

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to rise to present a petition on behalf of people who are concerned about the tobacco legislation:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately amend tobacco legislation that would make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be in possession of any tobacco products; and furthermore, anyone found guilty of such an offence should be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.

The people who have signed this petition are all from Wadena.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today to do with overfishing at Lake of the Prairies. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to work with the federal government, First Nations representatives, and with other provincial governments to bring about a resolution in the Lake of the Prairies situation and to ensure that our natural resources as a whole are used in a responsible manner by all people in the future.

The communities involved, Mr. Speaker, are Langenburg, Churchbridge, Tantalton, Binscarth, and Saltcoats.

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the deplorable and dangerous condition of Highway 58. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make the necessary repairs to Highway 58 in order to avoid serious injury and property damage.

And this petition is signed by individuals all from the community of Chaplin.

I so present.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present on behalf of citizens of the province regarding the prescription drug hike by this government. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reinstate a reasonable annual deductible amount for prescription drugs in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people in Indian Head and Wolseley.

I so present.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of people of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the tobacco legislation. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately amend tobacco legislation that would make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be in possession of any tobacco products; and furthermore, anyone found guilty of such an offence would be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Weyburn, Yellow Grass, and Regina.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to improve Highway 42:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to make the necessary repairs to Highway 42 in the Arm River constituency in order to prevent injury or loss of life and also to prevent the loss of economic opportunity in the area.

As in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Signed by the citizens from Strongfield and Elbow.

I so present.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents concerned with the boundaries of the new regional health authorities. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure the best possible health care coverage for the communities of Govan, Duval, Strasbourg, and Bulyea by placing those communities in the Regina Regional Health Authority as opposed to the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Strasbourg and Bulyea.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again I rise in the Assembly to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the

commercial fishing on Besnard Lake. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to work with the federal government, First Nation representatives to bring about a resolution in the Besnard Lake situation and to ensure that our natural resources as a whole are used in a responsible manner by all people in the future.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, on this petition are from Southey, from Saskatoon, Bjorkdale, and Prince Albert.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received:

A petition concerning the recruitment and retention of registered technologists and combined laboratory and x-ray technicians;

a petition concerning Swift Current's request for a new hospital; and

addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper no. 7, 11, 23, 59, 129, 132, and no. 134.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and through you to other members of this Hon. Assembly three people who are very important to me.

And seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, firstly, my parents, Charlie and Verna Stewart. They have farmed all of their adult lives, firstly in the Chamberlain district and later near Pense, where I was raised. They are now retired in Regina. They still take a great interest in agriculture and agricultural issues and particularly in what happens on our farm.

And with them, Mr. Speaker, is my sister, Cheryl Perry, who is an accountant by profession and who moved from Regina to Calgary four years ago to pursue a second career as an accounting consultant to the oil and gas industry. and they're doing very well at that. I hope that all members will welcome my family members to this Hon. Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, sitting in the west gallery, 18 students from St. Margaret School in Moose Jaw. Accompanying the students are Monique Byers and Lana Hebert.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say thank you to the grade 5 class from St. Margaret's for deciding to spend one of their last afternoons of grade 5 here at the legislature to watch proceedings. And I look forward to meeting with you at about

2:30. So all members, please help me welcome the grade 5s from St. Margaret's.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a friend of mine sitting in the west gallery, who's Dr. John Conway. And Dr. Conway is from Saskatoon. That name may take people by surprise because there is another Dr. John Conway who's the Chair of the Regina Public School Board, but this is Saskatoon's Dr. John Conway.

And he is a retired professor of psychology from the University of Saskatchewan, has also helped the provincial government giving out some advice over the past few years. I believe he's now retired from the University of Saskatchewan but still very active in the community. And I'd like everyone to join with me in welcoming Dr. John Conway to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with members opposite in welcoming the Stewarts here today.

They're my neighbours in Regina and I have to say I see their regular interest in agriculture when they dig up their yard every year and replant it in a new way.

And I would also like to mention that Ms. Stewart was an active part of my congregation of St. James when I was there and was a very strong support. So I'd like to welcome them here and have others join me as well. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

SIASST's Employment Rate Tops 90 Per Cent

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the crops are not the only things growing this summer. Opportunity is also ripening with the sweet fruit of enthusiasm and it's our young people that stand to benefit.

Mr. Speaker, in conjunction with the newly created 11,000 jobs in the Saskatchewan economy, we are starting to see the full cause of the effect. SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) 2002 grads recently reported in a survey that they continue to find jobs at a rate in excess of 90 per cent. Graduates have also once again given the institute top marks for program quality and report that 91 per cent of the graduates have entered the labour force.

Mr. Speaker, the survey also showed that 92 per cent of the employed graduates are working here in Saskatchewan. Now, Mr. Speaker, some naysayers may claim that these are in low-paying jobs with no future. That's not true. The survey discovered that the graduates' annual training related salary increased by almost 5 per cent to \$2,146 monthly.

More than 3,700 students graduated from SIAST's certificate

and diploma programs last year. SIAST has 41,000 full- and part-time students and an annual operating budget of \$133 million. Over the years, SIAST has evolved to become a pre-eminent institution for post-secondary education and skills training in Saskatchewan and an innovative leader in technical education.

I am sure all members of the legislature join me in congratulating this institution on its well-deserved success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Briercrest Grain Buys Grain Elevator

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A group of local farmers has purchased the abandoned Wheat Pool elevator at Briercrest. Briercrest Grain paid Sask Pool their asking price of \$171,000 for the facility which includes a 26-car spot. Briercrest Grain is in the business of cleaning grain to export standards and loading producer cars.

According to their feasibility study the farmer shareholders of Briercrest Grain indicate that the loading of 150 cars a year will put the new company in a break-even position, and according to their business so far, they are likely to be far in excess of 150 car loadings in their very first year.

The company also does custom seed cleaning. Producers can save 18 cents a bushel by using the Briercrest Grain facility or about \$1,600 for a hopper car of wheat. And producers from outside of the immediate area have shown interest in utilizing the company's facilities.

The facility is served by Southern Rails Co-op short-line railway and this initiative will certainly help to sustain them as well.

Congratulations to the farmer shareholders of Briercrest Grain. We appreciate your efforts to grow Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Restoration Projects Win Awards

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, there are some small but significant stories that have their own kind of pleasant synchronicity. Such a story occurred on Saturday evening in Saskatoon at that castle on the riverbank — the Bessborough Hotel. Next to the Legislative Building, the Bess is, I would guess, the most recognizable heritage structure in Saskatchewan. It has appeared on a postcard or two in its time as has the legislature.

At the Bessborough, the Saskatchewan Architectural Heritage Society held its annual awards ceremony. Four awards were announced including one for, quote, “the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan’s Award for Heritage Architecture Excellence in Restoration and Renovation of Landmark Property”. That’s quite a mouthful, Mr. Speaker, but it is this award I wish to speak to because it is for a project we in this building are quite familiar with: the restoration and conservation of Saskatchewan’s most well-known government building — this

one.

Named in the award are SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation), PSW Architecture and Interior Design Ltd., and Dominion Construction. We know what a monumental task this was, and it is good that it be recognized.

Other awards were made for, quote, “Adaptive Reuse” of the old CP Telegraph Building connected to Casino Regina, Adaptive Reuse of the old Eaton’s department store in Saskatoon by the Saskatoon Board of Education, and for excellence in educational and community programming to the town of Whitewood for the Whitewood Heritage Walking Tour project.

Mr. Speaker, we are a young province with few buildings of heritage quality. We can all applaud efforts that are being made to preserve our heritage for future generations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

Celebrity Sports Dinner and Auction in Unity

Mr. Peters: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Saturday evening Shirley and I were pleased to attend the Curtis Brown celebrity sports dinner and auction in the Unity arena.

The Unity Arena Project Committee spent the year planning and finalizing several fundraising events. The supper and auction were well attended by over 400 people. This is a tremendous credit to the whole community, but especially to the volunteers on various committees for their hard work to renovate their arena and curling rink.

Special mention also for their guest of honour, Curtis Brown, a hometown boy who is achieving his own goals in the NHL (National Hockey League), currently with the Buffalo Sabres. He was pleased to be able to assist Unity with this special event.

Thanks also to Eldon Ducherer who did a fine job of emceeing.

I would like . . . I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Unity and district for a job well done. Just another example of how rural Saskatchewan keeps their communities going.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chief Page of Canadian Senate

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a former Page with this Legislative Assembly and Luther College university student and former resident of Regina Sherwood, Melanie Bratkoski, is today the Chief Page of the Canadian Senate. Currently she studies political science and Canadian studies at the University of Ottawa and she has been a Senate Page for the last two years.

Melanie works at least two days a week, serves in Senate committee meetings, and attends university on a full-time basis. She also recruits, trains, and schedules all other Pages of the Senate. But this busy schedule does not faze her. She says that it is all about planning and time management, and the Senate has plenty of surprises that can really throw off her game plan.

Melanie keenly appreciates the significance of her position and loves the fact that she gets to witness history in the making. She also likes meeting Pages from throughout the country and says it gives her a real idea of the rich cultural flavour of Canada.

Melanie plans to attend one more year at the University of Ottawa and then, Mr. Speaker, plans to return to Regina to finish her degree at Luther College, University of Regina.

Melanie served during the last session of the previous legislature in 2000 and in the fall session of the first . . . of the current legislature in December 2000.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all members look forward to joining with me in saluting the accomplishments of this very, very well-deserving young woman.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

St. Angela's Academy 2002 Graduation

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Saturday, St. Angela's Academy at Prelate, Saskatchewan held its graduation exercises. St. Angela's Academy is a Catholic residential high school for young women in grades 9 through 12 where the Ursuline Sisters and the lay staff educate for life.

At St. Angela's Academy students experience a lived-in Christian community and a well-rounded Christian ethics program that empowers students for effective witness and service to others. Students also experience a wide range of high school credit courses qualifying students for a university admission along with much appreciated individual help outside of class.

The academy also offers the fine arts as a vitally important component of the curriculum, fully incorporated into the daily schedule. Students experience the development of the whole person through a comprehensive sports and activities program while experiencing an opportunity for growth and fundamental life skills in everyday living, as well as becoming good leaders, followers, and innovators.

Students also experience a unique opportunity to meet many other girls and to form deep and lasting friendships.

Congratulations to Lisa Jo De Bussac, Tanya Guran, Bernadette Hamilton, and my daughter, Lacey Weekes. All four girls from Biggar made the honour roll. Tanya Guran also received the excellence in math for grade 10. I'm very proud of my daughter, Lacey, who also became . . . was named Miss Congeniality for the grade 10 class and also Sportswomen of the Year for 2002.

Please join me in congratulating the students, staff, and Ursuline Sisters for another outstanding year. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

High-speed Internet Service Expands

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's more good news as we build the new Saskatchewan.

SaskTel High Speed Internet is now available in Lampman, Saskatchewan. That's right, Mr. Speaker, Lampman is the latest Saskatchewan community to join SaskTel's High Speed Internet service network.

Thanks to the CommunityNET program implemented by this government, SaskTel has been able to expand its commercial High Speed Internet more quickly than was originally intended. You may ask: does this expansion benefit the people of Alberta? No! Maybe the urban populations? Well not directly, Mr. Speaker.

This latest expansion to 191 Saskatchewan communities benefits the citizens and businesses in rural Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, once this latest expansion is complete about 71 per cent of Saskatchewan's population will have access to SaskTel's High Speed Internet service.

Since 1995, SaskTel has invested more than 56 million to offer a high quality, price competitive, high-speed service. Saskatchewan residents and communities in all locations of the province are receiving high-speed access sooner than . . . sooner, Mr. Speaker, than many large urban centres in Canada and North America.

As usual, Mr. Speaker, this is simply more good news for the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

National Agriculture Framework Agreement

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the federal, provincial, and territorial Agriculture ministers will meet this week to continue work on the new federal-provincial agriculture framework agreement in principle. It's one that they developed one year ago in Whitehorse. At that time and at the follow-up meeting in Toronto this past January, Saskatchewan's Agriculture minister fully participated and agreed with the plan for the new national agriculture programming. The only dissenting voice at the table was Quebec, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: does the Saskatchewan government and our Agriculture minister still support the framework agreement in principle as reached in Whitehorse one year ago, and will the minister be working in good faith toward finalizing the new framework agreement at the meetings that he will be attending this week?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely correct that this Minister of Agriculture, the member from Yorkton, has worked hard over the course of the past year with

his colleagues, other ministers of Agriculture across Canada, to build the agriculture policy framework, longer term safety net programs, and so on.

Given the context, Mr. Speaker, of the current discussions in Halifax, however, we know that this legislature and the producing organizations of Saskatchewan and farmers in Saskatchewan have said very clearly to us that we should not be signing any deal that ties this province or this treasury or these producers into trade support payments.

