

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in lieu of the government's reluctance to honour leases for Crown grazing purposes in the Southwest, many of my constituents have started a petition campaign. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure current Crown land lessees maintain their first option to renew those leases.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed from constituents from Tompkins, Cabri, Burstall, Fox Valley, Maple Creek, and other communities throughout the Southwest.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the dangerous and deplorable condition of Highway 58 between Chaplin and Shamrock. 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 necessary repairs to Highway 58 in order to avoid serious injury and property damage.

This petition is signed by individuals all from the community of Shamrock.

I so present.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition today, and it is from . . . citizens in my area very concerned about the safety of children and others who travel on Highway 47 south of Estevan. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 47 South in order to avoid serious injury and property damage.

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

And this is signed by residents of the city of Estevan and the surrounding area.

I so present. Thank you.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure again to rise on behalf of people in my hometown who are very concerned with the state of the hospital in Swift Current. The

prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to commit its share of funding for a new regional hospital in Swift Current.

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

Mr. Speaker, all of the petitioners again today are from the city of Swift Current.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here signed by the citizens, good citizens for the town of Davidson:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Davidson and Craik health centres be maintained at its current level of service at a minimum 24-hour acute care, emergency, and doctor services available, as well as lab services, public health, home care, long-term care services, available to the users from Craik and Davidson area and beyond.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the Assembly to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the government's dealing with Crown land leases. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure current Crown land leases maintain their first option to renew their leases.

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

The signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Spiritwood and Leask.

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 maintenance of current level of service at the Davidson and Craik health centres; and

Addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 4, 5, and 6.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 5 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: since tobacco taxes were raised in the 2002-2003 budget, what has been the percentage increase or decrease in: (1) sales of taxable tobacco products; and (2) sales of non-taxable tobacco products?

I so present.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 10 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Crown Investments Corporation: what were the terms of the sale of the fresh-pack potato plant at Lucky Lake to Pak-Wel Produce of Vauxhall, Alberta; when did the purchaser take full possession of the facility; on what date did the deal close; and on what date was CIC paid in full for the facility?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and a good Monday to you.

Mr. Speaker, it's with great pleasure that I introduce to you and all members of the House . . . And I'll ask them to stand as I introduce them. We have some visitors here from, not only out of province, but out of the country: Mr. Dimitri Logothetis, his fiancée, Suzie O'Donnell — congratulations to you both — Mr. Nicholas Celozzi. Now both gentlemen . . . Oh and as well Ms. Valerie Creighton, the CEO (chief executive officer) of SaskFILM.

These gentlemen are from ACME Pictures, Mr. Speaker, and this is a Hollywood-based film and television production and distribution company. Mr. Logothetis is a director/writer, and Mr. Celozzi is the producer of *The Lost Angel*, which is a 3.5 million — oh, you can sit down again, that's okay; it's kind of like being in church — that's being shot here in Saskatchewan. The majority of the shooting will be on location, as well as the 15,000 square foot studio at the Canada-Saskatchewan production studio.

Mr. Speaker, both Mr. Logothetis and Mr. Celozzi have been so impressed with the opportunities here that they've expressed interest in bringing more projects to Saskatchewan, including three more feature films and a large series — so let's do our best to encourage that thought.

And I ask all members to warmly welcome our guests.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — And I have one more introduction, Mr. Speaker. Should I finish my second one?

And as well — I've got a bounty of guests today — joining a hardworking staff member from my office, Margaret Giannetta, she's joined today by Sophie Kups, who is her mother, who is 83 years old today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — And she is accompanied by another daughter, Halina Schoenthal. And I'll just mention, Mr.

Speaker, that such is our working schedule that our dear mothers are forced to come to the legislature if they want to be able to celebrate their birthdays with their families. So join me in wishing Sophie a happy birthday.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the loyal opposition, I too would like to welcome the folks here that are in Saskatchewan from out of province and out of country. I hope you enjoy the proceedings this afternoon and enjoy your stay in Saskatchewan. And we look forward to having you back when we are government.

Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again in the east gallery this afternoon I'm pleased to present Mr. David Karwacki, the leader of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party.

Mr. Karwacki is in Regina for the gigantic leader's dinner that's to be held Thursday of this week. It promises to be an exciting affair, unlike the leader's dinner of a certain other party that was held last week in Saskatoon, which I understand was so boring there were people going for smoke breaks who don't even smoke.

Mr. Speaker, tickets are going fast but there are still a few available. Please help me welcome Mr. Karwacki. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this hon. Assembly seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, my good friend Mr. Chuck Guillaume. Chuck has been successful in small business, has been a senior civil servant. Chuck now farms at Marquis and is the head of a local group promoting a large hog enterprise in that small community, and a very important member of my constituency organization.

I ask all members to welcome my friend, Chuck Guillaume.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to join with my colleague from Regina Centre and welcome Sophie Kups here this afternoon, and say happy birthday. I've known Sophie and her family for many, many years. Her husband, Walter . . . they're immigrants from Poland who came to Regina shortly after the Second World War. And it's nice to see Halina here. I wouldn't want to embarrass her, but a few years ago Halina was my dance partner in the Polonia folk dance ensemble here in Regina for a little while. So Halina, it's nice to see you.

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

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Junior World Curling Championships

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan curling fans are proud and excited that Canada is being well represented at both the women's and men's junior world championships by teams from our province. Residents of Biggar, the hometown of Olympic gold medallist Sandra Schmirler, are jubilant over the performance of our women's junior team led by Marliese Miller. The team also includes Teejay Surik, from . . . where else but Biggar? Our Canadian champs won their first game against Italy on Saturday and sit on top of the standings today with a perfect 5 and 0 record.

The Canadian junior women have overcome jet lag and are adjusting to playing with a rule change. Accustomed to playing with the five-rock rule, the junior women are doing extremely well despite the four-rock rule change.

I know along with all members, I join about 1 million Saskatchewanians in wishing our two outstanding junior teams continued success. And particularly, we wish Teejay and teammates Marliese Miller, Janelle Lemon, Chelsey Bell, the best of luck. We hope that both the men's and women's teams can bring home the world championship gold.

Good luck to you all.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Partnership Between Sask Water and Prince Arthur School

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Sask Water is partnering with the Prince Arthur community school in Moose Jaw to provide guided reading books, specialized software, and learning aids for about 285 pre-kindergarten to grade 8 students.

Partnerships between schools and Crown corporations have become an important part of the value that Crown corporations bring to the province. This partnership provides additional funds for Prince Arthur community school and gives Sask Water an opportunity to be more closely integrated with our community.

The school will use the partnership funding for enriched content-levelled reading sets, aerobics, computer software, new books for the library, award items for student agendas, and for the school's swimming program.

Mr. Speaker, Prince Arthur's principal, Wayne Wolsfeld, said having Sask Water partnership with the school to provide foundational learning tools for students in this community is a valuable step towards building our community's quality of life. We are grateful for this contribution which allows us to reach every student in our school with learning aids that may otherwise not be available to them. Learning tools will help to increase their capacity for academic life and success.

Mr. Speaker, more proof of our Crowns' value to every citizen of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

World Water Day 2003

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to bring to the members' attention that March 22 was World Water Day 2003. The United Nations Environment Programme is the lead UN (United Nations) agency for this day of water quality awareness. The goal is to inspire political and community action and encourage greater global understanding of the need for more responsible water use and conservation.

Mr. Speaker, the theme for this year is water for the future. It calls on each of us to maintain and improve our fresh water available to future generations. We must all work towards a millennium development goal, a goal to cut in half by 2015 the number of people living without safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

In Saskatchewan, we must give a lot more attention towards critical water testing, infrastructure improvement, and water quality.

This year's water awareness day was most importantly in the public eye. It was the highlight of the world water forum held this past week in Japan. However here in Saskatchewan we have a long way to go towards becoming the best example of water purity.

(13:45)

Towns and villages across the province are still struggling to replace old water infrastructure equipment while risking drinking water quality. Obviously this government does not give this critical health concern much priority. We can only hope that the members opposite recognize this most important responsibility to this province, this country, and to the world.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Party Slogan

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, members opposite finally realized they have only empty slogans to offer voters so they decided to latch on to the BC (British Columbia) Liberal plan.

As their leader declared in a speech to the Saskatoon business community, "One initiative that I believe holds tremendous value for Saskatchewan is a project launched by Premier Campbell called the Core Services Review." He went on to say, "A Saskatchewan Party government will launch a similar Core Services Review in this province within 30 days of taking office."

