and owned by the government.

As we move forward there are old values that continue to be beacons. Mr. Speaker, Tommy Douglas was not tied to the past. He was willing to try new things. He did not slavishly follow the script. In the words of that dreadful modern buzz-phrase, he was a man who could think outside the box.

Sadly his political successors appear incapable of doing the same. We must be prepared to adopt new solutions and leave behind outdated ideology if we are to build a modern, dynamic province of opportunity and growth. Instead of bragging about us being a wee province with a wee leader, the time has come to again think big and to write large.

Mr. Speaker, I am not in favour of being a wee province. I am not in favour of thinking small. And therefore, I will not be voting for the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise today to enter into the debate on the Speech from the Throne that was ably delivered by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor. Moving the Throne Speech, the member from Greystone drew attention to many important initiatives that could only be highlighted in the speech last Thursday. I congratulate him and truly admire the steadfast works he carries on as a champion for social justice, community development,

and our environment, to name just a few. I know him as an inclusive and a compassionate colleague.

To my newest colleague, the member from Idylwyld, I say well done. Your speech allowed us to get a glimpse of not only your commitment but also your flare and your humour. I look forward to many years of working with the member to keep our province strong and to stop the forces that would keep us sleepless in Saskatchewan.

The mover and the seconder are two excellent reasons why I enjoy the Throne Speech debate, Mr. Speaker. It lays before this Assembly the reflection of the great constituencies that make up this province. It also allows us to understand how each of us will bring forward concerns and address the weighty issues that are placed before us in the session.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take this opportunity to highlight the important work that you do to further the understanding of the British parliamentary system of democracy in the communities across this province. The students and staff at Pilot Butte elementary school in my constituency, Regina Wascana Plains, thank you for the time that you spent with them holding a mini legislative session.

It was complete with premier, opposition leader, both sides of the House represented, private members' statements, and even a Bill to debate and to be passed, not to mention the presence of the mace and the Chair. Staff and students spent many hours in preparation for their debate. They told me they learned so much more about the work of peace and good government.

I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, as well on the selection of the Pages for this session. They not only reflect the diversity of our province but also the youthful exuberance and intelligence the next generation brings to our province, and yet another good reason to be confident about the future of Saskatchewan. Welcome to our Pages. I hope your time spent with us is not only informative but also a bit of fun.

I'm fortunate, Mr. Speaker, to have another young person work with me. Mr. Tim Baker, one of the participants in this inaugural year of the Saskatchewan legislative internship program. He has helped me to prepare for this session, and he has been learning about all the hours of work that is spent in committees, in research, and outreach, in order for the work of this Assembly to go forward.

I'm impressed with the resumes of all the interns, and especially with the life experiences, their formal education, and world travel, in their backgrounds in their resumes.

The internship program provides an opportunity for these young people to work on both sides of the House, and gain valuable experience, and knowledge that can be returned to our communities.

I would also like to welcome back the officials at the table who will offer wise advice on the procedures of the Assembly, and assist both sides to conduct our sittings with grace and dignity.

I would also like to congratulate and thank the Sergeant-at-Arms and his staff who will provide a secure

environment for, at times lively, and often emotional and heated debate that will occur.

Today it is a privilege and a pleasure for me to profile Regina-Wascana Plains. We are one of four urban, rural constituencies in the province, that include the communities of Pilot Butte, White City, Emerald Park, and Balgonie, as well as the southeast corner of the city of Regina, including the subdivisions of University Park, Gardiner Heights, Varsity Park, Wascana View, Wood Meadows, and Windsor Park.

We are blessed with farmers, teachers, health care professionals, civil servants, technical and trades people, and homemakers, just to name a few, as well as many beautiful children of all ages. I thank them, sincerely, for allowing me to be their representative.

It is with their faces in mind that I rise today to support the vision placed before us in the Speech from the Throne. Wherever I go, I will be telling them that Saskatchewan is able to look to the future with confidence, knowing the wealth of human and natural resources that we possess.

To this end, I would like to highlight this government's achievements in the area of sustainable tax reform. Since 1993, the provincial income tax, sales tax, and fuel taxes, paid by the average Saskatchewan family have been reduced by 24 per cent.

(20:45)

We have de-harmonized the sales tax, and have reduced sales and personal income taxes in every budget since we balanced the budget. We now have taxed capital gains from the sale of farm and business assets at the lowest rate ever. It's something our friends on the other side of the House, Mr. Speaker, will not propose, and they do not highlight in anything they talk about.

We're also eliminating the flat tax, the debt reduction surtax, and the high income surtax — all of which the initiatives that I have talked about are not proposed by the Sask-a-Tory Party in Saskatchewan.