Mr. Speaker, we've taken that position; we're taking that position to Halifax and we're going to be fighting hard for the federal government to assume its full responsibility for their area of responsibility.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that Premier's answer reminds me of a show that my teenage daughters used to watch. It was called *Clueless*, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the new national agriculture framework agreement is not the trade support that we've been lobbying for. And it states that the federal and provincial governments are committed to the current review of farm safety nets with the aim of completion in 2002. The communiqué states, and I quote:

They agreed that work on the long-term direction, in close consultation with industry, will build on safety net funding.

Mr. Speaker, our provincial Agriculture minister agreed to this statement one year ago. You'd think that as a result of that, Saskatchewan Agriculture would have started preparing. You would think they would have started looking ahead at what Saskatchewan would be expected to contribute financially to their commitment to, quote:

. . . build on safety net funding.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: if the NDP (New Democratic Party) government, and specifically the minister, still supports the national agriculture framework agreement, why did the NDP slash \$50 million out of the provincial Agriculture department's budget this year?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I will remind the member and all members of the House again that as a provincial treasury, on behalf of Saskatchewan taxpayers, we are supporting programs in agriculture at a rate four times the national average. Four times the national average.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — That support, Mr. Speaker, is coming from taxpayers across this province. That's twice as high as any other province in Canada. Now, Mr. Speaker, the member will know that in this year's budget some of the funding for those programs of support to agriculture have been paid out last year. She will know that, while the federal Government of Canada

has been reducing its financial support for crop insurance, this government has been increasing its support for crop insurance by a total of \$14 million.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, so we are there, we have been there, and we will be there financially, Mr. Speaker. But where we will not be financially is taking on the treasuries of Washington and Europe. The Chancellor of Germany is this week, these days in Canada admitting that the Europeans have been subsidizing their farmers to a state which makes them embarrassed to talk about it. Well we'll talk about it, Mr. Speaker. We need an end to those European subsidies. We need an end to those American subsidies. But in the meantime we need a national Canadian government that will stand up for Canadian producers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, this is typical of the NDP government. On one hand they support the federal-provincial agriculture framework agreement, leading the farm families of this province to believe that they're working in their best interest. But on the other hand, as the Premier should know, here at home they cut the agriculture budget by \$50 million. They slashed millions out of the crop insurance program, and they hiked up the premiums; they cut the property tax rebate program; and they are losing the fight with the federal government for trade injury compensation.

Mr. Speaker, why has the NDP slashed provincial programming for Saskatchewan farm families at the same time they're supposedly committing to building a national, long-term safety net funding?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the member, the Agriculture critic in the opposition, has asked this question repeatedly over the last several days. The Minister of Agriculture has answered this question repeatedly. I have answered this question.

So I think then, Mr. Speaker, it is time for the member opposite to start answering some questions. How about answering this question? When they sought government in the last provincial election, how much did they commit — how much did they commit — to new funding for the farm families of Saskatchewan? Nothing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when the member opposite became the Agriculture critic, she stood here in the corridor and said no, they do not have an agricultural plan; they do not have a plan for the farm families.

We've been in this session how many days now — 70 or something — 69 days. Have we heard one word of a progressive plan, a new idea from the Saskatchewan Party in regard to the farm families of Saskatchewan? Not a word, not a dollar in the campaign. It's time for that party to stand up and start putting out some policy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Settlement with John Popowich

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Justice. We have to get these in before July 1.

Last week the Justice minister announced the NDP would settle a lawsuit with Saskatoon police officer, John Popowich, by paying him \$1.3 million. The Justice minister told the reporters the government settled the malicious prosecution lawsuit because they would likely lose the case in court and face an even higher payout.

Mr. Speaker, malicious prosecution is an extremely serious breach of conduct for any government. It means the government pursued an investigation and laid charges and persecuted a Saskatchewan resident without proof and with the purpose of abusing or perverting the Justice system.

Mr. Speaker, are the Crown prosecutors involved in the malicious prosecution of John Popowich still prosecuting cases for the provincial government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Speaker, in response to the issue raised by Mr. Popowich and responded to by the Government of Saskatchewan, a settlement was reached whereby the government paid a sum of money to Mr. Popowich in settlement of his dispute with the province.

Mr. Speaker, that was done in the normal course of doing business. You fight hard for a case but, Mr. Speaker, sometimes rather than let it go to a court, you decide to make a settlement. That's what happened here without the admission of any guilt or anything of that sort, Mr. Speaker.

And I made it clear today that with regards to the prosecutors, Mr. Speaker, that we have faith in the prosecution service, those prosecutors in particular, and they remain prosecuting cases on behalf of the people of the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister has admitted the government pursued a case against John Popowich without reasonable and probable cause. The minister has also admitted the government prosecutors had improper motives in pursuing the Popowich case that involved the perversion or abuse of justice in Saskatchewan. And in doing so, the minister has admitted his prosecutors abused their office and the office of the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP government's malicious prosecution of John Popowich, who the minister has clearly stated is an innocent man, has now cost the taxpayer \$1.3 million. And that kind of abuse of office and incompetence by the NDP may cost millions more when the government settles with the people, with other pending lawsuits.

Mr. Speaker, what steps have been taken to discipline the prosecutors who abused their office in the malicious prosecution of John Popowich?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Speaker, let me just read what I said to the media earlier on today when I indicated that I wanted to clarify some of the things I'd said earlier about this settlement and which, on reflection, I see have conveyed the wrong impression. Mr. Speaker, I said the following:

Firstly, the pre-trial judge did not express any conclusion that our prosecutors had acted maliciously in this case. I cannot go into the detail . . . (of course but) . . . I think I can properly clarify that it is not the role for a pre-trial conference judge to express conclusions, and Mr. Justice Baynton did not do so.

Mr. Speaker, I also said that:

. . . the government is satisfied that our prosecutors did not act maliciously and, indeed that they not only acted honestly, but that they exercised their best professional efforts in a highly stressful situation and at a time when we knew much less than we know now about how to deal with such cases. In short, I want to make it very clear that we have the utmost confidence in our prosecutors' integrity. I regret very much that I failed to convey that sense of confidence in my statements last week.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the minister did convey is that if he stayed in court he would have lost and it would have cost the taxpayers more money than paying as if he was guilty. That's what he admitted.

Mr. Speaker, the minister won't take responsibility for the views of his office that resulted in the malicious prosecution of John Popowich. The minister doesn't appear to be concerned about the fact that the NDP has devastated the lives of Mr. Popowich and many other innocent people by accusing, charging, and then prosecuting them for crimes in which they had no part; by building cases for which the government had no reasonable proof and for purposes that perverted the justice system in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, all Crown prosecutors in Saskatchewan are responsible to the Saskatchewan Law Society for their professional conduct.

If the NDP refuses to take action against the prosecutors involved in the malicious prosecution of John Popowich, will the minister turn the full and complete file over to the Saskatchewan Law Society for them to investigate?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, let me clear the member's confusion on one point. By the settlement with Mr. Popowich, the Government of Saskatchewan plainly admitted its responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

And that is, I think, only proper when things have taken place in the way they did.

Mr. Speaker, that does not mean that a person who's called upon to make thousands of judgment calls in their work as a prosecutor on a daily basis — 84,000 cases a year, about 18 going to court, Mr. Speaker — with only about, with five, with five, Mr. Speaker, becoming problematic over a 10-year period.

Mr. Speaker, we have faith in our prosecutors. They're doing a good job for the province and they will continue to do a good job for the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskTel Involvement in Cable Television Industry

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For some time we've been trying to find out how much the government, through SaskTel, is going to spend getting into the cable television business.

And what we found out, Mr. Speaker, today at Crown Corporations Committee, is that they've already spent \$50 million getting into the cable TV business and they have plans to spend 21 million more dollars, Mr. Speaker, for a total of over \$70 million to get into the cable television industry in the province of Saskatchewan, to pursue a venture that one of the senior officials, that the senior official at SaskTel characterized as follows.

He said nobody's quite certain of whether or not there is a sound and valid business case here. That's what the CEO (chief executive officer) of SaskTel said about them getting into cable television.

Mr. Speaker, we know that other telephone companies across this country have looked at this. They've spent millions of dollars looking at cable TV and they've walked away, Mr. Speaker.

The question to the minister is, has the NDP learned any lessons at all from those experiences? It looks like they're going to spend over \$70 million to get into cable TV to compete against businesses already offering the services, including co-ops, including a business that they own shares in, Mr. Speaker. They're going to get into this business, spend \$70 million. Does the minister think that's the right decision for the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well we've answered this question a number of times. But you know I'm going to refer to this again.

When I get my monthly cable bills, Mr. Speaker, inserted in with the bill, Mr. Speaker, every month, every month, Mr. Speaker, along with the bill is an advertisement from — I see here we're partners with Rogers AT&T — from Access cable, is a picture of a cellphone, a cellphone right on the front, Mr. Speaker.

They're supposed to be a cable company, Mr. Speaker, but they're diversifying like many other companies are

diversifying, Mr. Speaker. The facts are that we are in a deregulated, highly competitive industry, Mr. Speaker.

So we have two options, Mr. Speaker. We can either choose to tell SaskTel to entirely get out of business — shut down, sell, full stop, period — or compete, just like they wanted SaskTel to compete, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just to be helpful to the minister, you know he's been speaking about that bill and holding that bill up in the House for well over a month and a half. We would advise him to pay the bill, Mr. Speaker. They're going to cut his cable off, Access Communications.

Mr. Speaker, last year in Crown Corporations we raised a concern about why SaskTel and the NDP would pursue this venture, why they would pursue this venture when other telcos have spent millions of dollars looking at it and they've walked away. We're not even asking about the competitive side of this right now; that's what the minister was answering. We're asking about the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars.

Now in defence of this the CEO at the time, Mr. Ching, said, well those companies had walked away but there was a company in Atlantic Canada called Aliant, and Aliant was doing the same thing. And they used this to justify their investment.

But, Mr. Speaker, last week Aliant announced that they are getting out of the cable TV business, Mr. Speaker, and they're going to give all 3,300 of their customers a satellite dish, Mr. Speaker.

So the question to the minister is this: in light of what's happening in this industry, in light of the fact that SaskTel's ready to spend another \$20 million, in light of the fact that other telcos are walking away from major investments, will the minister stand in his place and tell the Assembly if he thinks this is the right decision for Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, irrespective of what that member might think, or what that party might think, or what the member from Wood River might think, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you what the public of Saskatchewan think about SaskTel and the services that that corporation provides for them, Mr. Speaker

We're rated amongst the highest of any company in Saskatchewan and in Canada, Mr. Speaker, bar none compared to any private sector company, Mr. Speaker. And we should be proud of that, Mr. Speaker.

And I can tell you just because some private sector company is choosing to get out of that business doesn't mean that SaskTel should get out of that business. In fact SaskTel's history will show, I think, that they've been highly successful in many areas that lots of companies have not been, Mr. Speaker. And we should be proud of that, not chastise them for it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That minister tries to tell this Assembly what the people of Saskatchewan are thinking about things like this. Here's what they think about this deal.

From a government that pleads poverty, that cuts the agriculture budget in the middle of a crisis, from a government that takes away spot loss hail, that yanks away the property tax rebate on farm land, but has \$80 million to invest in Australia and 70 million more for a hare-brained scheme in cable television. That's what the people of the province object to, Mr. Speaker. That's what they object to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the minister touched a little bit on his answer just now. He seemed to say, well Aliant . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the minister touched on in his answer the fact that while Aliant is maybe different than SaskTel, that's why they're backing away and giving everyone a satellite dish that used to have their cable TV service. They're different. Well, Mr. Speaker, here's what Don Ching says about Aliant. He says:

. . . remember there's another telephone company out in the Maritimes called Aliant . . . Aliant is very much into the same type of project as we are . . . They're trying to do it in the same way as we are too, not only using essentially the same technology, but also approaching it with the same care and caution.

Their care and caution dictated to Aliant . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Would the member go directly to the question, please.

Mr. Wall: — Aliant has done the right thing and backed away. What is this minister going to do?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, in fact, the member is not accurate as he often is not accurate in representing the facts, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell you that TELUS is looking aggressively at this process, Mr. Speaker. In fact, Aliant is right, they . . . he's right when he says Aliant is backing away. But they're backing away from the delivery of the service through cable, Mr. Speaker. In fact, what they are pursuing then, they're giving satellite dishes to people, as he says, so they can deliver the service via satellite, Mr. Speaker. MTS (Manitoba Telecom Services) is looking at this, Mr. Speaker.

The point is is that this is a highly competitive industry. SaskTel excels in this area. SaskTel has become now a competitive company just like those members wanted SaskTel to become. The problem is, I think, they don't like to see

SaskTel to become successful, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Speaker, the minister says TELUS is looking at getting into this. And his own officials at SaskTel talked about TELUS getting into this, Mr. Speaker, and here's what they testified before the committee. He said he wanted to talk a little bit about the TELUS and Bell projects. He said:

I know TELUS launched into . . . (this is a quote) it was a \$60 million trial of video, cable-like services.