Well, Mr. Speaker, here are the results of the Campbell plan so far: hospitals closed, nurses and other front-line health workers laid off; schools closed, classroom class sizes up, and teachers laid off; an average 25 per cent cuts to all public programs; 11,000 jobs lost in the public service; 23 per cent cut in early childhood development programs; a training wage that is \$2

under the minimum wage for the first 500 hours worked; and, most recently, a hike in the gasoline tax. It's enough to drive you — that's if you can afford to.

That party has slogans, Mr. Speaker, we have a plan and it's working.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Assiniboia Hosts 2003 Masters Curling Championships

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the town of Assiniboia and specifically the Assiniboia Curling Club hosted the 2003 Canadian Open Men's and Women's Masters Curling Championships, March 17 to 23. The event was held in the new Prince of Wales Cultural and Recreation Centre and provided some excellent curling for the numerous fans.

Standings at the end of the round robin play had Quebec leading the men's division with a 6-1 record and the Manitoba women's team also had a 6-1 record.

In the men's semifinal playoffs, Alberta beat Ontario and then went on to meet Quebec in the final game. The final was won by Quebec in a very close and entertaining game.

In the women's playoffs there were two tiebreaker games which saw BC emerge as the semifinal opponent for Ontario. Ontario won the game and went on to meet Manitoba in the final. It took an extra end but Ontario prevailed and emerged as the champion.

Congratulations to all curlers who enjoyed an excellent week in Assiniboia, and special congratulations to Dave Moon's Pointe Claire Team Quebec and Gloria Sorley's Niagara Falls Team Ontario for their championship performance. Also, chairpersons of the host committee, Trent Richards and Trace Corman, plus their many volunteers should be commended for the excellent organization and providing direction for this highly successful event.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Party Agriculture Policy

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Party has been trying as hard as possible to keep its true agenda hidden from the public, but every once in while some of their members let a scrap or two drop.

The latest came from the opposition Agriculture critic, the member for Watrous, demonstrating once again that her party's understanding of significant agriculture issues is sorely lacking.

First the member for Watrous revealed a crop insurance policy that would cost Saskatchewan farmers millions of dollars. In response to the reporter's question, she suggested the crop insurance debt should be spread over eight or nine years. The debt is currently amortized over a 15-year period, Mr. Speaker. The policy she concocted would cost producers as much as 40 per cent more in crop insurance costs in order to meet her accelerated repayment schedule.

Mr. Speaker, the member should also know that Saskatchewan does not have the ability to unilaterally change the crop insurance premiums and how they're calculated. They are a part of a federal and provincial agreement.

Mr. Speaker, confusion reigns supreme on the other side of this House when it comes to agricultural policy. The last time their critic responded to questions about her party's policy was in answering a reporter's question about the drought. She was asked by a reporter: what would you do specifically about drought relief? Her response: right now, I wouldn't know exactly what we would do.

An empty slogan. That's no plan, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan and it's working.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Provincial High School Athletic Association Boy's Curling Championship

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on March 6 to 8, the community of Strasbourg hosted the Provincial High School Athletic Association Boy's Curling Championship. I was very pleased to participate in the opening ceremonies of this curling championship and to support our youth in sports.

I congratulate all the people from the community of Strasbourg for accepting the challenge of hosting such a competition. An event like this, Mr. Speaker, doesn't just happen; it takes a lot of volunteers, a lot of hard work to host such a successful event. And I would like to take this moment to thank all those volunteers and let them know that their efforts were very much appreciated.

The provincial curling championship consists of 16 teams from across the province who earn their berth in the playdown by winning their district championship. I congratulate every team and every team member for their energy and devotion to their team's success this year.

The final games were indeed a show of skill and strategy for the qualifying teams. The championship ended with the comprehensive high school from Kamsack receiving the gold, the Greenall High School from Balgonie receiving the silver, and the William Derby high school from Strasbourg receiving the bronze.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to at this time say a special word of congratulations to the team from Strasbourg consisting of skip Kevin Craswell, Dylan Uhl, David Craswell, Shea McLaughlin, and Kyle Lakness. Congratulations, boys, for a job well done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Forthcoming Budget

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, extensive details of the provincial budget

appeared on the front page of Saturday's *Leader-Post* and *StarPhoenix*. In fact this is probably the largest budget leak that we've ever seen in Saskatchewan.

So the question to the Premier is: why did this happen? Why did the government leak virtually its entire budget to one media outlet and one reporter a week before it was scheduled to be released here in this Legislative Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I understand why he and the Saskatchewan Party are upset about speculation around the budget which will be delivered on Friday. They're upset because all of the speculation now is that this is going to be a very good budget for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The one thing that the Leader of the Opposition and the Saskatchewan Party can't stand, it's good news. So I understand why, Mr. Speaker, they're a little upset today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — I know the Premier is somewhat new to this position, has not been elected by the people of Saskatchewan, but he should realize the importance of this situation.

Mr. Speaker, this budget leak was either a deliberate strategy by the NDP (New Democratic Party) or it wasn't. Either way it's a huge, huge problem. If the budget was leaked on purpose for some special reason, that shows disrespect for this Legislative Assembly, contempt, Mr. Speaker. If the budget was not . . .

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, if the budget was not leaked on purpose, then the Premier's got a whole different problem. He's got a major breach of confidentiality to deal with.

So the question, Mr. Speaker, is: which one is it? We don't want a glib reply from the Premier; this is a serious situation. Did the Premier's office authorize the budget leak, or was it leaked without the Premier's knowledge?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — For as long as I've been a member of this House and in many years before that, there is always an amount of speculation that occurs in the run-up to a budget — nothing new about speculation about the budget.

Now, that the speculation would describe a stronger financial position for the province of Saskatchewan is not surprising because I think most people in Saskatchewan know that the . . . that in fact the province of Saskatchewan has seen some very significant growth. That there is speculation, Mr. Speaker, that our income tax revenues will be greater should not be a surprise because for several months now we've been announcing month

after month that the job numbers in Saskatchewan are growing. That the financial picture in Saskatchewan is better today and therefore will be reflected in a provincial budget, that should be no surprise to anyone, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, this is not a minor leak with a few details. This is not, as the Premier says, general speculation over the overall direction of the budget. This includes very, very specific details on the level of spending in health, in education, and agriculture. This leak includes information on taxes and this leak includes an admission that the deficit is going to increase by \$400 million.

Mr. Speaker, now that the Minister of Finance has leaked his very first budget, will he be asked to do the honourable thing and resign as Minister of Finance?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I will tell you exactly what this Minister of Finance is going to do. He is going to stand in this legislature on Friday morning and deliver a budget to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, that's what he's going to do, as opposed to, as opposed to what the Saskatchewan Party's cousins in Ontario are about to do, which is deliver their budget at an auto centre — at an auto centre. Now that's the theory of the right-wing parties in Canada, that's the theory of the Conservative parties in Canada — that you can take your budget right out of the legislature and deliver it in an auto centre.

Well no, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will stand in this House on Friday and will deliver. And we will see of course how accurate the speculation is — or, Mr. Speaker, how inaccurate the speculation is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the budget shouldn't be released at an auto plant nor should it be released in the office of a reporter here in Saskatchewan. It's wrong, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, we have seen this government perform. We've seen the minister of this Premier hide from the people of Saskatchewan information for six years, confess that he misled the people of Saskatchewan, and he still sits on the benches of this Premier's government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a Minister of Finance who may have leaked the budget to a reporter in Saskatchewan and he is still sitting on the front benches of this government. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier do the right thing? Does he recognize the importance of this blunder? Will he commit to the people of Saskatchewan why the budget was leaked a week ahead of time?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the champion of democracy opposite. Mr. Speaker, delivered to many people in the last month was a brochure that talked about the Grow Saskatchewan plan. In here, Mr. Speaker, are a number, if I may say, a large number of spending commitments — spending commitments.

Let me just start at the top. They say to the people of Saskatchewan, elect us and we're going to have reduced and smarter taxes. Okay. Fair enough. They say right away we're going to lower provincial income tax. That's what they say.

I challenge the Leader of the Opposition today: tell us how much — 1 point, 2 points, 5 points, 10 points? Mr. Speaker, it's \$100 million a point — \$100 million a point. If they're going to lower the income taxes by 5 points, what does that add up to — \$500 million, half a billion.