Additionally, we have reduced the provincial sales tax by 33 per cent and have extended a sales tax credit to assist lower income people. The corporate income tax rate for small business has been reduced by 40 per cent since 1991, from 10 per cent to 6 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and we've increased the small business tax threshold by 50 per cent, from \$200,000 to \$300,000.

Last but not least, Mr. Speaker, this government has introduced dozens of targeted tax and royalty incentives in areas such as manufacturing and processing, enhanced oil recovery, potash and base mineral development, aviation, film and video, livestock and horticultural facilities, and research and development.

The cornerstone of our economic development strategy is the *Partnership for Prosperity*. Launched on June 7, 2001, this government's *Partnership for Prosperity* is an economic strategy that sets the stage for increased diversification, a greater emphasis on innovation and new technology, and a competitive commercial environment. This will lead to more and better jobs for Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Since putting our financial house in order in the early 1990s, Saskatchewan has been blessed with strong economic growth. *Partnership for Prosperity* builds on that growth. It builds upon that strong base and positions this province to meet new challenges — challenges like globalization — and take advantage of new opportunities. It is this strong economy that helps us build stronger social programs.

In consultation with almost ten thousand people, we discovered a desire to focus on our youth, focus on innovation and the revitalization of our rural economy.

First, our youth. In order to keep more of our youth, we are broadening access to the tools of the future and producing a society that is well-educated, competitive, and confident. To do this, we have enriched the educational system with technology-based enhancements, expanded opportunities for computer learning, and ensured that young people are aware of the opportunities right here at home.

In innovation, we can create more and better jobs by building on Saskatchewan's tradition of innovation as we address the challenges of globalization. To do this, we have expanded the research and development capabilities within the province. We've integrated new technologies and ideas into our traditional industries to create more value.

We've extended the range and the depth of IT (information technology) training in the province and increased the opportunities for participation to make sure everyone can contribute to a prosperous province and share in our success.

Revitalization. Here our focus is to maintain our balanced approach to economic growth and the quality of life issues to make Saskatchewan a great place to live, to work, and to do business. To do this we've fostered a competitive environment in which to do business. Teamed up with rural people to strengthen the rural economy, ACRE (Action Committee on the Rural Economy), we have reinforced our transportation infrastructure, and we've communicated the many success stories of Saskatchewan people.

So where are we today? Despite the global economic slowdown experienced as a result of September 11 terrorist attacks, the drought conditions experienced in Saskatchewan over the summer of 2001, and the falling oil and gas prices . . . we're not blaming these facts; Mr. Speaker, we're stating these facts as reality. But despite all of this, Mr. Speaker, within our first year of implementation of the *Partnership for Prosperity*, over half of our targets are on track — to be met or to be exceeded.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Some of these include the reduction of personal income taxes by over 25 per cent. Increasing the average disposable income by 20 per cent. Increasing the proportion of people completing some post-secondary education by 15 per cent. Increasing the number of businesses and families connected to the Internet by 40 per cent. Increasing the sales of agri-valued process products by 50 per cent.

Increasing the GDP (gross domestic product) per capita by 2.5 per cent per year. To become a world leader in research and development. To invest in the transportation network for economic development and retain competitiveness in the 10 key sectors of the partnership agenda.

In addition to the attainment of these targets, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to highlight several other positive developments in the Saskatchewan economy.

In January 2002, KPMG completed an update on the competitiveness of 42 cities in Canada, 43 cities in the United States, and 30 in other countries. The study included Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Regina, and Saskatoon. They say that while Canada was found as the overall cost leader in the study, I'm pleased, yet not surprised, to note that all four Saskatchewan cities covered in the survey rank better than the Canadian average.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Moreover, Mr. Speaker, among 17 major cities in the Canadian and US Midwest, Saskatoon ranked second behind Edmonton and ahead of Calgary. Ahead of Calgary, Winnipeg, and all of the US cities.

This study confirms that many Saskatchewan people already know that the province fares very well when compared to jurisdictions worldwide. However, Mr. Speaker, we as a government are not prepared to simply rest here. There is much more to be done. That is the plan; that is the vision that was unveiled in the Throne Speech.

Even in light of the recent difficulties being experienced in the agricultural sector, two key initiatives have been undertaken. The first one is the Action Committee on the Rural Economy or ACRE, which was created to identify and recommend options to further diversify the rural economy and to create jobs. This Assembly will soon receive the final report of ACRE and their proposals. Those proposals will form the basis of my government's action plan for rural revitalization.

This government is also advocating a comprehensive national farm safety net program. The Saskatchewan proposal, developed with advice from our farm leaders, calls for the federal government to support the following measures: a meaningful insurance program, including both crops and forages, a crop sector revenue deficiency program that offsets the impact of international subsidies, and an enhanced margin-based program targeted at our trade-sensitive livestock sector.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's looking to the future and is positioned to become a national leader in the production of renewable fuels such as ethanol. Ethanol has potential to further diversify our agricultural economy and help reduce carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere. This government will soon introduce a green print for ethanol production that will foster growth in the industry.