And he goes on to quote. He says:

I think Ted Rogers, who's the Chairman of Rogers Cable, said it would have been easier . . . (for) TELUS (if they) . . . just bought everyone of their . . . customers a car (Mr. Speaker, because of the performance of this particular pilot).

Mr. Speaker, in addition to competing with businesses in the province, co-ops in the province, if they proceed with the \$70 million deal they're also going to be competing with a company called Persona Inc., a cable television company. And guess who owns 1.2 million shares in Persona, in that cable company? SaskTel, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister please stand up in the Assembly and tell this House whose plan it was to start a cable television company to compete against the cable television company it already owns?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I've tried to find out . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Speaker, I have . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please.

(14:15)

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, to the dot-com expert. I have tried to find out what their policy was on . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. The members know full well that any time they're referring to a member of the legislature, they should refer them only by title or by name of constituency, even, even though it may be in jest.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Not to engage in debate, Mr. Speaker, but I certainly was not referring to that individual when I talked about a dot-com expert, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I tried to find out that party's policy on anything, Mr. Speaker. So I did what they do. I looked up on the Web site what their policy was. I couldn't find their Web site at first. So I finally found it and I say to the people of Saskatchewan, you dial up www.saskparty.flatline.com, Mr. Speaker, and you'll

find their policy, Mr. Speaker.

Their policy, Mr. Speaker, I tried to find it on, as the example, on agriculture. Up comes the nice, smiley face of the Leader of the Opposition with a link to the weather channel, Mr. Speaker, with a link to the weather channel.

Mr. Speaker, I tried to find out what their policy was on external investment. Up comes a nice picture of the opposition leader, Mr. Speaker, with a link to the weather channel, Mr. Speaker. Everything is contingent on the weather, Mr. Speaker. They have no solid policy on anything, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 79 – The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 2002

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 79, The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 2002 be now introduced and read the first time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a first time and ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

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

Hon. Mr. Osika: — With leave to introduce a guest, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that we have some calm, I'm very pleased to introduce a young lady to the Assembly, something that I feel is very important for our students in not only grade school but high school, to participate in our democratic process and to watch the proceedings in this Assembly.

And I'd like to introduce today Ms. Josie Steeves who attends the Estevan High School and has just entered into grade 11.

She's here to watch our proceedings as well as participate in some of the activities in my office, Mr. Speaker. And she's with my very capable and competent staff person, Kim Emerson, seated in your gallery.

And I'd like everybody to welcome them here this afternoon, please.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 16 — Economic and Contractual Relationships Between Government, Workers, and Taxpayers

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be introducing the following motion and it reads:

That this Assembly condemn the Saskatchewan Party's endorsement of the BC approach to radically alter the economic and contractual relationship between government, workers, and taxpayers by unilaterally abolishing long-standing collective agreements and decreasing essential services.

This will be moved by myself and seconded by my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

All right, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a rare day and a rare opportunity that we get to look into a crystal ball and see what the future holds for us. We often would like to have that but you know sometimes the future is kind of scary. And here we have a chance to see, look into a future ball . . . into a crystal ball, and see what the future might look like if the Saskatchewan Party were to take power.

Now this is really scary stuff, Mr. Speaker, and we have a rare and gloomy and very much black future ahead of us. Now how do we know this? Well we can see the things that are happening out in BC (British Columbia) and they are indeed very scary but how can we assume that this will happen in Saskatchewan?

Well I want to read this quote into the record because I think it's very important. It's kind of lengthy but it really tells us what might happen here and what we have to do to change a situation.

Now the Leader of the Opposition, on October 2, 2001, speaking to the North Saskatoon Business Association said the following, and I quote:

I've been watching closely what is happening with the new government in British Columbia. Voters in BC have given their new government an overwhelming mandate to make changes . . .

One initiative that I believe holds tremendous value for Saskatchewan is a project launched by Premier Campbell called the *Core Services Review*.

The BC government is reviewing every government program, service, board, commission, agency, and crown corporation. Premier Campbell expects to save millions of taxpayer's dollars through this review . . . money that will be used to finance his aggressive agenda of personal and business tax cuts and balance the budget.

A Saskatchewan Party government will launch a similar Core Services Review in this province within 30 days of taking office.

And this is what he said, Mr. Speaker, and it is alarming, and it is something to be concerned about. We have a very, very

scary future ahead if this were to come true. We don't have to worry, but we better reflect on this because it is very, very scary stuff.

So what's been happening in BC for the last year? What kind of things have been happening out there? Are things really positive? Now this quote from the opposition leader is kind of dated, it's a few months old. Now this may be a chance for them to reflect on what's happened over the year.

Well in BC this is the year of broken promises by Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals.

Gordon Campbell promise(s) . . . tax cuts would pay for themselves (does that ring a bell here) but they've created the largest deficit in BC's history.

Gordon Campbell promised that he wouldn't cut our education system — but schools are closing, class sizes are increasing, programs are being eliminated and teachers are getting laid off. (Indeed, very alarming stuff.)

Gord Campbell (as well) promised he wouldn't slash (the) public services (out there) — but he started the largest public services layoffs in Canadian history and he's cutting programs by an average of 25 per cent.

Gordon Campbell promised he wouldn't rip up signed contracts (and) that's exactly what he did. (He ripped them up).

Gordon Campbell (also) promised he wouldn't reduce welfare — but he's cut benefits and made it harder to qualify for assistance.

And those folks over there probably would like to see something like that too. They're looking with interest on that one.

Gordon Campbell promised to put the needs of children first by providing adequate funding — but he's cut \$490 million from the budget (of) the Ministry for Child and Family Development, and eliminated the independent office of the Child, Youth & Family Advocate.

This is of great concern for all people in Saskatchewan when you have the Leader of the Opposition saying:

One initiative I believe holds tremendous value for Saskatchewan is a project by Premier Campbell called the support services review.

He thinks these things have merit. And I would argue we have a lot to be concerned about.

Now what's happening here in Saskatchewan about welfare? I think we've got some very innovative, very progressive things happening. The month of May was our 90th month in a row that we saw welfare caseloads decreasing. In here, we need to keep that going. We are going in the right direction. We can't go the way of BC and we definitely can't let the Sask Party turn that around.

Now our minister, what did he have to say about this? Well he said:

For seven and a half years, fewer Saskatchewan people have relied on social assistance than compared to the same month in the previous year.

This unprecedented reduction is the result of focused government efforts that assist welfare recipients to enter the workforce and provide additional support for low-income earners.

Since 1997, (the minister says) building independence has helped 6,000 families, including 13,000 children, leave the welfare rolls. Furthermore, non-agricultural sectors of the economy has produced 35,000 jobs over the last six years. This is good news; this is encouraging.

Mr. Speaker, what are the key ingredients to the success? Well one of them definitely has to be building independence, an outstanding program that we've been recognized for. And it works because it removes the barriers people on welfare experience when they try to take advantage of the economic opportunities that exist in our province. Now that's very important that we support people as they enter the workforce. We can't take away those barriers.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what's happening in BC? Well on April 1, here are some of the things that happened out there. And I got to tell you, Mr. Speaker, April 1 was no laughing matter out in BC this year.

All right. What happened? Well first of all, the first thing they did — and here's a little twist of irony — they introduced a new three-week waiting period before welfare benefits kick in, during which time the applicant is expected to look for a job.

Well that's interesting. What happened that same day? The supports for doing that kind of thing is taken away. The work entry assistance program and the transition to work assistance program is cut.

So they introduce, you have to wait three weeks, but is there any support for trying to find a job, anything like that? No. It's cut, slash, taken out of the picture too. So here we have people stranded, stranded in BC. And the same thing might happen here in Saskatchewan; we hope not.

Now what about single parents? Single parents with more than one child will receive a reduced welfare benefit. Single parents . . . Now here's something. I think this is right out of the 1800s. This is incredible, the heartlessness of this. Single mothers are expected to seek work when their children reach the age of three. It used to be, under the NDP government, the age of seven. They've cut that down to the age of three.

And what about this, Mr. Speaker? What about working . . . the students trying to find a job in the summer? What's the BC government doing about that? Here we have the elimination of training and work experience programs for students. This summer, Mr. Speaker, the elimination of the students' summer works program and the youth community action program and the Job Start program were cut, effective April 1, 2002. What

an April Fool's Day joke for the students thinking about summer work. How cruel. That's unbelievable.

(14:30)

Now, Mr. Speaker, one other area that I want to talk a little bit about, and it's interesting we might be talking about this later on in the session, but it's the education. And what is the potential here in Saskatchewan if the opposition were to take the blueprint from Gordon Campbell in BC? What would be left, what would be left in the schools and the universities and post-secondary institutions here in Saskatchewan?

Well what kind of things were happening in BC before this? Well BC had quite a proud track record. They were opening up a new school every 19 days. They had over 4,000 additional teachers hired since 1991 and in the last 10 years, 4,000 new teachers, 3 new universities — Northern BC, Royal Rhodes, and Tech BC. Some very exciting, innovative things.

So what's the story now? Well in BC Gordon Campbell promised they wouldn't cut education. Gordon Campbell promised that he would cut taxes and still keep his commitment to balance the budget, protect health care and education funding.

Well during the election campaign he assured the BC School Trustees Association that a Liberal government would not cut education funding. And he says, and I quote:

You can count on it. You can guarantee it; it's not going to happen.

And he said that on CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), April 21, 2001.

Well what's the reality; what's the sad reality? Well since then, the Liberals have imposed a three-year funding freeze on our . . . on BC's education system. Because of inflation and increasing costs school boards are left with no choice but to cut programs, close schools, and layoff thousands of teachers. Those 4,000 teachers that came on since 1991, they're gone. Thousands of teachers are laid off. Class sizes are increasing and children in some communities have to be bused up to 80 kilometres each way to get to school.

This is not a happy thing and this is not something we want to see in Saskatchewan. So we can just tell the Sask Party, leave that plan out in BC; we do not want it here.

Well what are some of the editorials saying about this?

Protected is not an . . .

This is from the BC School Trustees Association president, Gordon Comeau, the *Vancouver Province*, April 28:

Protected is not an accurate reflection, it's just a play on words. Cuts are happening and they are happening in every . . . in the classroom. Schools are going down.

And what did the *Vancouver Province* have to say about this?

March 27, 2002 Burnaby school trustees want an apology from Premier Gordon Campbell for breaking his promise for not cutting education funding. And what about the same paper on May 7, 2002, school boards, and I quote:

School boards across BC are proposing to close as many as 57 public schools at the end of the school year to balance their budgets, according to a survey by the BC Teachers' Federation. The survey also found that (over, well) 1,857 teaching positions will be cut.

This is serious news, Mr. Speaker. This is sad news. This is alarming for our province if this kind of thing were to happen here.

We see the results out in BC, we cannot let that happen here. And so that . . . we just have to say when we hear things about the program out in BC having tremendous value, we have to sound the alarm bells.

Now the other thing that's very interesting, and I'll talk a minute about this, is what our initiative is here in Saskatchewan with the School^{PLUS}. But I want to go on for a minute. What are some of the other cuts that's happening out in BC to what I believe are the essential services to having a very good province?

Well Gordon Campbell promised to put the children first with proper funding. In his campaign literature, Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals promised to devote the resources to the job needed to put the interests of kids first.

Instead they cut \$460 million from the budget for the ministry of child and family development. And they eliminated the independent Office of the Child, Youth and Family Advocate. That's \$460 million. That's almost half a billion dollars.

This is very serious stuff. And as Paul Wilcox in *The Vancouver Sun* says, "it's a profound, profound betrayal of children, of families, and of voters who believe the Liberals' promises." A betrayal for sure.

Now what's happening here in Saskatchewan? Well around that same particular time we announced the response to the schools, the Role of the School initiative. And we talked about . . . we announced and endorsed the School^{PLUS} model. The School^{PLUS} model is very innovative because it talks about how we have to be sure that kids, that students are ready for school.

Schools can be and should be much more than just a transmission of information. They can be rich learning environments. But for them to be rich learning environments there should be the supports for the basic underlying services so kids come to school well fed, in good health, and meeting . . . getting all the services that they need to have to have good productive days in school.

Now our Minister of Education at the time, now the Minister of Learning, says the province recognizes that schools must have two primary functions: to educate children and youth and to support human services delivery at the community level.

So he's recognizing and our government is recognizing that

school should be much more, can be much more. And if they are, we'll have greater results. They can deliver community services and they can also have rich learning environments. And this is very, very important.

He goes on, the minister goes on to say a variety of students' needs must be met so they are ready to learn. And this is what the School^{PLUS} is all about.

He goes on to say while the focus of the task force dialogue was on schools and education, the heart of their work identified the critical need to improve the life opportunities for all of the province's children and youth. We are pleased to adopt this School^{PLUS} vision of the task force, where schools serve as centres for education and integrated social supports to nurture children's well-being and learning.