Secondly, they say they're going to make Saskatchewan small tax . . . a small-business-tax-free zone. Mr. Speaker, \$60 million a year. The list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker. It's time for this opposition to tell us how much — how much are they promising.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the Premier is \$80 million over budget on the land titles automation. There's lots of money if it's properly spent.

Mr. Speaker, on at least three occasions — and I hope the Premier listens closely — on at least three occasions in recent years, provincial governments have been forced to table their budgets early after portions of the budget were leaked to the media. This happened in 1987 and in 1992 in Quebec, and it happened in 1995 in British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, the leak in Saturday's paper contained extensive detail about the upcoming budget. If the Premier is not going to demand the resignation of his Minister of Finance, will he then follow the precedent set in other legislatures in Canada and will he order his Finance minister to table the budget for the people of Saskatchewan today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I repeat. On Friday of this week, soon enough — soon enough — the Minister of Finance will stand in his place and will deliver a budget for the people . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, I repeat again. I understand why the Leader of the Opposition and that entire caucus and their entire party are a little upset today because, I repeat, the speculation — and we'll see how accurate it is — the speculation is that this will be a very good budget for the people of Saskatchewan. And they cannot stand good news.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, when we look at that budget that was released on Saturday, it's very leaky. It's very leaky in more than one ways. You know, Mr. Speaker, that budget is leaking a lot of red ink.

Let's take a look at what is proposed in that budget: an additional increase, Mr. Speaker, of \$400 million to the debt.

Now let's take a look at what the auditor has said just a short year . . . two years ago in fact on March 31. The auditor said that the debt of this province was \$11.1 billion — a staggering amount — but 11.1.

The proposed budget, Mr. Speaker, is suggesting that that debt will rise to 11.4 billion. That's a huge increase, Mr. Speaker. Third straight deficit that this government is proposing. Why does the NDP continue to run up one deficit after another and drive this province further into debt?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think that the member opposite of course is again speculating that all the numbers will be out with regard to revenues, expenditures, and of course the detail on debt will be presented in this Assembly on Friday morning, Mr. Speaker.

But when we talk about our performance in debt management, Mr. Speaker, I must remind the members opposite that the debt when this administration took over in 1991, which increased because of Crown stripping, equity stripping, has been paid down continuously over the past 10 years, Mr. Speaker. And I must admit that this province from being one of the worst performers on debt management in the early 1990 . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I just was finding it difficult to hear, but the member I think completed his question.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I need to clarify two things. I believe I indicated that the debt proposed in this released budget is actually 11.4. No, it's not. It will be \$12.4 billion.

And, Mr. Speaker, for the Minister of Finance's information, if he happened to read the last document dated 2002, the debt, the combined debt of the General Revenue Fund and the Crown corporations in 1991 was \$12.1 billion. The debt proposed will be larger than the debt started when this government came to power in 1991.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, the former premier that used to sit in that chair talked about a balanced approach. He said if there was any new money, we would spend one-third on debt reduction, we would spend one-third towards tax reduction, and one-third towards spending.

According to the new Finance's leaked . . . Finance minister's leaked budget, this is a budget all spending. No tax reduction

and the debt's going up.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister admit the NDP is trying to buy votes with borrowed money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I can see that the member opposite, the Finance critic for the Saskatchewan Party is getting animated, but he's also made a few mistakes. The debt peaked in '93-94 at 14.8 billion and it's been considerably lower since then, Mr. Speaker.

And I must also indicate, Mr. Speaker, that the reason the debt peaked at that time was because this administration took on the debt of the Crown corporations which had been equity stripped by those members opposite for an entire decade, Mr. Speaker.

Now when we talk about, when we talk about the potential, possible potential of adding debt in any one given year, there's good debt and there's bad debt.

And I'd like to ask the members opposite, would they not have paid out crop insurance payments of \$1 billion? Would they not be fighting forest fires? Would they not be providing additional funds to help farmers and agriculture producers?

Well, Mr. Speaker, this administration believes that some debt is good debt and some debt is bad debt, and we are not adding bad debt and we won't, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to the Provincial Auditor, the largest debt that this province has had, combined General Revenue Fund and Crown corporation debt, is in 1994 when that debt reached \$14.2 billion — \$14.2 billion.

Mr. Speaker, you really have to wonder where the minister is getting his advice from. Apparently someone advised him to run a \$400 million deficit again this year and then leak it to the media a week in advance. So the question is: who is giving this advice and has the minister sued that person yet?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to speculate on the source of potential leaks. But I must say, Mr. Speaker, that this particular administration has done a very good job in debt management. And we all recognize that the news that is coming out in terms of what might be in the budget that will be presented here on Friday morning is all good news, Mr. Speaker.

And when we talked about what this administration is going to do for the people of Saskatchewan in terms of good news, it's been suggested that this might even be a pre-election budget. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you for a fact that it's going to be a re-election budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Settlement with Potato Producer

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question related to the SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company) scandal. And just off the top, I might suggest to the Premier that had he had the current Finance minister in charge of SPUDCO from day one, he might not have this trouble because the current minister can't keep a secret for more than a week — much less six years, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation). On the weekend the *Leader-Post* reported that that . . . that the Government of Saskatchewan had settled with a potato producer by the name of Mr. Jim Massey over a suit that Mr. Massey brought to the government or a dispute he had with them. Apparently the government broke its contract with Mr. Massey and the government had to provide him with cash and a potato storage shed as a settlement.

And the article says, and I quote:

Maynard Sonntag, minister in charge of the file, declined comment Friday. He said he isn't being briefed on the issue until Tuesday, and didn't feel comfortable speaking until then.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Who approved the settlement of over \$1 million in cash and assets if the minister hasn't even been briefed yet?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me respond by saying, first of all, providing the facts. The story was completely inaccurate. The facility was not 1.2 million, it was 135,000 was the cost to Sask Valley Potato Corporation. So it's completely inaccurate. The province did . . . the Sask Valley Potato Corporation did reach an agreement. There were absolutely no increased losses to the corporation whatsoever, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the article clearly outlines that the shed was originally valued at 1.2 million. In addition to that, the story says that government officials claim that Massey had owed them \$250,000. Either way, Mr. Speaker, the question is this. The minister is quoted indirectly as saying that he couldn't comment, he couldn't be interviewed for the article about the disposition of a taxpayer-owned asset because he wouldn't be briefed for several days. Presumably though, somebody in the government, somebody in the cabinet approved this deal. Someone would had to have approved a taxpayer-owned asset being given to Mr. Massey in his settlement.

So the question through the Speaker is this: yes or no, did the minister approve of this settlement?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, my question would be, given the level of inaccuracy in the story, is there any wonder that I wouldn't want accurate numbers before I would say them, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, the story is entirely inaccurate. Full stop. Period.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Maybe, Mr. Speaker, if the minister actually took the time to comment and let the media know and let the taxpayers know exactly what he's up to, maybe all the information would be accurate, Mr. Speaker. Maybe that's the problem. Maybe this government has absolutely lost all respect for telling taxpayers what it is they're doing with their assets, Mr. Speaker. That's the problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Now to the minister: the article says the shed is originally valued . . .

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has apparently learned absolutely nothing through this whole SPUDCO scandal. The question to the minister is this . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. I would ask the members to allow the question to be put.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question to the minister is this: did he approve of the settlement involved in this particular . . . reported in this particular story, and how many other cases like this are before Sask Water or CIC ready for settlement, and how many other taxpayer-paid-for assets will be used to settle the NDP's broken promises?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to respond to the question from the member from Swift Current. Already the Minister of CIC has indicated, Mr. Speaker, that there have been no additional losses in this exercise. None at all, Mr. Speaker.

The opposition and Saskatchewan people know well that we are disposing of the assets across the province, Mr. Speaker, of the potato industry and the sheds. This shed, Mr. Speaker, today has been purchased or received by Mr. Massey. Mr. Massey wants this shed in the settlement, Mr. Speaker, as do other producers in the Lucky Lake development area want the sheds.

And I want to know, Mr. Speaker, why it is, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition every day gets up and attacks the industry, Mr. Speaker, that's growing the potatoes in that part of the province. Why is it that they get up, Mr. Speaker, every day and criticize

it? I'll tell you why it is, Mr. Speaker. Because they don't believe in growing rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They don't believe in what the industry's got, capable of doing it. That's why they attack it every day, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Forthcoming Budget

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the government has challenged the opposition to come up with ways that we can save money and quit wasting money and what would be cut.