Not to forget to mention, Mr. Speaker, the immense potential that Saskatchewan has and this government has through an opening of, during the time that we're here, the Saskatchewan

and ... together with the Saskatchewan Film and Video Development Corporation, a new \$11.5 million state-of-the-art film and video soundstage in Regina. The soundstage will enable our province to fully participate in international film and video production.

Hope in the agricultural sector, hope in the video and film sector, hope in forestry and mining, hope in our economic development throughout this province, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad to stand firmly behind the vision that would speak to the hopes and aspirations of the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — To have our province grow we must have a firm foundation, Mr. Speaker, and I won't have time to talk about many of the initiatives that we're proposing in putting forward before a student even enters the school system, such as the child action plan, the Kids First program. And I'm sure others will highlight those programs as well.

But I'd also like to talk about what we're doing in the area of education from K to 12. While provincial funding for kindergarten to grade 12 education increased by 24 per cent over the past four years, I'm also proud to say the government has responded to the innovation and dedication of our educators and the long-term needs of our youth. Building on the experience of community, school, and the innovation of Saskatchewan educators, the Role of the School Task Force developed the concept of School^{PLUS}. Our government has embraced School^{PLUS} that would integrate education and human services to ensure that our schools are able to respond to the particular needs of the community and all of our students. We've endorsed the concept of School^{PLUS} that will work with our province's educators and human service agencies to ensure its implementation.

In addition to this focus on education, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point to this government's CommunityNet program. CommunityNet is a broadband, high-speed, province-wide telecommunications network that will connect more than 800 schools and regional colleges, including those on First Nation reserves, 310 health facilities, and 256 government offices.

This government recognizes the potential that CommunityNet has for Saskatchewan in terms of improving educational, health, and government services in affected communities, and potentially economic opportunities. The potential of the future of the infrastructure that CommunityNet provides is endless, Mr. Speaker.

In keeping with the focus on K to 12 education, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to celebrate the achievements of Buffalo Plains, in my constituency, Cupar and Indian Head School Divisions, and their efforts to join together and create one division. Thanks to their efforts, more than 5,000 students attending 22 schools in this new division will enjoy increased opportunities to learn and increased benefits from learning.

These benefits would include improved library resources and greater access and support to technology through such things as volume purchasing, shared services, and support personnel. There'll be expanded programs like music and band, improved

support services in the areas of speech and language pathology, and French language instruction, and increased staff professional development at networking that will be supported by mentoring opportunities.

So congratulations to all the boards, all the members of the board, the students, the staff, the teachers, who are involved in this innovative initiative. They began their work, Mr. Speaker, before there was any significant financial assistance in place. They recognized it was right to do so, and they moved ahead.

Now with an offer of additional financial assistance, it is hoped that other school divisions will take up the advantage of this opportunity to amalgamate and to be able to offer their students the same advantages.

My constituency, Mr. Speaker, has a number of mature families who have students that are entering into post-secondary education opportunities, and so I'd like to spend a few minutes talking about what opportunities would be available to them.

In terms of post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to highlight this government's desire to integrate education, training, and research opportunities, while creating jobs and economic growth in the process.

(21:00)

The knowledge corridor has sprung up as a result of the close proximity of the University of Regina, SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), and the SIFC (Saskatchewan Indian Federated College) building now underway and soon to be occupied, and the Petroleum Technology Research Centre and Information Technology Building otherwise known as the Terrace.

This will allow for such benefits as shared services and facilities, community recreational opportunities, academic program bridging initiatives, investment in research, and economic growth and job creation. Since the initiation of the research park in 1998 and the commencement of the operations in 2000, the provincial government has invested more than \$31 million towards the Petroleum Technology Research Centre, the Terrace, and other related infrastructure for tenants to carry out or support research and/or technology development.

These and many other efforts are ever improving this province's ability to educate our young people as well as link them with the private sector to ensure their participation in the futures of our province and their future successes here.

Economic growth in Saskatchewan will continue to be led by the private sector and private investment. However public policy and government initiatives as well as the cooperative sector make up the second and third engines of our economy. They also serve as a catalyst to investment. Cooperatives can and have had a great impact in Saskatchewan's economy by keeping profits in the hands of people who deserve it most: the Saskatchewan people.

Our Crown utility corporations represent another competitive advantage in support of economic growth in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They follow the same principle. They provide quality

services and offer consumer and commercial rates that are among the lowest in Canada. They also keep head offices here, good jobs here, and profits right here at home, supporting local suppliers and providing dividends that help fund essential public services.

Crown corporations also provide the opportunity to partner with private companies in attracting investment for new and expanded enterprises in the province. Many small businesses would tell you how they've benefited from the partnerships they've developed with our Crown corporations. A modern economy such as ours must ensure that workers and consumers are protected.