This initiative, now I want to quote the Minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation, because I think this is important as this is an integrated model and many, many departments are coming together to support this initiative. She says:

This initiative marks the beginning for Saskatchewan youth as they strive to reach their full potential.

She goes on to say:

Enhancing links between school initiatives and activities outside the schools will go a long way in providing maximum opportunities for child and youth development.

So we have a plan and we see the wonderful opportunities that are out there for our children, for our youth. And we're talking about embracing all children, the children at risk, very — very important to support them — and children who enjoy school and learn in the typical way. We have a plan that will embrace the whole gamut. Having a strong, strong school is our goal.

But what's happening, what's happening out in BC? Well they're cutting schools, they're cutting schools. And this is a really dangerous sign. We're on the verge of doing some wonderful things and if we look in that doom and gloom crystal ball what are we going to see? Cuts to that program.

School^{PLUS} will be left to wither on the vine and what will that mean to our children? And we know we are on a crossroads here. We have children who are at risk. We have children who are looking for opportunities to grow and bloom in schools.

And I'm thinking particularly of the Aboriginal community. I think we all need to be alarmed about the potential catastrophe that awaits here if we are to import the BC blueprint via the Saskatchewan Party. We have a lot of things to worry about.

Now when I was doing a little research here, I just want to quote . . . I want to talk about one very tragic, tragic story about some of the things that we, we struggle with here. And there are challenges here, in Saskatchewan. And when we balanced our budget, we had to make some tough choices.

But boy, would we ever have a horrible situation if we were to bring in some of the style of how some of the practices, some of the things that's happening out in BC. And I want to talk about

what happened on Thursday, May 30. Here, we have the BC Human Rights Commission scrapped, tossed, under a new proposed law by Gordon Campbell. This is very alarming.

BC Human Rights Commission to be toast — to be tossed. This is, this is outrageous. This would leave this province the only province — and I'm talking about BC — the only province to not have a Human Rights Commission. Now they're rolling it into another, another portfolio, but this is, this is just not doable.

Now I just want to read from this news article here:

The BC government (and I quote, the BC government) introduced draft legislation Thursday that would scrap the province's human rights commission leaving only a tribunal to deal with complaints. The move would make the province the only one in Canada without such a commission prompting outrage from anti-racism and disability groups and the opposition.

And I think they have a lot, a lot to be outraged about. This is, this is outrageous.

The NDP leader, Joy MacPhail, is quoted as saying, "It will put British Columbia on the map with the biggest black eye it's ever had."

So, Mr. Speaker, this is not good news. And this is the style, and I worry about the style, how governments operate.

What happened to the human rights commissioner? Well, although the draft legislation won't be introduced until the fall sitting of the legislature, the government fired Harinder Mahill, the acting chief commissioner, who had been in the office — or with the office — for 10 years. Mahill was ordered to vacate his office immediately and hand in his cellphone. He was escorted out of the building by 10 a.m.

What style, what kind of government would do that kind of thing? And this is a kind of respect that this government in BC seems to have — no regard for the people who work for it, no regard for the professionalism, no regard for the services that a government should be providing its people.

Now part of the motion before us today talks about how this BC government treats signed contracts.

In November 2000, Gordon Campbell assured the health employees' union that he would respect agreements that had been negotiated and signed by public sector workers and their employers. He said, and I'm quoting:

"I am not tearing up any agreements," he assured the HEU's newspaper.

And then you fast-forward it to January 2002 and Gordon Campbell is ripping up the very agreement he promised not to touch.

He promised not to rip up this agreement and he went ahead and did it anyway.

Said the *Vancouver Sun*, January 29, 2002. He didn't even try

to negotiate first. Now how can anyone trust a deal signed by that government?

And if we're using the same standards, importing that standards, the Sask Party, how would anybody stand . . . or how could anyone trust the Sask Party?

If this government . . .

And this is a quote from the editorial from the *Victoria Times Colonist*, December 6, 2001:

If the government's aim is to increase business confidence, tearing up contracts, even labour contracts, isn't the way to do this.

Now, Mr. Speaker, today is January . . . or June 25. It's six months to Christmas. And when I was thinking about this, this almost reminds me of Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol*. We have an opportunity here to look in the future.

Now if you look at the Saskatchewan past, what do you see? You see a strong province. A strong province with rich traditions of overcoming adversity, putting aside the doom and gloom.

And what's the Saskatchewan present? Well Saskatchewan present — 11,000 new jobs. I spoke earlier about the outstanding success of SIAST. Saskatchewan present is growing well. It's doing well. We are building a strong, strong province in spite of the doom and gloom.

But what I am really worried about is the Saskatchewan future, especially if the Saskatchewan Party is part of that. What would the Saskatchewan future look like? Well we have a chance to see what that would be when we talk about what the leader said last October. Very alarming, very alarming stuff.

Now we have the opportunity to fast forward from last October to now, and we have the opportunity with this motion and I would ask the members opposite to join in condemning what they said last October. Be on the record. Say that was not right; it was a mistake. Get onside. I ask them to get onside; say, well you know, we saw what's happening out BC; it's not the right thing; we have changed our minds; we are not going to embrace Gordon Campbell's blueprint. I think this is the time to do that.

And I would say to the members opposite, put down your torches that you would burn up the contracts with. And I would say to the members opposite, to put away the fire sale signs, the garage sale signs that they have all ready for our Crown corporations. That's what we're worried about. Put away those garage sale signs, all right? I think it's really important for us . . . So this is an important issue here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

(14:45)

We have an opportunity for the members opposite to come clean on this very important issue. Where are they on this? Are they with BC or are they with Saskatchewan? Are they with Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan people who work, sign contracts in good faith? Or are they with Gordon Campbell, who would rip up those contracts, who doesn't care about the

people of BC, doesn't have respect for contracts. Where are they on this?

And I see . . . You know, we struggle every day in this House with the doom and gloom and the negativity of the opposition party and we say, before we take a break and before we go for the summer, let's get on board; let's do the right thing here and give a clear sign that we are here for Saskatchewan people, we are here for Saskatchewan opportunities. This is the opportunity.

We see what's happening out in BC and it does not have . . . it does not bode well. What about those 57 schools that will be closed? What about the post-secondary institutions? And I can tell you one about the Kootenay School of the Arts — that I know of students who are facing uncertain futures because that school is being closed. It's being axed. Here you have post-secondary institutions being closed down. Unheard of in this province. Is that the kind of thing that we're talking about here? This is alarming stuff.

What are the other plans? And this is only the first year and it'll be very interesting to see the final, the final outcomes of Gordon Campbell. Very alarming things.

We have an opportunity here to do some innovative things. The Role of the School, the School^{PLUS} model, very exciting stuff when we had all sorts of people come into the consultative process. We had, through many hearings throughout the province, a whole year of dialogue. Will they rip up that contract? Will they rip up the social contract that we will do our very best by our children? This is alarming stuff, Mr. Speaker.

And I think that we have an opportunity and, once again, I would say, come on to our side, opposition. Rip up those garage sale signs. Rip up those garage sale signs. Put away that torch. And I'm going to stand here and make this motion here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very happy to join in on this because I think it's a very important, important issue that the people of Saskatchewan need to consider as we approach an election time, which could be any time between now and 2005. So as we approach that window, I think it's very important that people understand where the opposition stands on this topic.

And so I want to, I want to join in. I want to reiterate some of the things that the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld said. And they need to be said. They need to be repeated a number of times so that people get the full impact of what it has.

I'm going to quote again from a speech that the Leader of the Opposition made to the North Saskatoon Business Association wherein he says he's been watching very closely what has been happening with the government in British Columbia. He says that they've given . . .

(The) Voters in B.C. have given their new government an overwhelming mandate to make changes . . .

Well I don't think they gave that government the mandate to

make the type of changes that they made. And certainly the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld has outlined a great deal of the broken promises that the Campbell government in BC has made.

And it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that what the opposition is saying when they endorse the policies of the BC government is that they too would adopt the same mantra and then that leaves you to wonder, does that also give them the liberty to break promises that they make in the election campaign? So I think you have to ask yourself that question.

If they're so proud of the job that the BC government has done and proud enough indeed that they say that their initiative . . . they say that one initiative that they believe holds tremendous value for Saskatchewan is a project launched by Premier Campbell called the core services review.

Now they are adopting the direction of the BC government. They say that the BC government is reviewing every government program, service, board, commission, agency, and Crown corporation. And I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that I'm going to have quite a bit more to say about their position on Crown corporations as the afternoon carries on.

Premier Campbell, they say, expects to save millions of taxpayers' dollars through this review, money that he says will be used to finance his aggressive agenda of personal and business tax cuts and balance the budget.

Well balance the budget I think is not exactly what turned out. In fact I know that they have a very significant deficit in BC and that they're . . . And now so is that what the opposition says they would do? They would go through these massive tax cuts which they have been spouting about ever since they became the opposition — through a very strange process I might add, but nevertheless that's not part of the motion. That was a very strange circumstance that I think we might also want to know about.

They were elected as one entity and suddenly became another, and that was kind of a broken promise, I would think, as well. And regardless, they say that they would use this money to finance the aggressive agenda of personal and business tax cuts and balance the budget.

A Saskatchewan Party government — which isn't ever likely to happen, Mr. Speaker; not ever — once the people figure out what it is that sits across the floor and what their policies are, what they say about a Saskatchewan Party government is never going to come to pass. Because the people of Saskatchewan — the people of Saskatchewan — are far too smart, far too smart.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — Far too smart to endure the types of promises that these people across the way are proposing.

So they say though that they would launch a similar core services review in this province within 30 days of taking office. Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very interesting that a lot of the discussion, a lot of the comments made by the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld talked about broken

promises.

And I think what's really interesting is the contrast. Now the member talked about promises that Gordon Campbell made, things that he would not do. And I'll point out a few of those things that Gordon Campbell said he would not do and subsequently did.

He said:

Gordon Campbell promised that he wouldn't reduce welfare.

And then it goes on to say:

But he's cut benefits and made it harder to qualify for assistance.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not what the opposition says and that's not what the Leader of the Opposition says. In fact, I believe that we have the Leader of the Opposition on record saying that he would eliminate some \$50 million from the Department of Social Services. And I think that's really shameful.

That is indeed shameful. Because when the people of BC, when the people of BC are upset with Gordon Campbell for saying he wouldn't do it and then he did it, just imagine how upset they would be with someone who says they will do it and then do it.

So I think it's interesting to note the contrast, don't you? That the contrast is that he said he wouldn't; people are ripping mad. And this opposition across the road says they would do it. They don't hide. There's no need, they say, to hide. They just yes, no kidding.

Another thing Gordon Campbell said, another thing that Gordon Campbell said that the opposition has endorsed, the opposition has endorsed, says that he wouldn't . . . Gordon Campbell promised that he wouldn't privatize health care services. But he's turning hundreds of millions of dollars worth of services over to the private sector and looking at building a private hospital in Abbotsford. Well . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Why is the member from Moosomin on his feet?

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, with leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're just joined by a number of students and teachers and chaperones from Grenfell School— grade 8 students; we have 13 of them.

They're accompanied today by their teachers Renette Edgar and Neil Theisen; chaperone Patty Wahpoosewyan; and Gary Cole is the bus driver. And we're pleased to have the students today.

I'd like to thank the teachers for taking the time to bring their students into the Assembly. I see they've chosen to come in

when the Assembly is just a little more serene. We're currently in private members' debate and that's the debate that is taking place on the floor this afternoon.

I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to joining the students in a few minutes for pictures and just to answer a few questions. So would the members join me in welcoming these students to the Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 16 — Economic and Contractual Relationship Between Government, Workers, and Taxpayers (continued)

Ms. Jones: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. When I left off — and I'd also like to welcome the visitors introduced — when I left off I was saying that Gordon Campbell promised that he wouldn't privatize health care services, but he's turning hundreds of millions of dollars worth of services over to the private sector, and looking at building a private hospital in Abbotsford.

Now that certainly created a whole lot of chaos and uncertainty in BC. But let me contrast that to one of the candidates for the leadership race back in 1998, and here's what he says back in March of . . . March 23, 1998. The *World Spectator* from Moosomin wrote an article about Sask . . . "Where the candidates stand" it's called, Mr. Speaker. And it talks about the Sask Party leadership hopefuls, explaining their views.

So I compare that to Gordon Campbell who created all sorts of chaos in BC when he broke his promise not to privatize health care services, to the member from Wood River. The member from Wood River, when he was running for the leadership, said this. He said:

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

That's what he said. He said right out front, right up top, "I'm in favour of private clinics."

(15:00)

Now in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, health care is probably one of the most important topics to Saskatchewan people that you will ever find. And certainly it has been a cornerstone of government policy. It is taking tremendous effort to revamp it and restyle it and modernize it and make sure that we are able to continue delivering services to the people of Saskatchewan. And it's a very important part of our Saskatchewan heritage.

And the member from Wood River says, well not me — I'm in favour of private clinics.