I have a suggestion for the government today. As we speak, security guards are on a round-the-clock watch of a printing company in this city that I will not name, round-the-clock watch, guarding a budget that a senior member of that government has already leaked.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Now I think we can save some money here. I think we can save some money here. Why does the government pay to hire a security firm to guard a budget that a senior member of that administration has already leaked?

Hon. Mr. Melnychuk: — Well thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the member from North Battleford is correct in that the budget documents are being printed at this time, Mr. Speaker, and those documents will be provided to the people of Saskatchewan on budget day, Mr. Speaker. And any talk about budget items at this point in time is speculative.

I would say stay tuned, Mr. Speaker. The numbers will be out within three and a half to four days and everybody is going to know what a good news budget it is, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I have another helpful suggestion for the government offered in a non-partisan, non-political tone here. I would suggest that if the government is trying to grow the security business in this province, if they want them to do well, it would be entirely appropriate and in order for the Premier to engage a security firm to investigate who leaked the budget.

I think a prime minister or premier would want to know that — who leaked the budget — and take the appropriate measures. And I would suggest that would make far more sense than hiring a security firm to guard a budget they've already leaked.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I thought this was question period. I did not hear a question from the member of North Battleford.

I will assure the member of North Battleford, as I've assured the members of the official opposition Sask Party, that on Friday of this week in this legislature, not in an auto centre like Conservatives like to do, but right here in this legislature, this Minister of Finance will stand and deliver the budget — all of

the revenue measures, all of the expenditure measures and all of the fiscal situation of the province of Saskatchewan. And when the people of Saskatchewan hear this, Mr. Speaker, they are going to recognize a solid, fiscal plan to grow a wide open future for this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 3 — The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2003

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 3, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 4 — The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2003

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 4, The SaskEnergy Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 5 — The Teachers Superannuation and Disability Benefits Amendment Act, 2003

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 5, The Teachers Superannuation and Disability Benefits Amendment Act, 2003 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to join into the Throne Speech debate again. I finished up on Friday and had a few more words to say this afternoon regarding the whole issue around growth, the whole issue around our plan to create an environment that attracts business, that attracts investment, that then will create jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that's what this province needs is more jobs, and we're certainly lacking that. And, Mr. Speaker, one thing when we talk to businesses around the country, both in Canada and from south of the border, is one thing that they bring up often is

the labour legislation. And they're quite concerned with some of the labour legislation that we have in our province that isn't typical in other provinces, Mr. Speaker.

And one thing that in order to increase growth and increase business and increase jobs — jobs whether they're unionized jobs or non-union jobs, Mr. Speaker — will take some changes in labour legislation.

We spelt out over the last couple of years, through our Labour critic who has done a great job, some of the things that we would like to see changed in the labour legislation that will attract business. And some of the issues will be . . . that we would put in place is we would implement a democratic unionism for certification and decertification by a secret ballot vote by the majority of the employees, Mr. Speaker. And we think that is crucial in order to attract business, is a secret ballot vote to unionize or decertify, and we feel that's very important.

We would implement freedom of speech in the workplace with the appropriate safeguards — and that's very important, appropriate safeguards — in place to prevent intimidation or coercion tactics that interfere with this process, Mr. Speaker. We think that when a union drive is going on that both parties should be . . . have their say as long as the appropriate safeguards are put in place.

None of this stuff, Mr. Speaker, has been . . . is new. It's stuff that we have talked about over the last two or three years. But the government that stands in their place every time they get a chance and say, they have no plan, all that is is a slogan, Mr. Speaker, which is absolutely false.

We would work with labour leaders to adopt a new, collaborative approach to the collective bargaining process that will focus on mutual gain for both employee and management, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's very, very important.

We've got a government over here that says that they are the labour party but, Mr. Speaker, the longest health care strike that was ever seen in this province was under the labour party's watch, so you do question whether how friendly they are to labour and not.

We'll also look at reviewing the mandate of the Workers' Compensation Board to ensure that the Workers' Compensation Board is not only serving injured workers efficiently and effectively, but also is fully accountable to the employer as well, Mr. Speaker.

We have listened to business leaders and we've also talked to many union leaders who say that they need more jobs in this province. Some of the things that we've outlined so far in our labour policy would go a long ways to attracting business which then would create more jobs, both unionized or non-union, Mr. Speaker.

And I think if there is one thing that tells me how effective this government has been with their union and labour policy, is the recent issue with SPUDCO. In their own documentation, one of the major reasons why this SPUDCO partnership was introduced was to avoid its own Crown Construction Tendering Agreement, Mr. Speaker.

And we've got a government over there that says, there's no plans over here. Well there are plans over here, Mr. Speaker, and these plans are laid out in black and white; they're not hid under partnership agreements and then you can play with the word partnership — oh it meant this or it meant that. Their partnership meant avoiding union contractors in their own buildings, Mr. Speaker — that's what this government is all about.

So, Mr. Speaker, the next time you hear this government say that there are no plans, that all it is is a slogan, I would think again because everything that we have talked about over the last three years is in print. It lays out a plan for the province that will create growth of 100,000 people in the next 10 years, as opposed to a decline in population which this government has overseen over the last 10 years.

I'll be supporting the amendment, Mr. Speaker, and voting against the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to speak in favour of this Throne Speech today. It has definitely sparked a vigorous debate here in this House. But clearly, Mr. Speaker, our government has a vision that speaks passionately to and for all of Saskatchewan citizens. This government brings to vision . . . brings its vision to life with an ably articulated plan that allows all who are willing to plan well and work hard to enjoy our future — our future that is wide open.

Mr. Speaker, before I start I do want to wish and to welcome and extend my congratulations to the newest members of our Assembly. To the member of Battleford-Cut Knife and to the member of Saskatoon Fairview, best wishes, because I too am a relative newcomer and I know what it's like to come in as a result of a by-election. So I hope they enjoy the public discourse here. It's rigorous and sometimes fun, but we work hard in this House.

I also want to take a minute to welcome my legislative intern, Corinne Barnett. She is up in the west gallery there and she's been helping out over the past few weeks.

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. I notice that there have been two or three times now that members have taken the opportunity to introduce guests. And I think guests are always welcome but usually the protocol is to request leave to do so.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a newcomer's thing there, so I request leave to introduce a guest.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Forbes: — To you and through you to the House, I'd like to introduce a special guest, Corinne Barnett, a legislative intern that's been working with me for a couple of weeks, for the past couple of months actually. She's been doing a whole host of jobs including research, writing, and following me around, and it's been quite insightful to have her with me. So, Corinne

Barnett in the west gallery. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, our vision is clear. We will be a province of opportunity. It's a vision of expanding economy from which no one, Mr. Speaker, no one is excluded. Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech rang true for me especially when it speaks of a province where all children have an opportunity to grow up healthy in safe, secure communities, and they will receive the best in education. And we have a vision for a green Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our future will be wide open to those who are prepared to dream big, plan well, and work hard. And this is not an empty slogan, Mr. Speaker, but a vision that's becoming a reality for thousands of Saskatchewan citizens who are part of the record-breaking job numbers, 10 months of steady growth, our building independence program, and people who live in our towns, our neighbourhoods, our RMs (rural municipality), and our communities. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with you, with the Assembly today, two wonderful examples of our vision becoming a reality in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure of how many members here have spent time on 33rd Street in Saskatoon. It's a pleasant business district, nestled between two wonderful neighbourhoods, Caswell and Mayfair. Now some say 33rd will be the next Broadway district because of its unique, small-town charm. But others say, let's keep it our own little secret. But I say, Mr. Speaker, I'm most happy to tell everyone I meet about our wonderful main street, 33rd Street.

Now it's anchored by some old familiar businesses such Bruce Thomas's Mayfair Hardware that's been established in 1949 by his father. It's a legend on our street. Mayfair Drug; Mayfair Sporting Goods; the Dairy Queen; and Lipsett's shoes, also a family business that was established in the 1950s. All of these are outstanding community boosters. And how can I not mention Christie's Mayfair Bakery established in 1932. They draw customers from all over the city and do a wonderful job.

And we have some old businesses recently jazzed up such as the Scott Ludlow Fehr law firm who recently hung out their shingle in Jim Scott's father's old office which began on 33rd in the early 1960s.