Investments in infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, is an important part of both the economy and the quality of life in Saskatchewan. This government is in the midst of the single largest public infrastructure project in our history — \$900 million will now be spent over the next three years to improve our highways. Maybe this will help the Leader of the Opposition's efforts to get into Alberta more and more often these days.

In my constituency of Regina Wascana Plains, I'm happy to highlight several major road initiatives including the resurfacing of sections of Highway 1 from Balgonie to Regina and from Pasqua Street to the west of Grand Coulee, the paving of Highway 364 from Balgonie to Edenwold, and the regional highways plan that will move Ring Road traffic further east resulting in less heavy truck traffic conflicting with people needing to get to work. Pilot Butte and Balgonie have received, respectively, 1 million and about \$700,000 to address their water quality concerns and have been given dollars for a joint fire protection initiative. Investment in our volunteers in our communities, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan communities are enriched and strengthened by our volunteers. We have the highest rate of volunteerism in Canada that contributes to the growth and the prosperity of our province. Last year we recognized the volunteers in our community — the year of the International Year of Volunteers — and we give out the volunteer medal recipients each year. I'd like to congratulate those who are on the list from Regina — James Burnett and Jean Thomas. Mr. Burnett is the retired director of Education and a trustee of the Regina Public School system who is also known for outstanding volunteer commitment to his community. And Ms. Thomas has been active with the scouting movement, church activities, the Regina Food Bank, the seniors and war veterans, and musical groups just to name a few.

I'm looking forward now to the volunteer sector initiative as it will impact on Saskatchewan. It will help us to forge new relationships with the volunteer sector to develop a portal for those groups who want to make and strengthen their volunteer base with the Government of Saskatchewan, and it will help them with the challenges that are now confronting the volunteer sector in this province. So I'm looking forward to the announcement of those initiatives in the days ahead, Mr. Speaker.

Another top priority of our government is our commitment to accessible, quality health care. In carrying out our priority we have listened to the people from across the province about the

services that matter to them and their families. Out of these discussions, the government has developed the action plan for Saskatchewan health care and in doing so we've provided a clear direction that will improve access to care, quality of services and, most importantly, the future of publicly funded health care in the province.

I'm also interested, Mr. Speaker, during this Throne Speech debate, to hear what this Grow Saskatchewan plan will mean, if it were ever put in action in the province of Saskatchewan. I'll be interested to listen if there's anything to this plan beyond the opposition's repeated gloom and doom that they shed day after day on the economic development prospects of this province.

I haven't heard anything new, Mr. Speaker, beyond the mantra of cutting taxes, privatizing everything that's not nailed down, gutting the civil service, and spending more and more of our children's future, Mr. Speaker. The jury is out. As the headline in *The Wilkie Press* says, "Is it Grow Saskatchewan or Gut Saskatchewan?"

It seems, Mr. Speaker, that there are conflicting elements in this plan and there are not many nutrients that are needed to grow any province. Just ask British Columbia, Mr. Speaker; or just ask Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, it's the reason I continue to work toward the plan laid out before us in the Speech from the Throne. It's the reason why I'll vote against the amendment and stand in favour of this speech delivered by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well it's always an interesting time to rise and to address the Speech to the . . . what we've just heard, where the Premier wants to go. And we'll do that in a little while, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll go through some of the things that they state, and we'll work from there.

First of all, I guess there's one or two other things I should mention before we get into those specific details of how the province of Saskatchewan is being run and how it could and should be run.

First of all, I think I need to take a minute or two and thank my family for their support, as those of us in this legislature know, that it takes all kinds of time to do the job well. No particular assigned hours. Individuals may come calling or give you a phone call at any time, day or night, wanting us to address and deal with the issues that they have on hand.

And we have to show up at anything from ribbon cuttings — and we do have some of those in my constituency — to, you know, parades, sports facilities — all the things that happen in all our communities. We're sort of expected to be there, and I think we should be there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because people need the opportunity to meet us and to have us around and to talk to us.

So with those kinds of time constraints on us, I do have to thank my family for their support, especially my wife, Arlene, who

fills in on all the things that are sort of my responsibility at home and takes care of those when I'm not around. I have a new member of my family that isn't a new member as such, but the support is a new support. I have a daughter of mine that's working in Ottawa right now for one of the MPs (Member of Parliament), and she has a whole new insight into exactly what politicians do and the amount of work that they put into what they do. And it's very interesting to get that kind of a support and understanding that's out there.

Anyways, first of all, I think I'd like to spend a little bit of time about my constituency, and then I may come back to that a little later on. I'm really quite proud of my constituency. The constituency of Rosthern is bounded by both Saskatchewan rivers and goes north to about halfway between Duck Lake and Rosthern, and then about halfway between Martensville and Saskatoon, and then has the boundaries of the rivers as the boundaries on the east and the west side.