And Gordon Campbell, who they endorse, says he wouldn't privatize them but once he got in there he is planning on turning over those services to the private sector and looking at building a private hospital in Abbotsford.

So if you can imagine the people of BC being upset, you can imagine how the people of Saskatchewan would feel, Mr. Speaker.

Another important and interesting aspect of what the opposition talks about . . . And constantly in this House every day, they stand up and they ask question after question after question about the operations of government and about finances.

I've served, Mr. Speaker, on the Public Accounts Committee. I serve on the Crown Corporations Committee. I know how interested the opposition members are in public accountability and, Mr. Speaker, I am too.

I think it's very important that the people of Saskatchewan are able to have faith in the accountability, in the policies, the programs, the sound financial management of our government. It's a very important factor and I don't fault opposition members for wanting to probe and delve and do the work and reveal things and assure the voters that the government and its agencies are doing a good job for the people of Saskatchewan.

But I think, as I say it's important, and as I know the opposition believes that that's important, Gordon Campbell promised to run the most open and accountable government in Canada. But they've shut down or reduced funding for independent offices, restricted the flow of information, and failed to consult British Columbians on important decisions.

So now how do you think that fits in? They would follow Gordon Campbell's lead. That's what they said. They believe in what . . . The leader of the Saskatchewan Party said that they would implement a core services review and that it appears that the BC government is on the right track. That's what they say.

In fact, we have the member . . . Let me see now, where is this member from . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Lloydminster. We have the member from Lloydminster and he's on record there. He says if in BC . . . he says if BC is doing the right thing, we want to learn from that.

And the radio announcer says, "Do you think BC is doing the right thing?"

And the member from Lloydminster says:

We understand they are doing the right thing to attract business, trying to make opportunities. If they are doing the right thing, we would certainly implement it.

Now that's from a rather gentle member of the opposition. That's a rather gentle member of the opposition. And I'll tell you that from my experience, there are some who would not be as gentle. And yet that's what he says, Mr. Speaker. If they're doing the right thing, then they would want to do it too.

And so how does that fit in with the opposition's demand for public accountability and this government's desire to provide public accountability? How do you suppose that adopting Gordon Campbell's approach to this could possibly fit in with our desire and our agreement and our implementation of many programs, many of the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor who has set about to improve public accountability, and

the members of the opposition who have set about in the committee meetings to ensure that there was public accountability?

Now how, how, how . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well they can't be serious if they're going to approve of what Gordon Campbell has done, because he has cut services in those departments. He has made it sure . . . he has made sure.

Now I want to go into another little promise, I want to go into another little promise that Gordon Campbell made. And he said that they promised that they wouldn't slash the public service. Now this is just another, just another minor little promise made by the Premier of BC not to slash the public service.

He says, Gordon Campbell says — and I quote from the *Victoria Times Colonist* on April 26 — he says:

“Our goal is not to go in and slash the public service,” said Campbell in March of 2001.

Christy Clark said:

We're not planning massive layoffs in the civil service.

And that was from the *Voice of the Province*, February 14, 2001.

While seeking votes from government workers and small-business owners in Victoria- Beacon Hill, Jeff Bray told Concerned, “There's not going to be massive job cuts.”

This was quoted in the *Victoria Times Colonist*, April 26.

And Sheila Orr, who also needed to win votes from workers concerned about the future of their jobs, said:

I have made it very, very clear. We have no intention of going out and firing the public service.

But we all know what happened once the Liberals managed to win their seats . . .

An Hon. Member: — What happened?

Ms. Jones: — You want to know what happened?

An Hon. Member: — Tell us what happened.

Ms. Jones: — All right. What happened is, even though BC has the second leanest public service in Canada, one-third of the public service workers — almost 12,000 people, Mr. Speaker — will be laid off in the next three years. One-third.

Now the opposition, the . . .

An Hon. Member: — What about public safety?

Ms. Jones: — Yes, what about public safety? What about law and order? Well this law and order opposition that we have across the way — what about law and order? What about delivering services to people?

But I want to compare that because in Saskatchewan, if we were to lay off one-third of our public service, it would amount to about 4,000 jobs. It's interesting to me to note that around 11,500 jobs being lost in the public service in BC is equivalent to the 11,500 jobs that we just created in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — So I think that's quite a contrast, Mr. Speaker. But I still want to speak to the difference between the government in BC and what the opposition in Saskatchewan talks about. Because we have some things on record about what they promised back in 1998 when they were vying for the leadership of this party.

Although Gordon Campbell said he would not lay off the public service, we have another one of our . . . the same . . . we have the leadership hopefuls from the other side. The member from Wood River says, the member from Wood River says, the whole bureaucracy . . . Mr. Speaker, he says, the whole bureaucracy, the whole civil service has to be cleaned out, every socialist system under the world. He says, I can wield a pretty good sized broom and you know what I would do with a broom.

Now that's the member from Wood River who promises to gut the civil service. He's promised to gut it.

Now Campbell said he wouldn't do it.

One of our leadership hopefuls back in 1998 who did not win but nevertheless he was hopeful at the time, was running around — men with brooms, I say — running around with his little brooms; men with brooms trying to get rid of all the public service.

And then we have the Leader of the Opposition and his statement wasn't very much nicer than the leader from Wood River. He says:

Before I agreed to run for the leadership I asked the MLAs, do you know who the deadwood are? Do you know who the skunks are? They assured me they know who those people are.

Isn't that, isn't that interesting? I think that's very interesting. Now skunks and deadwood. Committed, dedicated . . . committed, dedicated public servants and the Leader of the Opposition calls them skunks and deadwood.

Well okay, I've just been handed another good quote. Oh well I forgot about this one, but I'm going to come to that one because this is a very interesting quote.

So we have, we have the leader of the . . . or the Premier of BC who has a pretty, a pretty tough row to hoe because he has implicated a lot of policies that he . . . that have broken promises and made the people of BC quite upset — quite upset.

But our leadership hopefuls and those who would be government, if ever the people of Saskatchewan could stomach any of their policies, he has said that they would do it. They're not, they're not hiding it. They're right upfront about it, right

upfront about it.

No problem decreasing civil . . . essential services. No problem with this law and order opposition getting rid of a whole bunch of Legal Aid workers. No problem with closing court houses. No problem with gutting the budget of the Human Rights Commission. No problem with gutting health care.

The opposition's . . . Well this is an interesting one. The opposition's economic development critic says that they would implement BC's plan. So here's what most people could expect from a Sask Party government.

One third of the civil service fired. Now that I translated earlier would be about 4,000 of our dedicated Saskatchewan workers.

You have to remember that BC, when they promised to cut provincial sales tax, they actually increased provincial sales tax. So if the opposition, if they were ever government, which they won't be, is . . . was going to follow their BC lead, then they would have to increase the provincial sales tax because they said they would gradually decrease it, but we know that since they adopt and endorse the BC plan, that they would actually increase it.

They would have to . . . they would increase the fuel tax, Mr. Speaker, because, because we're endorsing the . . . we're endorsing BC over here, so they increased the fuel tax, so the opposition would have to increase the fuel tax.

Now it's a really interesting thing that BC has health care premiums, and they increased their health care premiums, Mr. Speaker. And so I think that an opposition party would probably also increase health care premiums.

But first they'd have to implement health care premiums, and then they'd be able to increase them. I think that would probably be the way it would have to work. Because under a New Democratic government, we don't have health care premiums, Mr. Speaker.

But if the opposition was to follow BC's plan of increasing them, first of all they'd have to implement — they'd have to put it in and then they'd have to increase them.

The department spending outside of health and education in BC, Mr. Speaker, is going to decline by 25 per cent over the next three years. Education spending is going to be frozen . . .

An Hon. Member: — Well that's the same thing they promised in that platform.

Ms. Jones: — They did. That's the very same thing as they promised. I think it was zero. Even if, even if you allowed that — as they claim — that they said, well we would raise it by the rate of inflation, just doing that is still zero. Either it's zero or it's less because you have to add money to it in order to improve it and maintain it.

And indeed, they certainly have . . . had seen some increases in post-secondary tuition fees. And I acknowledge and recognize that so has Saskatchewan, but Saskatchewan has done a much better job of funding its post-secondary education institutes than

BC has.

Now another interesting thing that they promised in BC was that they wouldn't reduce the minimum wage. Now one of the things, Mr. Speaker, that we hear from the opposition all the time — and heaven only knows what it could mean — they talk about fair labour policy, fair labour laws. They talk about that all the time — fair labour laws.

What they really are talking about . . . And of course, we've had a bit of an opportunity to have a look at some of their proposed legislation in terms of The Trade Union Act. And I have here an article from Wednesday, April 11, 2001 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Some more platform stuff, yes. I know they really don't like to talk about it. They talk about it to their friends, their little crowd that comes out — the committed. But when it comes to sharing it with the rest of the public, it would appear to me that they really, really don't like to talk about it.

So on the economy the Leader of the Opposition says that a Saskatchewan Party government — which I have to say again, Mr. Speaker, like this isn't going to happen; it's a dream. It's just not . . . it just isn't going to happen because the people of Saskatchewan are too wise. They are far too wise to buy the types of policies, when you have people ripping mad in the province of BC when they said they wouldn't do something and the Sask . . . or the Saskatchewan Party opposition here admitting that they would do it, endorsing it, and endorses breaking promises as well, as far as I can tell.

In any case I'm reading from April 11, 2001 where the Leader of the Opposition said that:

A Saskatchewan Party government (dream on) would spur the economy by eliminating the small business tax, changing labour legislation, and altering the makeup of the Labour Relations Board.

Now . . .

An Hon. Member: — Well here's their labour legislation.

Ms. Jones: — Yes, I kind of wouldn't mind having a look at the labour legislation because I read it and I filed it, which is exactly where it ought to be. And in there they try to make out, Mr. Speaker, that unions are not democratic organizations.

And I am here to tell them — that as a former labour union representative for 12 years and longer if you consider the not full-time paid part of my job but as an elected representative of the union that was in the place, at the workplace that I worked at — I can tell you that unions are some of the most . . . among the most, if not the most democratic organizations in the world. They have constitutions and by-laws and rights that are set out in legislation and they are very democratic.

But they would say to their . . . they would say to their community that they're trying to support that there's a problem with trade unions because it isn't democratic. Well I'm here to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it is — that their rights of employees, employers, and unions as organizations are set about and set out in legislation.

And to change that legislation to make it less democratic is like changing the Human Rights Code to make it less protective. And that's what it's about.

There is an imbalance of power that is inherent in any workplace in that those who hold the capital have a greater amount of control than those who sell their labour for wages. It's simply that simple. It has been that way since time immemorial.

And what we have done in order to equalize that balance is to set up organizations that represent employees, to recognize those organizations in law, to recognize the rights of individual employees to participate or to not participate, as they choose.

And yet we have an opposition who continually, continually attacks workers and the organizations who represent them. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that that is a very dangerous road that they've embarked upon. And they try to soften it, you know. I guess the part that's so interesting to me is how they try to schmooze over that with saying that, you know, things like they hope that the workers will join with them in . . . I think I have a little quote here.

It says . . . it says here . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . you want to participate in the debate you can do that, but right now I'm on my feet . . . It says Saskatchewan businesses . . .

Here's from the speaking notes of the Leader of the Opposition on February 12, 2002, and he says:

Saskatchewan businesses today are facing labour legislation that is a major barrier to business growth and is a major barrier for new capital investment.

And then . . . and then he goes on to say:

I hope our province's labour leaders will join us in reducing the barriers including the barrier of unbalanced labour law.

Now first you go out and accuse working people and the legislation that protects their rights of being a barrier, and then you ask them to take the barrier down. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't consider by any stretch that I'm the wisest person in the world. However, I don't consider for a moment that working people would be foolish enough to accept that premise, not by any stretch of the imagination.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — I don't think one of the things that . . . now we all know that in BC it tends to be a lot wetter than the climate in Saskatchewan. Although we do have a little bit of rain for which I think everyone in every corner in every city, town, village, hamlet, and rural community is grateful, grateful for the rain that we've had.

We do know however that BC has a lot more rain than we do. But in April 6, 2001 I want to just outline the Leader of the Opposition's new plan, new plan for stemming the outflow of the population in Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . yes, plan of the day.

He says in this April 6th edition of the *Leader-Post*:

If the Saskatchewan Party wins the next election.

Now I know I've already referred to that a few times, Mr. Speaker, that's just not going to happen. I mean, that's a pipe dream. He says, Hermanson said:

. . . the population outflow would be stemmed within a year or two and the province would then grow if (if — this is the big if — if) the weather and the national economy co-operated.

And probably with each other, says the member from Saskatoon-Idylwyld. Well I think that is without a doubt the best — the best — plan.

I talked a little a few minutes ago, Mr. Speaker, about the private hospital in Abbotsford that was part of one of the broken promises where the BC government said that they weren't going to do that. And I found this article in the *National Post*.