And we are keeping up with the times, Mr. Speaker. We have our own computer shop, Sage Computer, and new businesses such as the Medicine Shoppe with owner/operators Joan and Mike Cochrane; and my own personal favourites, Keo's Kitchen and Nitotem coffee shop.

Now I want to speak a minute about Nitotem coffee shop because it's a shop that markets or specializes in Aboriginal bannock and that type of thing. It's a wonderful, wonderful place. So I really encourage people to come on by.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I could go on about our arts store, our new carwash, and so on. But suffice to say, we are doing well; we are doing okay.

We are living this vision. These folks are making their plans, their hopes, their vision a reality. And so, Mr. Speaker, I invite everyone to come out to 33rd Street.

(14:30)

Now I also want to share with you some information about why Saskatoon truly shines. You may have heard that phrase, Saskatoon shines. As you know, Saskatoon Idylwyld is a downtown area and we play host to many summer festivals, including the jazz festival, the Northern Saskatchewan Children's Festival, and then the Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan Festival, as well as numerous conventions throughout the year.

But what kind of impact does this have for the people of Idylwyld, the people of Saskatoon? Well let me quote a letter of November 2002 from Bruce Eaton, chairman of Tourism Saskatchewan to myself. He writes and I quote:

Congratulations are in order for Saskatoon Idylwyld constituency — it's among the top 10 in the province in terms of tourism revenue with \$84.4 million spent by travellers in 2001.

(And) As well, (Mr. Speaker, as well) your Saskatoon Idylwyld constituency should be proud of the fact that it is among the top 10 in the province with regard to total tourism employment — with (over) 1,500 (people) employed.

To provide additional perspective on tourism in your civic constituency, note that in Saskatoon in 2001, travellers spent an estimated \$366.8 million, an increase of 31.2 per cent over their 1997 expenditures in the area.

He also estimates that this spending generated an estimated \$16.9 million in provincial tax revenue. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is indeed another amazingly good news story about a vision becoming a reality for thousands of people in Saskatoon, a plan that is bearing fruit for all of us.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight some of the plans that were outlined in the Throne Speech that I think are particularly good and I will then . . . and will lend to the balanced approach of our government to ensure that our province's future is for everyone.

I was particularly delighted to hear about agriculture, organic farming that has increased by some 20 per cent annually and now we have over 1,000 certified commercial organic producers.

I was also delighted to hear about the Northern Development

Fund Aboriginal development program where 40 Saskatchewan agencies and companies have become partners in the Aboriginal Employment Development Program. Fifteen hundred people of Métis or First Nations descent have been assisted by meaningful employment. This is truly good news.

And I've already touched on tourism which I think is particularly important.

I'm also very impressed and excited to hear about the green initiatives. Again we are ensuring that our economy is sustainable and fits within our natural environment. We must ensure that our environment is protected and that we as citizens have access to a healthy environment.

The key points for me, Mr. Speaker, include wind power, a ninefold increase, and this is equivalent to some 50,000 homes, power to . . . to power 50,000 homes. This is outstanding news. Increased funding for SARCAN, other exciting news. The proper decommissioning of abandoned uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan. And I'm looking forward to this year, to this session, the state of the environment report that will be tabled during the session.

Now, Mr. Speaker, health is a major concern for the citizens of Saskatoon Idylwyld. We have a number of senior citizens who have special needs. But we also have a very important group of young people who have, also have special needs and so we watch with interest and advocate for the best possible services. We are very pleased with the leadership our Premier and our minister has shown on this file, particularly in regard to the Romanow report and the federal implementations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of participating in the Canadian Diabetes Association special initiative, diabetic for a day. And I should note my colleagues, the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for Mount Royal and the MLA for Coronation Park, also took part in this event. And I think they would both agree that the experience was definitely an eye-opener.

While as a teacher I felt I had a good grasp of the daily challenges diabetics face, this day really drove home the extra burdens of testing, needle shots, and just the extra cost to keep on top of this condition. For this opportunity, I do want to thank the Canadian Diabetes Association, and in particular Laurel Jungwirth for her time as she accompanied me for the whole day to ensure that I got the point.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my constituents are looking forward to continued leadership, and in particular we support the government's commitment to primary health care, the 24-hour health advice hot line, and the Health Quality Council, and a surgical registry that is managing the waiting lists.

And, Mr. Speaker, I must address the issue of education, opening doors to the future. I'm especially delighted to hear the renewed commitment . . . (inaudible) . . . government has taken for public education here in Saskatchewan. Truly, if we wish that all Saskatchewan citizens will be full participants in our society and reach their full potential, then education is the key. We will most unfortunately shortchange our future if we do not invest in our children and our schools.

Kids First is a superb example of meeting the needs of children and supporting families so children are fully ready for school. And I am also looking forward to the implementation of School^{PLUS} model, and I am confident that we will see positive results as the basic needs and learning needs to children are met in this very innovative and timely initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a minute to elaborate on what my good friend and colleague, the member of Regina Wascana Plains, had outlined in her speech last Wednesday, the Premier's voluntary sector initiative. Through her able leadership we were able to complete on time a very thorough, comprehensive framework for our government in the voluntary sector. This framework, while not a legal document, is very much a moral imperative for these two partners, the provincial government and the Saskatchewan voluntary sector.

I would like to highlight our report for you. The voluntary sector has historic roots in Saskatchewan. It continues to act on the tradition of enhancing our quality of life and teaching us an ethic of working together. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, it encourages community building; and out of community building evolves healthier societies.

Government has forged relationships with numerous community-based organizations to support the development and the delivery of services in the areas of health, social services, culture, recreation, environment, community economic development, and youth services.

Now this report, Mr. Speaker, is not just about volunteering. That's a major part of it, but there's more than that. We should all take pride in the fact that Saskatchewan has the highest rate of volunteers per capita in Canada. The figure speaks for itself: 42 per cent of Saskatchewan residents aged 15 and older volunteer on an annual basis in their communities. There is no denying that citizens of this province have a vested interest in the well-being of their communities, as well as the condition of their province. Furthermore, in speaking . . . speaking in economic terms, the voluntary sector organizations represent an investment in our economy of approximately \$800 million per year.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is the values identified within the document that will define a healthy relationship between the government and the Saskatchewan voluntary sector. And I am referring specifically to values such as active citizenry, whereby individuals or organizations have the ability to shape society; values like autonomy and diversity, where the government and the voluntary sector respect the work of one another and respect the rich and culturally diverse society that we live in; community, inclusion, and innovation are also valued because these concepts aid in the success of the voluntary sector and build a stronger relationship with government.

Moreover, this initiative intends to build upon responsibility and social justice because all sectors of society need to understand that they play a role in shaping the future of this province.

Saskatchewan already has a great network of community organizations that exist in the area of sport, culture, and recreation. Sask Sport, Sask Culture, and Sask Parks and

Recreation provide support and services to an estimated 12,000 community organizations throughout the province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, our report is indeed very good reading, but much more than that it serves as an excellent inventory of our government's relationship with the voluntary sector. We have a vision, clear objectives that speak to recognizing the voluntary sector, building its capacity, and most importantly building a formal partnership between the provincial government and the voluntary sector. And, Mr. Speaker, this is merely the tip of an iceberg.

With this government's recognition of the voluntary sector initiative, we are reinforcing social trust, social networks, and common values within a community and across communities, ideas that we need to flourish for our own children so that we can provide them with a better quality of life and a better future — a future that is wide open.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank once again the Chair of the committee, the member from Regina Wascana Plains, as well as the member from Cumberland who sat as Vice-Chair, and the members of the joint steering committee — both from the government side and the voluntary sector side — for their dedication and hard work which has resulted in this framework for partnership.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak for a moment on our Throne Speech which spoke of the hopes and prayers of those who seek peace and justice and security for all nations and peoples of this world. And I add wholeheartedly my support for this. Our own Premier added these words:

We believe that it is essential that . . . all matters of international security that Canada establish its own foreign policy and uphold the role of the United Nations. We loathe the undemocratic nature of Iraq . . . of the Iraq government and its aggressive actions.

(But) we support full United Nations intervention to ensure that Iraq does not jeopardize the peace and security of others. We also support (the) international efforts to stop terrorism, the most abhorrent and cowardly of actions of humankind.

It is for these reasons that we believe Canada's engagement in Iraq must be supported by resolution of the United Nations Security Council.