It's one of the few constituencies in Saskatchewan that has grown. I think all members in this Assembly have received, after the census came back, the little reports on to what the population is in each of their constituencies. I notice, for example, in Regina, almost every constituency in Regina has dropped in population, which is amazing. After having hired 500 more people last year and all the families that involves, you'd think this government could have at least kept their own town . . . kept the population up.

But when I look at the constituency of Rosthern, it has grown more than any other constituency in Saskatchewan. And there is a couple of very definite reasons for that, and I think it's the industrious, take-care-of-yourself nature of my constituents. They don't put their hand out to government and say, "Can you do something for us?" They've done it for themselves. And you drive through that area, and you will see the dairies. You will see the chicken operations, the hog operations. You'll see intensive livestock operations that you don't have any other place in Saskatchewan.

And there is one other unique feature that I think underlines why this happens as it does. That constituency has never once voted NDP. Never once.

If you look at the constituents in Saskatchewan that are traditional NDP constituencies that's, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where you'll find the numbers have gone down. And I think it says something for the attitude that a free enterprise constituency has, taking care of themselves, taking care of their own, doing their own initiatives — it shows.

Now someone was chirping across from the other side, don't forget the influence of being close to Saskatoon. That's right. But those dairies aren't there because Saskatoon is there. You don't find them outside of Swift Current. You don't find them outside of Prince Albert. You don't find them around Regina. They're in that peculiar area of Saskatchewan and so the part that Saskatoon plays a part in is obviously the growth that you would see in three of our southern communities, particularly Martensville, Warman and Osler. Those have grown due to their proximity to Saskatoon.

But so have all the rest of the communities. All the rest of the

communities have grown, and some of those have essentially no link with Saskatoon whatsoever. It's a great constituency, and as I said, they have never voted NDP in the political history of this province, and they never will. They never will.

Every single poll but one went to the Saskatchewan Party last time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Every single poll. And that poll I'll make sure we win again. That poll is going to come back, and we will take them all next time. That's because those individuals, Mr. Deputy Speaker, know how to take care of themselves and take care of their families. They have the initiative and the drive that is needed.

Let's take a minute or two and go through the Speech from the Throne. And some of the pages we'll comment on and some we won't, because there's just nothing there. But others again we will.

Page 1. An interesting line, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It says:

Last summer, the Premier and his caucus traveled by bus throughout the province to hear the ideas, concerns and enthusiasm of Saskatchewan people — a process that will continue . . .

That's the infamous bus tour. And, Mr. Speaker, if in the morning when you get up and you listen quietly, you still hear the odd echo of laughter coming out of a few of the coulees of Saskatchewan, from people laughing at that bus tour. What a silly mockery of democracy that really was to load up this group across over there and chug across Saskatchewan.

And they stopped in Rosthern. And where did they go? Where did they go? Did they go up and down and visit the businesses in the community? Did they ask the business people, are you employing more than you used to? How is business doing? No, they didn't.

An Hon. Member: — Where did they go?

(21:15)

Mr. Heppner: — They ran very quickly down to the newspaper office, got their picture taken, and another little group skippity-scattered down the street to the credit union. They figured, surely there must be some support over here at the credit union. Well I happen to know that virtually all the people in the credit union vote for parties other than the NDP.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — And so does the newspaper. And that was their visit. It didn't take much longer than it took for me to say it, Mr. Speaker. And that's the kind of visits they had all over this province. They ran into communities, said "Please take our pictures so people think we were around," and then they were gone. They didn't meet with the farming community; they didn't meet with the business community. I don't know . . . they didn't drop in at any schools in my constituency. They just didn't do anything. It was just run and hide, run and hide, just stick their head out and they were gone.

And again we have some chirping from the other side, Mr.

Speaker, asking what we did. Okay, in my constituency, in the Grow Saskatchewan meetings, we had a representative from virtually every town, every RM (rural municipality) council, from the division board, they came out there. We presented our idea and we asked them if they had some ideas, and we spent an hour to two hours with them. No photo op. We didn't go running down to the newspaper and said, "please take our picture because guess we're doing something. We don't know what it is but we're going to jump on the bus and do some more of the same."

Well that's what they did all summer long. So what do we get? A whole page, the first page, Mr. Speaker in this Speech from the Throne. And it says, "the premier and his caucus travelled by bus throughout the province and got their picture taken." And that's about it. That's about it. Not much else. No one is sure where they went or what they did.

Page 2 . . . Someone over there again, and the sound from over there is interesting, said it must have really bothered me that they did that. Well no, they can drive any place in a bus they want to but don't try and disguise this as a fact-finding tour. It wasn't. It wasn't.