And I want to read some of this into the record because I think it's very important. The headline says, "For-profit hospitals have a higher risk of death." And this was a study done. And it says:

Patients in the US for-profit hospitals face a significantly higher risk of dying than those who enter not-for-profit hospitals, a Canadian study has found. The research concludes that if private for-profit hospitals were introduced in Canada, hospital deaths would increase by as many as 2,200 a year (Mr. Speaker, 2,200 increased deaths).

In an accompanying perinatal study, researchers found there was a 10 per cent increased risk of death among children under 28 days in private . . . (for hospital private) for-profit hospitals.

Twenty-eight . . . a 10 per cent increase risk for children under 28 days old. Now that is tragic:

The authors of this report say results should send a sobering message to those supportive of letting the private sector into Canada's ailing health care system. The report is likely to provide new fuel to the debate over whether to permit more private, for-profit health care delivery in Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have more that I want to read into the record, but I just want everybody to keep in mind that the member from Wood River says that he believes in private clinics.

So this article goes on to say and I want to continue reading this into the record because I think it's an important point. It says:

A 17-member research team, mostly based at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, examined 15 studies comparing death rates in for-profit hospitals to those in not-for-profit facilities. About 38 million patients in 26,000 American hospitals were included. Conducted over a 13-year period, from 1982 to 1995, it found that residents

had a 2 per cent higher relative risk of dying in a for-profit facility.

Now 2 per cent might not sound like much but if you're the patient, it's a high risk.

Going on though to read this into the record:

The Canadian health care system is at a critical juncture with many individuals suggesting that we would be better served by private for-profit health care delivery, the research concludes. Our systematic review raises concerns about the potential negative health outcomes associated with private, for-profit hospital care.

Going on a little further, it talks about Dr. Deveroe, and he's a cardiologist at the McMaster University and he was the paper's lead author, and it goes on and says:

Dr. Deveroe said for-profit hospitals must typically achieve a 10 to 15 per cent profit margin to deliver bonuses to . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would just like to bring to the member's attention that the motion before us is . . . relates to the Saskatchewan Party's endorsement of the BC approach and the member should relate her remarks to the topic at hand. And it sounded to me, is the member had gone on for some time about another issue dealing with hospitals.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And actually, although I certainly accept your ruling, I was talking about the Abbotsford . . . the Abbotsford hospital and how the BC government had privatized the Abbotsford hospital and how the member from Wood River had said in his . . .

The Speaker: — Member, I'd just ask you to continue with your remarks without making any reference to the Speaker's ruling or justifying what you were doing . . . or what the member was doing. But please continue with your remarks with respect to the private member's motion moved by the member for Saskatoon Idylwyld.

(15:30)

Ms. Jones: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm not, I'm certainly not out of material because the opposition over there gives lots of material for the government members to talk about — much, much material for them to talk about.

So when we talk about the . . . We'll take a closer look then at what the Sask Party would do. Because last fall the Leader of the Opposition said:

A Sask Party government would undertake a core services review like that done by British Columbia's new right-wing government.

And this translates into a massive attack on Saskatchewan's Crown and public services.

And I've already explained about the 11,000 jobs that BC is going to be losing and about the 4,000 jobs that that would translate into. And again about the member from Lloydminster

saying that if BC's doing the right thing, that they would certainly do the same thing too. And we know in the past that the Leader of the Opposition has said that he would freeze health and education spending. And his core review would in fact cut services to the core.

So what would that mean, I ask? Would that mean fewer nurses? There's certainly a public sentiment that we have indeed — although the government is working very, very hard on it — we have a problem, I guess, in that some of our nurses have . . . are beginning to choose to retire and some of them are aging a little bit. And we are implementing more seats to train more nurses.

But if the core services review would cut services to the core, according to the Sask Party, what would that mean for nurses? What would that mean, what would that mean for doctors? Would that mean fewer doctors?

Well I would think it would mean fewer doctors. And it would also mean, I'm sure, as you've promised back in 1998 — as the member promised back in 1998 — that it would also mean private clinics.

Ms. Jones: — Well I think that reduced public service in Saskatchewan would also mean fewer teachers, and we know that teachers provide extremely valuable service to children and parents and to the public in general in Saskatchewan because they are the ones who we entrust, for at least 10 months out of the year, with the future of our children.

And those children and their education is the future of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Children are the key to the province and its welfare and education system that is cut to the core as BC has done, indeed ripping up the teachers' contracts, which I'm not too sure if that's part of the opposition's promise for less labour legislation is just to go ahead and rip up contracts. I think that's probably what it means.

I think that having fewer teachers and ripping up their contracts would not be a very popular nor a very wise and progressive thing to do in this province when we value our children, we value the students, we value the teachers, and we value their right to participate in determining what it is that their wages and salaries and benefits will be.

I think that freezing health and education spending, I think that would likely also mean reduced health and safety inspection. And I think that it also could mean closing schools. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this budget our government worked very hard to find a way to improve the capital spending for schools because there's quite a pent-up need for infrastructure in our education system.

And of course we always put health and safety concerns as our no. 1 priority, but there are neighbourhoods that are growing very quickly, and their children are growing up and are needing education facilities in their neighbourhood. And so we took some steps in our budget this year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to address some of those concerns. And I think that that's a very good job and I'm looking forward to seeing how the opposition members vote when it comes to that part of the budget.

Because we know last year that all the progressive moves, the spending that we did last year, the opposition party voted against all of those progressive measures that the government brought in.

So we know that the opposition offers a hard-line right wing ideology and we know, and we know that it doesn't work.

An Hon. Member: — Better than socialist . . .

Ms. Jones: — Yes, well the man says better than socialist. Well I would remind him, I would remind the member from Wood River, of the ideology that put this province \$15 billion into debt — \$15 billion into debt. And the people of Saskatchewan are paying for that debt, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And if we weren't paying \$700 million a year to pay for the interest on the debt of your Devine Tory friends we would have all kinds of money, all kinds of money, to spend on programs and to reduce taxes for your right-wing ideology . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Two reasons. One I would direct the member to . . . or ask the member, remind the member, to direct all her comments to the Chair and through the Chair and not engage members directly in debate. And secondly I am having difficulty hearing the speaker . . . the member speaking. So I would ask hon. members to keep the quantity of the noise down just a bit.

Ms. Jones: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I left off by saying that the right-wing ideology does not work. And that the right-wing ideology that people suffered through from 1982 to 1991 left this province with a crippling debt. A debt that we are still paying for even though our ratio of GDP (gross domestic product) to debt is in much better position than it was when we took over this government.

And I commend our current Finance minister, and all previous Finance ministers, and indeed all members of government who have worked so hard to bring this crippling debt under control.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — And if the member from Wood River thinks that the right-wing ideology is what works I would invite — I would invite them, any member from the opposition — to come a little bit cleaner with what it is . . . It is though interesting, I mean I say I invite them to come clean, but it is interesting to find out what their economic strategy is. And I quoted earlier from the weather and the national economy. And so I want to . . . I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that their economic plan falls a little bit short on details — in fact, it falls a lot short on details.

As usual the message was I'll spend more money on massive tax cuts and more money on programs. Now mostly we hear that there will be zero monies increase spent on programs. But if he's going to spend massive . . . money on massive tax cuts, it would be really, really interesting if he would just tell us where he's going to . . . how he's going to pay for it. Where is the money coming from?

Now we just . . . It's very interesting because even though they talk about as part of their core review . . . And we all know where they stand and we all know where the member from

Swift Current stands. In fact, we get an opportunity to have his speeches to different organizations passed along to us and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, it makes, it makes, well, it makes better shredding material. Nevertheless . . .

An Hon. Member: — Better shredded than read.

Ms. Jones: — Yes, better shred than read, I say.

But anyway they talk about massive tax cuts and spending money on programs, but they won't tell you how they're going to pay for it, and indeed they think that we should just trust them, Mr. Speaker, we should just trust them.

An Hon. Member: — Will you trust a guy that looks like Elwin?

Ms. Jones: — Well, I'm not going to comment on anything like that.

But it seems like they are negative; the opposition is negative, except — except — when they're very gleeful about wanting to endorse the BC plan, then they seem to get cheery. That's very cheery if they're endorsing the BC plan.

But if we talk about or introduce the fact that we have just . . . Saskatchewan has improved its job picture by 11,500 new jobs, they don't want to talk about that.

If we talk in the House about how our welfare rates have declined for the past 90 months, do we hear anything? Do we get any press releases? Do we get, do we get any members' statements about how proud they are and how glad, how glad they are that the children of Saskatchewan . . . I mean I think it was 6,000 families, and I think that included over 12,000 . . . 13,000 children who are no longer reliant upon welfare to make their way and to help them along and ensure that they come in and live in dignity . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, very, very difficult.

Now another thing that I find interesting is all the debate that's been going on in the last little while about, about our farm economy and our government. Our Premier, our Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture have been working very, very hard — very, very hard — to try and get a package for our farmers, for the rural community in Saskatchewan and a way to help get over the horrible situation that the US of A (United States of America) has imposed upon us by increasing the amount of subsidies that they pay to their farmer, as opposed to the promises that they made about reducing the amount of subsidy gradually over the number of years.

And I note that back again in the *World Spectator* from Moosomin on Monday, March 23, 1998 the Leader of the Opposition says this on agriculture, he says:

I don't believe in making . . . special deals for farmers.

Now I would think that we have been working very hard to create a special deal for farmers because farmers are hit by low commodity prices. Farmers are very devastated by the amount of subsidies that are provided by the United States and European Union, and we are trying to accomplish a trade injury

compensation package for rural Saskatchewan for our farm communities.

And I have the Leader of the Opposition back in 1998 that says:

I don't believe in making . . . special deals for farmers.

Now I must say, I must say that so far the agreement that we have and the support that we've enjoyed from the opposition on this issue seems to be holding, and I hope that it continues to hold. But on the other hand I don't think we can ignore what has been said in the past.

And what was said in the past by the Leader of the Opposition was that:

I don't believe in making . . . special deals for farmers.

So I'm comparing a lot of these things to what happens in BC.

(15:45)

Now I want to talk a little bit about, about something that I saw in the newspaper, from the *News-Optimist* from April 11 of 2001.

And, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know that we've had . . . a great deal of effort has been put into realigning the health districts in Saskatchewan. We had the Fyke report in which the opposition participated in the special committee meetings and the government implemented a new action plan for Saskatchewan health care, and they're going to be working on that. And we have legislation pending that's going to put all of that in place and so I'm . . . I think that working it out into regional hospitals of varying abilities to provide service to the people of the province is a very good idea.

Now I see here that the Leader of the Opposition says in his speech to . . . well it's not . . . I have a quote here, but it's an article in the *News-Optimist* from April 11, 2001, where it says that the Sask Party would make sure that there's access to health care.

Now he says, the Leader of the Opposition said, and I find this very, very interesting because I think that delivery of health care is a big challenge; it's a huge challenge to face. And what he says is that a Sask Party government . . . and I have to say again dream on, dream on because . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, we've gone from Fantasyworld to Disneyland. A Sask Party government would, and I appear to be quoting here, says:

Would not be hung up on the mechanics of delivering health care.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have spent, we have spent a good deal of time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, talking and planning the mechanics of delivering health care because I think that is one of the ways that you ensure an equal access to health care. It's one of the ways that you ensure that remote corners of the province are not any more remote than they would necessarily be. I think that the mechanics of health care are important and I think to dismiss them in that way is not a very good way to gain public appeal.

So I want to go on quoting from this article. And it says:

If the Sask Party is elected to govern the province (dream on) it would set up a medical system in which local hospitals like Battlefords Union would look after relatively minor ailments like eye, ear, nose, or throat problems, while hospitals in Saskatoon would look after major problems like cancer or heart disease, Hermanson (well I'm quoting) Hermanson said.

So . . .

An Hon. Member: — You heard that?

Ms. Jones: — It was a quote. So I compare that and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, under the organization that we have in place, the Battlefords Union Hospital is a regional hospital. And when I look at what goes on at regional hospitals — and I believe it's designated as a regional hospital, level 2 — it says all six regional hospitals will provide the minimum range of services found in district hospitals, which of course district hospitals provide a greater range of services, but the regionals will provide at least the minimum of that.

And when you go on to say what that is, it includes, now keep in mind that the Leader of the Opposition said that hospitals like Battlefords would look after relatively minor ailments like eye, ear, nose, or throat problems.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't think that the people of Battlefords and region are . . . would be extremely happy with the Leader of the Opposition for saying that. Because what they would do, what they would do under our reorganization is they would provide the minimum range of services found in district hospitals. They would also provide reliable basic specialty services. These include internal medicine, general surgery, obstetrics, and gynecology. These hospitals will also offer intensive care services.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I invite people to say . . . to compare what the Leader of the Opposition's vision for the Battlefords Union Hospital, and following the BC model, it would most certainly be closed. But at a minimum, we want . . . he wants them to look after minor ailments like eye, ear, nose, or throat.

And we say, in an area that has a burgeoning Aboriginal population, he wouldn't even provide gynecology. And I think that obstetrics and gynecology — delivery of a future generation of our province — is an important thing to consider.