Now, Mr. Speaker, our federal leader, Jack Layton, also talked of this last week, and he said:

Our first thoughts today are with the Iraqi civilians and the horror they're experiencing. The tragedy (Mr. Speaker) is that (these) inspections were disarming Iraq and this war could have been avoided . . . (So together we must) . . . Together, let us renew our efforts to build a peaceful world.

And my own thoughts, Mr. Speaker, on this are well illustrated by Martin Luther King when he says:

Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are excited about the future. Without a doubt, we see a future for our great province that is rich, productive, inclusive, and green. Our future is wide open.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to read this into the record. In conclusion. I want to put into the record the Leader of the Opposition admission that he has no plan, no intention of having a plan. In fact a plan does not even fit with his world view.

Last Thursday morning I was listening to CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) radio. It was Thursday, March 20, and Kathy Fitzpatrick . . . and I'll read the quote:

Hermanson compared them to hockey referees who want to carry sticks. They want to be a referee and a player at the same time.

End of quote . . . Oh, I'll continue:

And that is the problem, ladies and gentlemen.

End of quote.

Now at first this is a light-hearted jab and I found it very amusing and you have a lot of fun with it. But then I was thinking about this. This is like one of those jokes you hear that makes everyone a little uncomfortable because it really exposes the world view of the person telling the joke.

This province is not a game. We are not simply referees. That is not the role of government, to be simply impartial and disinterested. And that means without interest. We do have an interest in the success of this province, and everyone in this province will be winners. This is not a game where there are winners and losers.

So I am concerned because truly the Leader of the Opposition's point of view is that there are winners and losers in this province, and that's his world view. And that's their world view, Mr. Speaker. So I am deeply, deeply concerned.

I'm concerned on a couple of levels because, first of all, that idea that we are in a game over here and that that's all there is, and it's . . . we're trying out for the position of referee where they are impartial, disinterested. But this second part which really worries me is the idea of this game, this hockey game, so therefore there must be two teams. Who are these teams? Are they the haves and the have-nots? Where are the haves from? Would they be from Alberta? Would they be from Calgary?

Mr. Speaker, this really worries me. This is their idea of a plan — that we are in a hockey game. This is very concerning to me. So if you have the haves against the have-nots, who do you think people who ride the STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) bus . . . are they on the have team or the have-not team?

What about labour? Are they on the have or have-not team? Where will they be? Are they on the winning team here? Mr. Speaker, what about if you're young, disabled? Are you on the have team or the have-not team? This is very concerning to me. What if you're an Aboriginal? What if you are an artist? Where

do you fit into this game? Are you on the have team or the have-not team?

Mr. Speaker, clearly last Wednesday evening in Saskatoon the Leader of the Opposition showed his true colours. He is not talking about a plan. He does not have a plan. He thinks his role is of gatekeeper and the big stick. And so I do have some concerns about this.

(14:45)

Our vision is clear and includes people right across this province. Everyone in this province will be a winner. We do have an interest in the success of this province and we are proud of that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be speaking in favour of this Throne Speech and against the amendment.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I consider it a privilege to stand and respond to the Speech from the Throne. And I must say, Mr. Speaker, that this is one of those times when it seems everyone in the province, even on the government side, agrees on that Speech from the Throne and what it was all about.

Probably the first ones to actually hear it and listen to it were members of the opposition, the Sask Party. And I sat here, Mr. Speaker, and listened to that for what seemed an unbelievably long period of time — in fact is, even the Premier stopped paying attention to it and was chatting to the people beside him. And I said, well what's happening here? I don't hear anything about Highway 11, which is a very dangerous stretch of highway; it goes my place. Listening about education, listening about agriculture, I just had the sense there was nothing in it. And I even tried to, very hard, to pay some close attention and just nothing was there.

So then next day I picked up the paper and I found out that it seems the public and the media said, what's in it? There was nothing in it. Then we find out that what had happened to show that everyone agreed with this is the Premier . . . and this must have been a bizarre sight, Mr. Speaker. You have to picture this. He walks into that beautiful long office where they meet with his caucus — nice chairs, high ceiling, very dignified place — the Premier walks in, slams down his books, and starts to grumble in a very un-preacher-like way about what a terrible thing this was; who in the world had ever given him that advice to write a Speech from the Throne that was so vacuous as that particular document was. Unbelievable — it was totally empty.

But what was the most frightening thing of this all, Mr. Speaker, is that this is the Premier of the province who has picked his cabinet and together they pick their advisers, and they'd spent all summer creating this document. The Premier has the speech read and all of a sudden it dawns on him, there's nothing in this thing. Well where has he been, Mr. Speaker? Where has the Premier been the whole time that document was written? Didn't he get together with his people and say, here's a

few things I want to see in that particular document; this is what my government stands for; this is what the people in my cabinet, what they stand for in their departments.

But somehow or other that whole document slipped by that whole front row over there, Mr. Speaker, slipped by every one of them. They hadn't noticed it was empty; it was empty. For the first time in a long time I believe the NDP felt a whole lot like the farmers in Saskatchewan felt this year when they looked in their bins — there was nothing there, there was nothing there. It's probably been the first time they've been able to actually sympathize or empathize with the farm situation. Totally bizarre.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a little bit of time discussing how the Speech from the Throne could or should have related to the people from my constituency, the Rosthern constituency.

And by the way as you would know, Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of changes in some rural constituencies and urban ones as well, and mine is one of those. And so the majority — probably about 86 per cent — of the Rosthern constituency is going to be renamed the Martensville constituency. And I'm going to consider it a real privilege, Mr. Speaker, to run in that constituency for the Sask Party in the next election.

Having done a little bit of research on it, Mr. Speaker, it did come to light that in the Martensville constituency, the one to be, the Sask Party won every single poll in that — every single poll — and they will again. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to relate a few things about that particular constituency, and probably start off with the community of Martensville.

The community of Martensville. Unfortunately the NDP has discounted that community and a few of the other ones in the south part of the Rosthern constituency, and they have said, well those are just bedroom communities.

I think they've done a major disservice to a few of those towns, and I'm thinking specifically of towns such as Dalmeny, Martensville, Warman, and Osler, which the NDP like to categorize as, well those are bedroom communities; they don't have a personality; they don't have a characteristic to them. Wrong, Mr. Speaker. Those communities have developed a great personality; they've developed a great character.

I sat at a luncheon very recently in Saskatoon with an individual who says . . . told me . . . says, you know, I live in your constituency. And so we talked a little bit about it and then we started talking about the community of Martensville where he lives. It turns out that his family had moved there when he was, I believe, two years of age. And he formed a very good friendship with five other fellows that he'd gone all the way through elementary and secondary school.

The interesting thing — and this underlines what I'm trying to say when I say that those communities have developed a good sense of personality and character — is that out of those five, four of those still live in the Martensville town, still live in the Martensville town, and one lives five miles outside. Probably no other place in Saskatchewan where that sort of thing happens — no other place where that happens.

Now why is that possible in the Rosthern/Martensville constituency when it isn't possible in the rest of Saskatchewan? In the rest of Saskatchewan when you have a group like that that goes to school together what'll happen invariably, one will go to Ontario, one will probably go to Manitoba, one down to the States, two to Alberta, and one will stay here. That's sort of the average; very few stay.

There's a unique thing that's happened in this particular area, Rosthern constituency, and it underlines, Mr. Speaker, it underlines very definitely why the attitudes in that constituency are so positive. And that is — and it's a political thing, Mr. Speaker — in that particular constituency, not once, never in the history of this province has that constituency voted CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) or NDP. Never once. That constituency, Mr. Speaker, grew more than any other constituency in this province — urban and rural. It grew more.

And it didn't grow that way because it was rural; it didn't grow to that extent because it was next to an urban area. It grew that way because of the attitude of the people. The people in that constituency understand that if you want growth, if you want excitement, if you want things happening, you can't have a socialist mentality — you can't have a socialist mentality. They've never had it, and they probably never will, Mr. Speaker. They never will.

I can understand . . . Three, four elections ago, the NDP would win the odd poll in Dalmeny, and I hear the member from across the way over there who has some association with Dalmeny. Well when he gets up to speak he needs to tell us how many seats the NDP won in Dalmeny in the last election. Not one — not one. Not one.

Those particular towns in that constituency have all grown. They've all grown in spite of being next to Saskatoon, in spite of being in a rural area. It's that thinking; it's a forward thinking. Not a backward socialist NDP thinking that says, well government has to control everything.