There is a very nice heading at the top of page 2. It says "Province of Opportunity." I like that because it is a province of opportunity. Everyone in this legislature from both sides of the House, I believe, was probably born in this province. We were raised in this province. We love this province. We're still here, which after having about half a century of NDP rule says a lot for what the 58 of us think of this province that we're still here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Province of opportunity. The opportunities are here, Mr. Speaker. They're here. They're here in rural Saskatchewan, they're here in our cities, they're here in our tourist industries, they're all over. They just need to be tapped and tapped in a way that's going to be significant and bring those people from all over Canada and the United States that have left Saskatchewan, bring them back.

In Ireland, Mr. Speaker, when they made some changes, they've actually had people come back from all around the world. And as you know, as being a school teacher yourself — and you know a smattering of history I'm sure — Ireland was basically noted for potato famines and exporting people. Good people all around the world. A lot of those people are now coming back to Ireland for the opportunity that's there.

We need to provide that opportunity in Saskatchewan to bring those people back from Ontario and BC and Manitoba and Alberta and from the States. But instead we're moving them out. The census showed very definitely where they're going. We just had a member from across there from the NDP who said, yes, we're bringing them home. Well either the census is lying or he doesn't know what's going on. He must have been on the bus and I'm sure it was the back of the bus. If he'd have looked out of the front he'd have seen that many of the windows in small town Saskatchewan and the business places boarded up.

I recently came back from Lethbridge and we came across from

Medicine Hat and went through the area south of Leader, back through Leader along that particular area. Some of those towns had more stores that were boarded up than were open. That's because of that sort of an attitude. When the census says, Mr. Speaker, that the population is dropping and that member across, the NDP member, can sit there and say, yes, we're bringing them back. He seems to know something the census people doesn't know; he seems to know something people in those small towns don't know when they board up their stores.

We drive down some of those areas and you have to look for miles to find a particular farm that's being lived in. Totally different from my constituency, but it's unfortunately the truth in much of Saskatchewan. But it is a province of opportunity and we have some ideas. When I presented those to the people in my Grow Saskatchewan meetings, they said that's good. We believe that. We believe that.

And we have the member from PA saying, what did you say then? Well if he'd have been in the House all day today, he'd have heard our leader get up earlier on this day and very specifically explain it to him. I have no intention, Mr. Speaker, of wasting good time telling him twice something that he won't hear once.

Province of opportunity. Here are some of the opportunities that are listed. Diversification and value-added processing in agriculture — definitely, definitely. Ethanol is one of those. Ethanol is one of those. There are groups all around Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, who are just waiting to go ahead and start something. They've done their plans; they had the people who know cattle; they had the land set aside; they have money set aside. What is this government doing? Are they providing an opportunity? Are they guaranteeing a market for some ethanol?

All they would have to do is say okay, you people tell us how much ethanol you're going to produce, and as you know, Mr. Speaker, an ethanol plant has to go together with a feedlot in order for them to become viable. We know that from the Pound-Maker experience. All they need to be told is that if you produce so many gallons of ethanol, we'll make sure that the market is there. The government can do that very easily by dictating how . . . what percentage of our fuel has to be ethanol.

But not this group of people. It's a very simple idea. They've got the plans, they have the cattle, they have the land, they have the people. But are they going to go ahead and work with that idea of providing a market? No, not these people.

If you can't sell it down to the States, they couldn't possibly imagine how we could use ethanol in Saskatchewan. But they will be starting a few of them, I'm sure. But they'll have taxpayers' money involved. And they'll probably go like our potato schemes, or some other hare-brained schemes we've had. The NDP-CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) have had schemes for decades. It started off with a shoe factory, who knows when. Now we've got the potato factory. Did have, it went down, and some of us over there still think that it's going to fly.

So they could do something with ethanol if they actually wanted to. We presented an idea to them, the cattlemen out

there who want to go ahead and have those feedlots, looked at our ideas and said excellent, that's exactly what we need. But is this government listening? No, they were on the bus, but they weren't listening — they weren't listening. They didn't pick up any of those ideas that were out there in rural Saskatchewan from the people who understand cattle.

You're going to have a bunch of these people out there, who know next to nothing about farming, are going to be the ones that are going to try and decide how ethanol should be produced.

It says increased development of energy resources, including green energy. Okay, we appreciate green energy. We had the member from Greystone get up the other day and make quite a lengthy statement about his view of energy. And before we get into the green energy idea, he was totally against the production of uranium.

Well about an hour ago we had the member from Cumberland get up and speak eloquently about the way things have changed up North and the jobs that were being provided for the people of the North.

Now why doesn't he get together with the member from Greystone and why don't they decide. Are they going to put those people out of work that are working in the mines — the uranium mines, or aren't they going to do that?

The NDP has absolutely no idea what they're doing out there. One member gets up on Monday and says, we've got great opportunity in uranium mines. The day before the other one gets up and says, oh we're going to shut them all down. Doesn't anyone over there know what they're doing? Doesn't anyone have any idea?