Anyway the new image in BC of course, under Gordon Campbell's new era, and again we go back to Abbotsford, a city just outside of Vancouver, puts the government's health care agenda into stark relief. Before the rest of the province knew what was going to hit them, the community of Abbotsford got a bitter taste of the Liberals' medicine when secret plans to build a new private hospital were exposed.

And we know that the opposition is very, very enamoured with the BC core services review. They've said they would implement it. I don't have any reason to believe them but indeed that's what they said.

So the government's plan, which is the Government of BC of course, exposed in October 2001 by CUPE's (Canadian Union of Public Employees) Hospital Employees' Union, which of course we all recall that the Leader of the Opposition wants to make these labour laws here much, much weaker for people in Saskatchewan. And they were developed . . . the government . . .

There's the member from Wood River cheering, for the record, about removing rights from workers. And I think it's very important. He wants to make the labour laws weaker. I said that and the member from Wood River, in case *Hansard* couldn't record it, said "Hear, hear." And so that's what he wants. He just did it again and I think that's going to make a very nice little press release probably later this day, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So they were developed without any community consultation despite the sweeping policy shift that they represent. And that is the government's plans that they're talking about. Now the previous NDP government had approved the hospital's replacement as a public project and plans were progressing early into 2001. And the health employees' union sources indicate that the project went private in June of 2001, around the time the Liberals implemented huge tax cuts and reduced government revenue. The hospital scheme is one of many Liberal broken promises on health care. Well certainly the BC government is about broken promises. Now the Sask Party isn't exactly in a position to break any promises because they're not government and they're not going to be government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — So it's pretty hard, pretty hard for them, pretty hard for them to break promises when you're not government and you're not going to be. That's the way I see it.

So we have a little bit under Britain's private financing model, and I think it's important. If they believe in the endorsement of BC, they need to be willing to look at other jurisdictions that have implemented the same type of thing as BC has, which of course they are endorsing.

And that is that under Britain's private financing model, hospital construction and ownership is privatized. The local health authority leases back the hospital from the consortium through the payment of an annual fee over the life of the contract, which is usually 25 to 35 years. The annual payment is expected to cover both the lease or the rental charges: private sector debt payment, shareholder returns, and building maintenance, as well as a service fee — a service fee — covering health and facilities support services such as cleaning, lighting, and laundry.

So really what we're talking about here is a return to the shareholders in a for-profit situation.

Now once unleashed it will be hard to keep a handle on any private hospital. Because once it's in here it cannot go back . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, no kidding.

Now independent research has shown that public . . . private for . . . hospitals have ended up costing far more than public hospitals while bringing deep cuts in the number of beds and

staff. It's quite interesting to see, quite interesting to see, how the promises of the opposition would all mesh in with the broken promises of the BC government because the BC government didn't have the guts to ever say what they were going to do, but the opposition across here does.

Now I want to compare what BC, I want to compare what BC, I want to see what BC has to compare, how BC and Great Britain compare to the NDP, the NDP approach to, the public approach to strengthening communities. And I think that's what we're all about — strengthening communities.

Canada's prospects for the future rest on the strength and the vitality of its cities. Now we, to realize our potential, we need a full range of quality public services, securely and properly funded, with the federal and provincial governments paying their fair share.

And we want . . . and we say that here in Saskatchewan we not only rely upon the strength of our cities but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we rely on the strength of our rural communities as well. And we are going to, we are going to be putting a lot of effort and we are going to be holding the federal government accountable to ensure that we are able to deliver proper, proper finance help, financial assistance to our farming community.

But nevertheless, whether you live in the city or whether you live in the country or whether you live in the North, the South, the East, the West, public services are really important to the public.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — It's very important that tax dollars are invested into public service and that all members of the community can participate actively in open and transparent decision making. And in communities it's important that we have local governments there. But in their governing, it's important that the public interest has to be respected. And it has to be respected without constraints imposed by international trade deals.

And I think that's one of the problems that we're facing here is the international problem that we're facing with some of the other nations with whom our farmers have to compete.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need communities that are healthy and sustainable. We need green communities that foster the development of green jobs and harbour our natural resources. We also need to develop our natural resources, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

(16:00)

And we need communities that offer secure employment, communities that pay fair wages, and where the contribution of workers is respected and encouraged. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not have any encouragement from the members opposite that the dignity and the value and the worth of workers would be respected. None whatsoever.

We would be very concerned at how a BC-style health privatization which the opposition is . . . want to endorse. They

say it's a good thing. They say that they would certainly want to look at that and they would certainly endorse a core services review.

And if, while they're participating in the core services review and endorsing the actions of the BC government . . . I want to say a little bit about how BC health privatization has hit women hard. It has been quite devastating to the women. And I'm quoting from a little article here called, "A Cross-Country Sell Off." And it says:

The government plans . . .

And they're talking about the BC government here.

The government plans to carry out the most extreme health care privatization scheme in Canadian history at the expense of working women, their families, and their communities.

And that's what they have to say about Premier Gordon Campbell's relentless drive to dismantle and privatize public health care targets.

And we have the member from Wood River on record saying, hear, hear, when I quoted him and said, very enthusiastic about creating private clinics. He was very enthusiastic in his support about that.

So I say again here, Premier Gordon Campbell's relentless drive to dismantle and privatize public health care targets the jobs of tens of thousands — tens of thousands of BC women.

Now when you target, when you target something like health care, and we all know the very significant percentage of workers are women in the health care sector. So when you target an industry such as health care, you are targeting women, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And the Liberal government's privatization scheme attacks women in their homes and in their communities because it takes away their security. It takes away their ability to earn a living, to raise their children, to be a productive part of their community.

And as health care workers piece together the outline of Campbell's cuts, concealed in secret documents leaked to the public, I find that so interesting that BC finds this great need to have this great shroud of secrecy around their plans. And here we have leadership hopefuls back in 1998 who publicly said what it is that they would do.

And what they would do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is very much what the Campbell government has done and were afraid to say. I find that very interesting that the Campbell government is afraid to say out loud what it was that they were going to do, when the opposition has absolutely no trouble whatsoever.

And so it will be a very interesting experiment as we watch how things unfold in BC and the devastation that hits that province, and the deficit that continues to grow, just exactly how that compares to their plan across the way.

So it goes on to say, concealed in secret documents leaked to the public, the extent of the devastation becomes clear. The Campbell Liberals plan to axe nearly 28,000 health care jobs. Now these aren't, these aren't the 11,500 public sector jobs, these aren't the civil service jobs, these are on top of — so now we're talking like 40,000 jobs at a minimum. And who knows how many jobs were lost in the closure of schools and kindergartens, and in the ripping up of collective agreements? I just have no way at the moment of keeping a tab on that. But I'm very sure and I feel quite confident in saying that it's a minimum of 40,000 jobs and it will be a lot more when you tally in all the other casualties.

And we have record, we have record housing starts in Saskatchewan, and people have jobs. We have 11,500 new jobs in Saskatchewan and a lot of that, a good part of those 11,500 jobs are created as a result of the burgeoning housing starts that we have in this province.

And so you have to tie those things together. If you're going to slash 40,000 jobs out of the public sector and the health care sector, you can't expect the people are going to go out and buy and build a new house. So they just work together, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You just . . .

I mean it's foolhardy to think that you could slash public sector jobs and still have people paying taxes, building houses, buying goods and services, able to participate in the entertainment industry or the food service industry, or any of the other things, or participate in sports and be able to volunteer in their community. It simply doesn't happen. When you don't have a job, you don't have the ability to make the rest of the economy work.

And so that's the part that I find so very, very strange about when you link this seeming desire they have to make the world go around in terms of cutting taxes. I mean you can't make the world go around by cutting taxes . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You can't shrink your way into the future says the member from Moose Jaw North. And I think that we have a lot of shrunken things but you can't shrink your way into the future.

So while they say . . . Again I go back and he says the Liberals planned action. Nearly 28,000 health care jobs, which is more than 85 per cent of them, are held by women and then increase the surgery wait lists and shift 500 million in health care costs onto the shoulders of BC families, forcing the sick and elderly to pay for the government tax cuts.

Now when they say that they're going to stimulate the economy by massive tax cuts, and what they do is it results in a big deficit when you shrink the amount of taxes that come in, but it also does not stimulate the economy because it ends up costing more. You end up with people without jobs, people on welfare, and I want to say how it is that it costs more.

How it costs more is that the Ontario and BC government, who were planning to import a British scheme that has been a dismal failure — we all know that that was started under Margaret Thatcher — and perhaps stopped to some extent but not to the extent that we would like. But once you get started down that privatization road it, I mean, it's just like a snowball.

An Hon. Member: — It's a race to the bottom.

Ms. Jones: — It's a race to the bottom for sure.

So the BC . . . and the Ontario and BC government planning to import a British scheme that has been a dismal failure, and why would they? Why would you take something that has proved to be a dismal failure and want to implement it into your government? Well if it's simply to cut costs then that is most certainly a false economy.

An Hon. Member: — Sask Party logic.

Ms. Jones: — Well it must be.

Now this British scheme was introduced in the early 1990s and the private finance initiative privatizes hospital financing, ownership and operation. The local health authority, National Health Services Trust, leaves . . . leases the hospital back from the consortium paying the annual fee over a 25- to 35-year contract. A decade after Britain introduced P3 hospitals, there's been a massive reduction in the quality of and the "access to health care services, including a 30 per cent reduction in the number of hospital beds and a 25 per cent reduction in clinical staffing budgets." The privatized hospitals are costing taxpayers far more than publicly financed facilities.

Now I mean that's what happens. You have a . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It is no mystery and indeed you cannot expect a private investor to invest his money and not expect to make money.

So automatically you have to add a profit margin for the investor. And the profit margin for the investor is going to be paid by the taxpayer of the province — there is nobody else to pay that bill but the taxpayer of the province. So when you introduce false economies like that and then you wonder . . . and then you wonder why.

It's no secret the UK (United Kingdom) private hospitals have been a financial nightmare. They provide substandard care while rewarding shareholders with massive profits. Independent analysis of the model published in the British Medical Journal found the private finance initiative led to higher costs, lower level of service in staffing, inferior construction, and administrative efficiencies.

An Hon. Member: — Other than that it was a good idea.

Ms. Jones: — Yes, other than that, it was a great idea.

But I think the idea that I would like is, I would like to know if indeed that is what the opposition considers to be a good idea. Because I think that's here what we're talking about, what we're here to talk about is, is the fact that the BC government promised not to do certain things. Then when they got elected, they did those certain things.

And what we know is that we have an opposition government who says good on you; we want to do the same thing because we say you're on the right track. So I just want to make a review of what it is that they did.

First they cut . . . they made cuts to welfare and income support for people in BC. Now we, as opposed to making cuts, as opposed to making cuts to welfare, we're most certainly reducing the number of people on welfare, but we're not doing it by making cuts to the amount of money that we spend. We're doing it by finding people, retraining them, providing supports to them, and putting them into jobs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — The way that people have an opportunity to participate in a bright future in our province is not to cut the amount of welfare, but to hide welfare people in jobs. And that's where they are — and we're proud of our record — and they will be the future, the future productive people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — But in contrast to that, in contrast to that, here's what the BC approach is that the opposition tends to agree with. In fact, they have stated categorically that they would do the same sort of review.

And so what they have done is cuts of up to \$370 million, or 26 per cent of income support for single parent families, most of which are headed by women. So in comparison to the Saskatchewan advantage, then that is for sure . . .

Now here's something else, here's something else that the opposition party agrees with. They agreed that . . . cutting funds to BC's entire network of women's centres. So the BC government cut funding for centres that in communities across BC assist women with issues of poverty, justice, and family violence, providing hot lunch programs, legal advice, and counselling to abused women. With only transition houses left standing, there will be few resources for women between the threat of abuse and the reality of abuse.

(16:15)

It does put a whole new spin on that old saying, women first, because that's what they've done — hit the women first.

And in another category, they lowered the minimum wage. They said they wouldn't do that. They said they wouldn't do it. And so they maybe didn't take the established wage, but what they did do is they put in a new wage.

And the majority of BC's minimum wage earners are women over 19, not youth. We've heard it argued that the majority of minimum wage earners are youth. But we know in this province that a lot of minimum wage earners are women, and university students, and people that are trying to get ahead in this world and trying to get an education and trying to lay claim to the types of service jobs that are important in this province.

And what did they do in BC? Well no, they said we think that the new \$6 wage with its mind-boggling paperwork it requires to prove a worker's experience — and this is going to especially hit immigrant women. Now in Saskatchewan I think we would be quite happy if we had more immigrant women. We would be very happy if we had more new residents coming to

Saskatchewan.

What we would not be happy is to discriminate by giving them a lower minimum wage than everybody else. And the Saskatchewan government would not be happy to do that.

But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, we would be very happy to welcome them into our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — Now we have an opposition across the way that is very, very . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well sad is one way to describe them, yes. Very, very . . . Portray themselves as law and order, big law and order. Up on law and order.