The speaker just before me, Mr. Speaker, as you recall, made some statement about how government has to plan things because our society's not going to be the society that it ought to be if government doesn't plan. Wrong, Mr. Speaker. Wrong, Mr. Speaker. And you know the very example that he used . . . And I don't know why he picked this. It must have been the same advisers that wrote his speech, that wrote the Speech from the Throne, because similarly it was vacuous and full of error.

Now he said, you need government to plan because look at the whole issue around STC — don't we need someone to take care of all the bus lines? Who, Mr. Speaker, has been dropping bus lines around Saskatchewan and abandoning them? It's the CCF-NDP socialists over there who've done that. They've abandoned the little old ladies in those small towns. They cut the bus lines.

And who, Mr. Speaker — this is critical, Mr. Speaker — who, Mr. Speaker, filled the gap? Private enterprise. They filled the gap. They took those bus lines that STC said were losing bus lines; we're going to abandon them and the people. Private enterprise moved into there. They're running bus lines today and they're making money. They're providing service, making

money. And for the people across over there, the CCF-NDP, Mr. Speaker, that's profit. They're making profit and providing a service that a socialist government with government control couldn't do and can't do. That's the big difference, Mr. Speaker.

And when we look at this particular Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, it's full of those empties — full of those empties. It's full of those empties.

And there we have the expatriate from Dalmeny saying, what would we do with STC? We will ensure either by a government bus line or through private bus lines that those people will always be served. It's in our platform. And had he read our platform instead of chatting from his seat, he would know that. He would know that.

History totally on its own has shown it. The NDP abandoned the bus lines; private people come in and fill it. Between those two, all of those are being taken care of and they will be taken care of. You don't have to sell the bus line; you just work the two together and you provide the best system there. You don't have to abandon it.

Mr. Speaker, looking at a few of the other things in this particular constituency that's presently Rosthern and will be . . .

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

Mr. Heppner: — I'd like to spend a bit more detail on the various aspects of my constituency. It has, I think, without a doubt more dairies, for example, in it than any other constituency in Saskatchewan; probably more dairies than all the rest of Saskatchewan together.

It has hog operations, bird operations . . . (inaudible) . . . layers, breeding stock, grain, feedlots to a great extent, a great extent. And I can see the ex-Finance minister there understands that because most of his budgets were full of what he was just talking about. So, Mr. Speaker, I need to discuss a few of these things.

The dairy industry in my constituency is growing. It's not static. It's growing. We have people coming in from British Columbia; we have people coming in from Alberta; we have people coming in from Holland; where we have two, three, four, five dairies every single summer that are being created in that particular area because they know it has a good work ethic. They know they have a mentality out there where they can work and survive.

However they run into one particular problem and that is the bureaucracy and the red tape of this government. Had a dairy . . .

An Hon. Member: — What colour tape?

Mr. Heppner: — Red tape. And you can easily eliminate that, Mr. Speaker, by getting a government with a different name on it. Green tape is much more attractive than red tape. You want to remember that.

We had a dairy farmer just recently set up and he's in operation

now. Had to go through seven different arms of this government to get his business going — seven different ones. He came in from out of province.

You would think if this government was at all interested in growing an industry, they'd have a one-window operation so if someone coming in could contact government, industry ministry, whatever they call it, and say okay, I want to come into Saskatchewan; I want to start a dairy; I'd like to do it in this constituency because there's lots of other dairies around there; it has good land, good people, good supply of water, all of those things. Now, what do I need to do.

Ideally he should be able to come to government, one person would talk to him and say, there's quite a number of things we have to take care of; I'll be the conduit for all of those; you just call me, I'll take care of it. But, no. This government has seven different doorways a person had to walk through and we haven't even started on the federal ones yet, Mr. Speaker. And I may have to take a minute on that one because it's bizarre.

Seven different ones. And the biggest problem was that those seven, none of them seemed to know what the other person's area of responsibility was and they would overlap. So they would . . . two different groups of government, two different bureaucratic arms would ask for similar documentation. Totally bizarre. And then one would want it a little different; he'd go to the other one and say, well I was told to do this; no, but I say you can't. It took him a long time to get through those seven arms of government.

(15:00)

Probably one of the more bizarre things happened right near the end when he decided that he needed some irrigation for his dairy. And when he set up where he wanted to put it, he contacted the government and the government said, we don't know who owns that piece of land next to the river where this line's supposed to go across. Totally bizarre.

But I have to digress a little bit and talk about Oceans and Fisheries. This government, this NDP government, had the opportunity to keep Oceans and Fisheries out of Saskatchewan. But instead they said, no, federal Liberals, come on in; just walk on in and go ahead and tell us what to do. This particular dairy person that has a line to the river to get some river water for his cattle . . . And incidentally, Mr. Speaker, just the change in water quality brought his dairy production up 21 per cent. No other changes, just the improved water by being able to give them river water instead of some well water that was a . . . had a lot of chemical content. His production went up 21 per cent. So you would think government would be very excited about enhancing that kind of probability.

So he has the line into the river. Along comes Oceans and Fisheries and says, well you know, we don't want the little fishies to get in there because then obviously it might get up the water line and the cows might drink that water and the milk would get fishy. I don't know. These are federal Liberals. You don't know how they think.

So they told him, you have to have a screen of this kind of mesh. So he put that mesh in there, and lo and behold if the

sand from the river doesn't plug it. So it doesn't work. So he says, well I'll put a bit of a scraper on the outside of that that moves around that screen real slowly and moves it away. Oceans and Fisheries says, no, you can't do that because the fish will get caught up in that little rotating thing, throw them up in the air, and they might gasp in the air. That is exactly what they told him, Mr. Speaker. It is just as stupid as telling a farmer when he's got this chaff remover on the outside of his combine, so the air can move through to cool it, to say, you can't have that turning out there because it might catch a crow. It is utterly ludicrous, Mr. Speaker. And this government could have kept Oceans and Fisheries out of Saskatchewan. They could have kept them out of Saskatchewan.

That kind of nonsense, that kind of nonsense, goes on in agriculture throughout this province whenever they want to deal with anything to do with water. This government has to take responsibility for that. Mr. Speaker, that's just a short note on dairies and the red tape that this government sets up.

I need to talk on one or two more things. I know my time's up but I'll take another two, three minutes.

I guess one of the biggest problems with an NDP socialistic government is the vindictive attitude they have toward anyone out in the province that doesn't do things their way — vindictive, Mr. Speaker. And you check vindictive up in your dictionary, your Funk & Wagnall's, and it'll tell you it's very much like trying to get revenge for something someone has done. And I'll explain this to you.

High-speed Internet. SaskTel's been putting this throughout the province and that's good, that's great. They put it into a lot of small towns. That's good. In fact is they put it in some very small towns, Mr. Speaker. However . . . Towns about 100 population. But we do have three communities that have populations of seven, eight hundred. Those three they won't put on Internet. The line goes right past them on the way to Prince Albert but they won't hook them up. Why not? Because the NDP are vindictive.

A couple of years ago the school said, in the Sask Valley School Division area, we would like to have some very fast Internet for our students, how could we do this? So they talked to SaskTel, SaskTel told them what it would cost. They said, well let's see if we could do it a little more cheaply than that; there has to be an economical way of doing it.

So what did the people do in this non-NDP constituency? They didn't just, you know, slurp up all the information coming from SaskTel. They went and checked it out and they had a wireless system put in into all the schools in the system which cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to install. But the operating rate once it got going was so much less than what SaskTel was going to charge. They paid for it in three years, Mr. Speaker. In three years they had their very expensive system paid for and after that they were saving money every single year.

However, what did occur is that SaskTel . . . This is a little blunt but they got their nose out of joint, Mr. Speaker. So now when the communities want high-speed Internet here's the excuse that SaskTel uses: well now we have a business problem because we can't have the schools in the system. They're on the

wireless, therefore we can't make as much money as we would like to make. Whoa, that sounds like something a dirty capitalist would say, but it comes from SaskTel. So they won't give these three towns, they won't give these three towns high-speed Internet. They'll give it to other towns that have a population of under 200, and have schools of under 100, and that's great. But why not give it to these towns that have a population of just under 1,000?

Furthermore, there are some very vibrant businesses in some of these towns. One of these towns has the only privately owned fire insurance with its head office in Saskatchewan. The rest these socialists have chased out of the province. And so when you sign up with the rest of them, you have some foreign ownership thing.