I ask the question, Mr. Speaker, one hand went up. That's our Finance minister who's just run a deficit — just run a deficit — and he thinks he's the one who knows what's going on including green energy, Mr. Speaker.

I mentioned earlier on that we'd been on a bit of a trip to Lethbridge and it wasn't for anything anti-Saskatchewan. It happened to be a swap meet for car parts, so we were bringing some things back to Saskatchewan. But anyways driving from Swift Current through to Medicine Hat and then down to Lethbridge there are those wind generators going — beautiful site, quiet.

The member from Greystone should know it's the best green energy available. Just quietly making their little spins. Going slow enough they couldn't even hit a bird, as environmentally sound as possible. Now any taxpayers' money from Saskatchewan in those plants? No. Are they providing green energy? Yes. Are they marketing it in Saskatchewan? Yes. Are they using SaskPower's energy system, their power grid? Yes.

But now all of a sudden this NDP government has decided they want to get into the game. Well let's see how they're going to play the game. How will the game be different? These wind charges that are out there, green energy, doing exactly what everyone thinks they ought to be doing are paying some \$70,000 a year in taxes to RMs in property tax and in school tax

— property tax and school tax. They're paying access for the landowners to get to those particular sites at about \$2,000 a piece.

So the monies coming in to the people who are living there, to the school boards, to the RMs for their infrastructure, and they've got green energy. It just is a win-win program. And by the way, Mr. Speaker, I need to repeat no taxpayers' money involved in this — no taxpayers' money involved in this.

So now we're going to plan one and this is how the NDP is going to be planning it, so we need to pay attention to this. They're going to be building some more of these things. That idea in itself is not bad. There is enough wind in southwest Saskatchewan to handle a lot of it. And that's just wind that blows over from Alberta and from the oceans.

However, they're not going to be paying any money to the RMs for taxes that could go for RM infrastructure or for education. Zero. Absolute zero. The NDP's Green Plan won't be putting that money into schools or into infrastructure. What are they going to be paying to the landowners for access? Thousands of dollars? No, about two hundred.

Now, are they going to have a market for this? Yes, Mr. Speaker, they have a market. Guess where they found it? Guess where they found it? Who's going to buy this energy at an inflated price because wind energy does cost more? Who are they going to sell it to? They are going to sell it to the university, which is paid for with taxpayers' money. So they are going to build these things with taxpayers' money. Then they are going to sell it to an institution that's being funded from taxpayers' money and that's supposed to be a grandiose plan. I doubt it.

Now, to make it just one step worse, just one step worse, when another group wants to come in and build some more of these things without taxpayers' dollars, pay the taxes to the RMs and the school and to the landowners, suddenly SaskPower has decided that you can't sell it down our grid system. You're out of the business. No more out-of-province people can come in here. And then we'll build wind generators; green energy without taxpayers' money. It can't be done. No more investment.

There's some chirping across there but I can tell they're confused cause they obviously shut that down. So we are still on page 2. We are still on page 2. There isn't a whole lot more on that particular page so we will move on to page 3. We get into agriculture.

We go on to page . . .

(21:30)

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order, please. Order, please. I would ask all members to . . . Order. I would ask all members to give the member from Rosthern their attention.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Truly I have so much to say and apparently so little time. It says that year 2001,

one of the driest years in our history. It was the driest year.

So then they go through what they've done for the agricultural scene. What have they done? Ten years ago, they tore up GRIP (gross revenue insurance program). For ten years they kept saying, we're going to have a safety net. We'll build a safety net. There is no safety net in place.

They've got this crop insurance thing that they've been working on. No one seemed to want to sign up, so a few years ago they had an idea that wasn't that bad. They put in spot loss for hail. It was a good idea. It did get a lot of people to sign up. So this year, they pulled it. So they've got the program that had a good feature in it. It created involvement. Now they pull that one good feature.

These people across there, Mr. Speaker, have absolutely no idea of what agriculture is all about, have absolutely no idea how to build a safety net. Why hasn't the Minister of Agriculture put together a safety net, gone to the other provinces, made it agreeable with them, gone jointly with the federal government and said, here's a safety net, work together with us and we'll get out of your hair. Instead he sends a fax once every month or two and says, please send us some money. And usually he gets the answer no.

Last year he got some money to make up for the fact that he didn't have enough to pay out the payments he had to make on some of the crop insurance. This year he doesn't want to pay it back. And when it's supposed to come out of this year's payments, he says, someone's renegeing on their commitments. It's the Minister of Agriculture who's renegeing on his commitments to the farm community.