And one of the things that we noted in BC, that they certainly adore . . . endorse is that, is that they endorsed the fact that the BC province cut legal aid services. They did. They cut legal aid services and of course you know who that particularly affects, people who are mostly required to . . . require the service of legal aid lawyers, the most vulnerable in society of course. Of course.

And they cut a good number, as I understand it, closed a good number of court houses in BC which of course is going to slow up the whole court process, is going to delay justice. It's going to delay justice for the victim but it will also delay justice for the accused because sometimes they're not guilty and yet they have this huge problem hanging over their head for a long period of time because court houses will be closed. There will be increased costs of housing them in holding facilities, in remand, or increased problems that come as a result of not being able to have your court case heard in a timely fashion. There's the whole bonding issue.

And yet, they promised . . . the opposition has decided that, indeed, they're going to endorse the BC government's program. So that is very shameful.

And it's . . . they . . . Among the measures that Gordon Campbell took to meet the Crown counsels' 77.9 million budget in 2001 included slashing the Crown ad hoc work usually farmed out to private defence lawyers, reducing the number of prosecutors on big cases from two to one, and laying off the auxiliary victim services workers. Now we all know that victim service workers are very important.

Now here's another way that they seem to have, seem to have decided to particularly pick on women. And the way that they particularly pick on women out there in BC is that they eliminated the employment equity and put pay equity under review.

And again I say that the opposition has endorsed this particular program and said that they too would carry out a core services review. So they've already have moved to eliminate employment equity from within the public service.

And we're still struggling very hard in this province to advance employment equity in the public service. And we are doing a good job; we have made very good progress on employment equity and we are making progress indeed on pay equity —

very good progress on pay equity, although always more needs to be done but we're working at it.

But what did BC do? What did they do? Well they eliminated employment equity and then they've put pay equity under review. So they did. They did. So they've already moved to eliminate employment equity from within the public service to the extent of removing from government correspondence the declaration . . .

Here's how they went about it. They went about it by, they removed from the government correspondence the declaration: the government of British Columbia is an employment equity employer. So now . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Deadwood, skunks and deadwood it was; skunks and deadwood, yes. And the man with . . . Wood River . . .

Anyway the Campbell government already moved to eliminate by removing it's an employment equity employer.

Now here in Saskatchewan . . . And our government is proud of the work and we're proud of the partnership that we have with many of our industry partners, many of them in the public sector, some of them in the private sector. And what are we doing? We're working toward employment equity.

We have a wonderful advantage in this province, in that where many other provinces are going to be suffering a shortage of skilled workers, our province is experiencing a growth.

A growth in young people. And that growth is — thank you, thank you — to our Aboriginal community. And our Aboriginal community are going to be very, very active in our workforce. And we are working with industry in the public sector and in the private sector and in the government to expand employment equity and to bring along our Aboriginal sisters and brothers through their leadership and in partnership with their leadership. And we are working in economic development areas with our partners in the Aboriginal community.

And what's BC do? Cut employment equity.

Now the . . . What would the Sask Party do? I think that that's a very important question. Because if it means that they endorse what the Campbell government does, then it means they endorse what the Campbell government does. And what the Campbell government did was to cut employment equity in very stark contrast to what the industry in Saskatchewan is doing, the public sector, our private sector participants, and the government, and we are working to include employment equity into our program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — The Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, has also . . . we've worked . . . I think the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld talked about expansion in the . . . in schools, expansion in our early learning program, expansion in the number of people . . . number of community schools that are covered by additional funding. We have added child care spaces in our most recent provincial budget, and as I say very often, that the children are the future, that their early learning and their education is what is going to make this province the place to be

today and in the years to come.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — And I want . . . So I want to compare that and our efforts in Saskatchewan to provide services to children with what they've done in BC.

And what do you suppose that they've done in BC? They have gutted child care programs more. Here they've gone . . . cuts to subsidies for low-income parents will put child care out of their reach for thousands of BC families. The subsidy cuts amount to \$26 million on \$126 million budget. Now that is one shwack of a percentage.

And in Saskatchewan we added child care spaces. We didn't gut child care programs.

In BC taking that \$26 million out of their \$126 million budget is being accomplished by lowering the income thresholds for the program so fewer people will qualify. And those who do qualify are going to get less money.

The minister responsible there was quoted as saying . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You ask how they could do something like that? Well Lynn Stephens, the minister responsible, was quoted as saying that the changes were necessary to make the system more affordable for taxpayers. Even though . . . And you know what they said? She acknowledged that it would result in needy parents paying more. So I don't know.

They also cancelled universal child care, Mr. Speaker. In the 2001 economic update, the Campbell government put a complete halt to their government's move towards a universal, affordable child care program for all BC parents, scrapping 15.6 million in the 2001 budget that was earmarked for child care funding.

Now they scrapped \$15.6 million. I wish that I had the numbers at the end of my fingertips or at the end of my tongue, but I don't. But we increased money and put more money into our child care services.

And if the opposition endorses what they did in BC, then I can only assume that that is indeed what the opposition would do. However, I'm feeling a little bit more comfortable about that because if you're not in government, you don't need to worry about it.

Now they also eliminated programs for high-risk children and we talk here about high-risk children. We've talked about the Role of the School. We've talked about very, very many things and there's high-risk children. Some children are at higher risk than others. We have dozens of programs in Saskatchewan aimed at preventing high-risk youth from getting into more trouble.

I think that we've done a very good job in our government about identifying and about trying to protect some of the children who are at risk. And those that are, those that are most vulnerable in the province of Saskatchewan, we've recently introduced some legislation and certainly there's a high level of

support for what the government is doing.

And I would be remiss if I didn't thank all members of the committee that participated in the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children.

(16:30)

But when it comes to that, and here we have a BC government that is eliminating programs for high-risk children, and they want to be just like them, then you know even though they participated and I think some good work was done by the committee, I worry about the position that they would take when they want to be just like the BC government and eliminate programs for high-risk children.

So they say that in BC dozens of programs aimed at preventing high-risk youth from getting into more trouble are facing the axe from the BC Liberals. Children and Family Development minister Gordon Hogg has stated:

The cuts to the Children's Ministry mean all such programs are under review. Some have already been told their funding will stop. Others expect to learn their fate by mid-April.

And so we certainly endorse what has been done here, we were part of it and proud to be part of it, and I say that we do not need any government that would cut programs to high-risk children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — Now we in Saskatchewan last year, we have . . . We started a program about increasing the number of jobs that were available to university students and summer students — the centennial summer employment program, which provided a lot of meaningful jobs. And a lot of the jobs that the people were placed in were very important in the city of Saskatoon and in the city of Regina where we had centennial employment program students working on Meewasin Valley, planting trees, doing parks, designing future research at the university — very, very, very important program and we're proud of it.

So what do you think happened in BC . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I'm going to tell you. I'm sorry, I have to tell you because it's important to know what they did in BC and it's important to know that the opposition party endorses it.

So here's what they did. They eliminated, they eliminated the summer, the student summer works program, the youth community action program, and the Job Start program, effective April 1, 2002.

So our approach is provide more jobs, more employment for young people, give them an opportunity to make some money and go back to university, get an education. Give them an opportunity to participate in the community. Give them hope, give them optimism.

In the JobStart program, give people who are on assistance hope and optimism and tools to participate in the future of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — And compare our approach to the BC approach was to eliminate student summer works program, youth community action program, and the Job Start program. And the opposition says that they would conduct a similar core services review and, if it works, they would do the same thing.

And I mean, it is a shame. I think it's an absolute shame.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — Well BC people are saying about their government . . . I have relatives, in-laws in BC, and I had the privilege of being able to introduce them in the House this . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — Mr. Speaker, I really, really appreciate the support but with all this interruption I don't know if I'm going to be able to get to the main part of my speech.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, I have relatives in BC. I have one brother-in-law who's a teacher, who's been a teacher for a very long time, and who's very, very concerned, not only for his own future and security but for that of his students, Mr. Speaker.

I have a mom and dad, well in-laws, out there who are phoning — they phone. We call each other at least every week and they continually tell me that it's just . . . well some of the words I likely can't tell you what they tell me, but in very plain words it is not a nice place to be, that the BC Liberals are just ruining the province and that's in the word of my mother-in-law.

Mr. Speaker, my husband's brother moved out here last fall from BC. He's lived there all his life, born and raised here. He made the move to come to Saskatchewan because he could see what was coming from the . . . He could see what was coming — dark days for working people in BC.

And when we talk to his mom, my mother-in-law, she says, I'm so happy. Although they did not want to lose their baby son from BC, and they miss him very much, she said, I'm so glad he was able to get out when he could because the BC Liberals are ruining this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can only ask what kind of an opposition could endorse the policies of a government that is ruining the province? Only the Sask Party . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — So I thought because I gave you, Mr. Speaker, some personal anecdotes and personal quotes from family there, I want to read just a few quotes from BC about what they think about the government in BC. May 11 to 16 the quote of the week . . . the quote of the week is:

I would much rather have not had the tax cuts and seen that money go towards balancing the budget or not leading to such a huge cut in services.

And that came from Steven Broscoe, a self-employed computer programmer, and was in the *Vancouver Sun* on May 16.

Runners-up to the quote of the week on cutting programs for sick kids, Mr. Speaker, the quote is:

If the government thinks they're going to be saving money by getting rid of this service, they're wrong.

And this was from Denyse Fowler, the *Victoria Times Colonist* May 15. And Ms. Fowler helps severely disabled children attending live-in rehab and respite programs. And the centre is no longer booking past September and its programs are now under review. And what she says is if you think you're going to save money by doing this, then you're wrong and you cannot save money by putting sick kids at risk.

Another quote on cutting child care subsidies, the quote is:

We've got some families who are going to be getting 120, 140, \$170 a month less. We've had some calls from parents that are really concerned. They're not sure what they're going to do.

Now one of the things that you need, Mr. Speaker, if you're a young family and you got child care responsibilities, is you need to be able to afford the daycare in order to be able to go to work. And if you cut the subsidies to low-income working families, then you are dooming them to welfare. If they cannot have their children in a place that they can afford the proper care, then they are not going to be.

This one's really good. Gordon Campbell's housekeeper says this:

Gordon Campbell is taking us somewhere. He has a plan for BC, I think. I mean, he must, right?

And this is said by Christiana Helsall, Gordon Campbell's housecleaner and ultimate insider on . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I mean, he must. Right?

Anyway, anybody that supports a government that's doing what this government is doing, I think deserves very close scrutiny from the people of this province.

I want to carry on a little bit more with the quotes because it's important on . . . it's important to hit all the highlights of what they are doing, and they are closing schools. And it says on closing schools, the quote is:

This will just about kill us. It pulls the rug out from under us. How are we going to attract people to the community if we don't have a school for the children.

And that is from Dave Hendrickson, mayor of Wells, *Vancouver Province* on May 12.

And I said earlier, Mr. Deputy . . . or Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, that we in Saskatchewan in our most recent budget recognized the need for capital spending in both our K to 12 and in our post-secondary educations. And as a result, as a result of having to dedicate so much of our budget every year,

year after year, since 1991 to payment on the debt — in fact only interest payment on the debt — it has taken and created a rather pent-up demand for some very needed infrastructure in this province.

And so, Mr. Deputy . . . Mr. Speaker, I have outlined a lot of the issues that the people of BC have with their province. I have outlined many of the contrasts of how our government treats the extreme approach of the BC government — endorsed by the opposition, endorsed by the Sask Party — and the balanced careful approach that our government takes, and our government takes it to education, to our children, to advancing the opportunities for our Aboriginal people, for advancing investment and progress.

We are looking at health. We are spending more on education. We are spending less . . . well I don't know that we're spending less, but we certainly have a lesser caseload in our welfare people because they are hiding in jobs. We are spending and promoting the people of this province. We are not gutting the core services. We are not selling the Crown corporations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(16:45)

Ms. Jones: — We have 11,000 new jobs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — Saskatchewan is on its way up. We are prospering. We are doing well. And the people of the province will not be fooled by an opposition that endorses a government that is driving the province into the ground.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jones: — And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to adjourn debate . . . the House. Adjourn the House. I move this House do now adjourn.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 16:46 until 16:54.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 27

Calvert	Addley	Atkinson
Hagel	Lautermilch	Melenchuk
Cline	Sonntag	Osika
Kasperski	Goulet	Van Mulligen
Prebble	Belanger	Crofford
Axworthy	Nilson	Junor
Harper	Forbes	Jones
Higgins	Trew	Wartman
Thomson	Yates	McCall

Nays — 21

Hermanson	Kwiatkowski	Heppner
Krawetz	Draude	Gantefoer

Bjornerud	Stewart	Elhard
Eagles	McMorris	D'Autremont
Wall	Brkich	Wiberg
Weekes	Harpauer	Hart
Allchurch	Peters	Huyghebaert

The Assembly adjourned at 16:56.