It says there's a commitment not to permit unsustainable tax reduction return to massive deficits. Whose return is to a massive deficit? Half a billion dollars. Half a billion dollars this year. I've sat in this House for numbers of years when Roy Romanow used to get up and say, we're never going to let this province get into debt again. His chair is barely cold. We have a new Premier, and he's got us a half a billion dollars in the glue, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — A half a billion dollars. And then the Minister of Finance used to get up and say, well we have this rainy day fund that's out there. This rainy day fund. Well we told him there was no money in it. Then the university people who usually set up one of these mock budgets, tell their students, but don't count on the rainy day fund because it's empty. We knew it. The university knew it.

Finally the Minister of Finance says, well check with our bond rating agencies. And the bond rating agency says there's no money in it. He has no one else to turn to. A half a billion dollars in the glue from this Finance minister, from this Premier.

This is not a Roy Romanow government. This would have not have happened under Roy Romanow, even though I didn't support too many of the things that he's put forward. One of his budgets I actually supported, but I don't think this government

with this group of NDP MLAs will ever present a budget that an opposition person will have any support for. I don't think so.

There is in this particular plan absolutely nothing that's going to grow Saskatchewan — absolutely nothing. They've taken a fund that they didn't have and spent it. That's hard to believe, but you'll have to ask them about that, Mr. Speaker. They put the province a half a billion dollars in the glue, some place we haven't been in 10 years — in 10 years.

And then the first two speakers that got up from the NDP side in favour of this thing thought they had to go back and talk about old debt. Well they should have gone back a little further and found out where the first \$6.8 billion of debt came from. They don't want to admit it. They've got about 25 per cent of this province convinced that it never happened.

But, Mr. Speaker, in the last election, which party got the most support from the public? It was the Saskatchewan Party . . . was the Saskatchewan Party. The NDP has almost never received the most votes. This is not a socialist province — it is not a socialist province. It's unfortunately a bunch of capitalists that are too often run over roughshod by an NDP-CCF group that think they're socialists. There is no democracy on that side and there is no socialism on that side. There's just a lot of greed and power-hungry people. That's all we have over there.

Back to my constituency. I have to briefly mention a few other things that are going on in that particular constituency. We have, for example, two communities who've lost their rinks and they have to rebuild them because they are not safe any more. Any provincial money? No. We have two communities that have a real water problem. One is getting its water from dugouts and has done so for years. Now they're pumping it from one dugout to another. Last year both of those went dry. They pump it from one well into the first dugout, into the next dugout.

And what does this province have to do, what are they going to say they're going to do? They're going to test the water for water safety. Now that's good. That's good, Mr. Speaker. But after they've told all these villages and communities that their water is bad, what are they going to do? Absolutely nothing. These communities will still be pumping bad water from bad wells into bad dugouts to another bad dugout and be told they're drinking bad water, but there's going to be no money from them. No money for infrastructure.

One of the things that, as we went around with our Grow Saskatchewan meetings, they kept saying: they've downloaded on us, downloaded on us. Our sewer systems, our water systems are in trouble and they're not getting any help.

We also have a number of other communities whose growth — this is unusual in Saskatchewan — but whose growth has been so rapid they've actually got difficulty with the growth problems, particularly schools. We have communities whose schools are full, literally bursting at the seams. They need some money to build some schools. Nothing coming from this particular government.

Mr. Speaker, there's lots more that could be said. We could talk about the NDP promise of 30,000 new jobs. They've lost jobs.

We could talk about the balanced budget. Well we already did.

Surgical waiting times. Well that would take a whole night to go through all of that. Longest waiting lists in Canada. Longest waiting lists in Canada in the province where Tommy Douglas created a health system. This group of people has messed it up. This group of people can't control it. This group of people can't think up a new idea. Tommy Douglas thought of a new idea. The idea has aged. It doesn't work any more. We need some new fresh ideas from over there. They have none. They have none.

One more thing. We had a promise in 1999 — 200 more police officers. In the first couple of years there was a surplus in the budget. Did we get those 200 police officers? No. We got about 45, no 46 — 46 police officers in the first half of their mandate. Now that they're half a billion dollars in the glue, where are they going to find the money for the other 150 that they have to provide — 155 cause the Minister of Justice likes to add up things like police officers that he doesn't have? I don't think we're going to get them.

I asked him today for a commitment for just 55 more this year. We didn't get that commitment. We didn't get that commitment. We need that. We're not even discussing the loss of police officers to movement, to retirement, to all of those sorts of things. We haven't even discussed those. So if we're going to have some justice and people are going to feel secure, we need those 200 police officers. That was a good commitment. That was a good promise that was made back in 1999. It just needs to be kept, Mr. Speaker, and they're not keeping it.

It's a sorry tale what they're doing to this province. People are leaving. They have created the car theft capital in North America, the crime capital in Canada, the longest waiting lists.

Without a doubt, Mr. Speaker, there is no way I can support this particular Throne Speech, and I will be supporting the amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 21:41.