But we have it in one of these small towns. They need high-speed Internet because they're brokering a lot of insurance deals. SaskTel says no way, no way. We have very large financial institutions, probably six or seven in those three communities, that do a multi-million dollar business very year, Mr. Speaker — by far, by far outdoes all these other towns that have no business. These business people need it. They are not going to give them high-speed Internet because they say well we've lost the schools. They're bitter, they're vindictive. That's unfortunate.

A government should be in power to serve all the people in the province. Not an NDP government — not an NDP government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — The sooner we get rid of them the better, Mr. Speaker, the sooner the better. We were hoping that this budget leak was actually the Premier's attempt to float an election budget balloon. And we thought we'd have an election this spring — good, we can get rid of these socialists.

And here we find out, it's this Liberal, turned NDP, it's his budget. And he's trying to leak it out — sort of like a Paul Martin wannabe — to let the people know what a good budget he's created. Again it looks like something else has happened; the Premier had nothing in touch with it or the cabinet. So now we've had the Speech from the Throne, and we've had our finance statement coming out, and on both of those neither the Premier nor the cabinet knew anything about it. We need an election.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot vote in favour of the motion, but I will be supporting the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I want to thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak in the House today, and to speak to the Throne Speech.

You know, we've heard some criticism, Mr. Speaker, that it was a long speech, but you know, from my perspective, it was still not long enough to talk about all the very important details that I believe that people need to know.

I want to just go back over the vision, and I'm going to quote

directly from the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, just the opening comments:

Our government's vision is a province of opportunity, where the future is wide open to those who are prepared to dream big, plan well and work hard.

And that's always been a recipe for success, Mr. Speaker.

It's a vision of an expanding economy from which no one is excluded.

And I'll get back to the theme of exclusion a little later on in my remarks, Mr. Speaker.

It is a vision of a province where all children will have the opportunity to grow up healthy, in safe (and) secure communities, (and) receive the very best in education and training, and be encouraged to build successful families and careers . . .

And I'm going to spend some considerable time on that, Mr. Speaker, because I think it's important to understand the substance that's behind those words.

It's a vision of a *green* Saskatchewan, where exciting new breakthroughs in renewable energy, environmental technology and energy conservation support a growing economy in harmony with our natural environment.

(And it's a vision) realized through comprehensive planning (and considerable action, I might add) in key spheres of activity.

And I just want to mention something as a bit of a preamble about the remarks today. I am going to talk about three things. I am going to talk about our government's support for young people, our government's support for equality and diversity, and our government's support for democracy as it relates to initiatives in the Throne Speech.

But maybe you'll enjoy this as much as I did, Mr. Speaker. The people who are starting university this fall were born in 1983. Their lifetime has always included AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). Bottle caps have always been screw off and plastic. The CD (compact disc) was introduced the year they were born.

They've always had cable TV. They don't know who Mork was or where he was from — well there might be a few who do, TV historians. They never heard, where's the beef? Or, de plane, boss, de plane. They don't particularly care who shot J.R. and probably don't even know who he is. McDonald's food has never come in Styrofoam containers.

And probably are not all that sure who Grant Devine and Eric Bertson were but I'm going to shed a little light on that later because I believe, Mr. Speaker, that those who don't know their history are doomed to repeat it.

So today I'm going to spend just a little bit of time focusing on our government's work with young people. And I just want to point particularly to two things that were mentioned in the

Throne Speech — the intervention necessary to support children and families, the changes to The Child and Family Services Act which will be proposed to recognize the importance of kinship care as a first option. In fact, Mr. Speaker, today this Bill was first introduced in the legislature.

And, you know, I worked for a long time in Aboriginal communities and I can't begin to tell you how important this initiative is. One of the young men that I worked with at Rainbow Youth Centre who was one of the staff members, he said, you know when I went into foster care, I didn't just get removed from my immediate family — I got removed from my whole support network. I got removed from my aunties and my uncles and the neighbours and all the people around who might have . . . (inaudible) . . . able to give me some support.

So I think that this legislation, Mr. Speaker, is exactly in the right direction because that old phrase, children are raised by a village. And whereas an individual foster family can and does provide very excellent care, we also have to think about the community of support that surrounds that individual.

And as well, the change in name of the Department of Social Services to the department of community resources and employment. I think it's important to reflect the changing purposes of government departments and we certainly have gone from a view of dependency on social assistance to a department that helps people get on their feet, get on with their life, and get the skills and the supports they need in order to do that. And I think this is a very good move, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we have a lot to be proud of. Our government does have a vision of world-class education because we believe that education is the foundation for both successful individuals and a successful society. So I want to just provide a few facts because I don't know if people understand what a world leader Saskatchewan is in education.

In a recent international study of 32 industrialized nations and all provinces, Saskatchewan was number one, Mr. Speaker, as providing the highest level of education to the broadest income and economic groups of anywhere in the world. I think that's quite an achievement that we've managed to educate more people better than anywhere else in the world.

We, in the last two years, have more than doubled the number of pre-kindergarten classes; doubled the number of community schools; has the lowest high-school dropout rates in Canada so we have more young people staying in school here than anywhere else in Canada. We have a new pioneering school model, School^{PLUS}, which I know that people are struggling with but essentially it puts the school at the centre of the community in terms of children and family development.

We certainly have provided enhanced technology and career development opportunities and workplace transition in Saskatchewan schools. Every public school by 2003 will have access to high-speed Internet. This has made a big difference of what children are able to do in the classroom.

(15:15)

I toured around to a number of schools in the province and saw

the children actually working. And every single child was able to research a totally different topic simultaneously. It's quite a sight to see compared to my own experience in education. But it's a powerful new tool that every student in Saskatchewan has.

In the area of First Nations, both in the area of curriculum so that people can understand that we have a history that includes treaties, that there's language instruction available, there's as well emphasis on bilingual instruction, understanding the benefits of being bilingual to students both from a learning perspective and for a practical employment perspective.

And as well the Canada-Saskatchewan Student Loans Program is one of the most generous in Canada. We have over 30 libraries that partner to bring access to 4,500 magazines and newspapers and on-line resources. I just mention this because I think it's important to realize all the successes that we have in our education area.

The SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) graduate employment statistics show that 92 per cent of graduates had a job within a year of graduating. In Regina, being a sitting member for Regina, I just want to mention that the University of Regina has had an exciting number of projects in its development of the knowledge corridor. We have the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College Building, which I'll refer to a little later in my remarks; the Education Building addition; the Greenhouse Gas Technology Centre; student residence; the sports complex. There's so many cranes out there, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to find your way through to a building. And it's just wonderful for me.

When I first went to that campus, Mr. Speaker — I don't even like to admit this because it does tend to show how old I am — but there was two buildings. And I used to swim on the university swim team, and I'd have to walk across a bare field with my wet hair, so I'd always end up with frozen solid hair when I was done swimming practice every night. So it's really changed around there. There's so many buildings you can go from place to place without ever having to go outside.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just mention one of our particular initiatives, the centennial student employment program. We started this program because so many youth were having difficulty getting career-related job experience. Although there was a number of available jobs, there was less opportunity for them to get a start. And I just want to say that I went on a tour of 10 communities last summer to look at what was happening with these programs, and we had glowing reports from the various employers who hired students.

Here's one from the Yorkton Tribal Council:

"Programs such as the Centennial Student Employment Program give students an opportunity to decide which area of employment they may wish to pursue," Employment Counsellor with the Yorkton Tribal Council Jamie DeVos said. "The tribal council is very pleased to be part of the program . . . it gave students an opportunity to work and . . . gave our community two much-needed employees."

Last year's survey showed that 95 per cent of students found the quality of their job very satisfactory. And here's another

employer quote — oh, this may be a little closer to home for some of our elected members here:

"Last year we hired seven students through the . . . (Centennial Student Employment Program) and it was such a valuable experience," Moose Jaw Parks and Recreation Board Director Scott Osmachenko said. ". . . (it) greatly improved our recreation programming because . . . (the) students . . . were passionate about their work, and . . . that is integral to success."

We have our Games program in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker: the Saskatchewan Games, the Western Canada Summer Games, the Canada Games program, and the First Nations Winter and Summer Games, as well as the national artist program that accompanies it. Every year 800 athletes from our province participate in these games and an additional 800 in the Indigenous Games. And this is a huge training ground for leadership and teambuilding. And of course in 2005, Mr. Speaker, those games are here in Regina, and we're very excited about that.

I want to mention just a couple of other youth programs before I move on to the other parts of my remarks. The REDAs (regional economic development authority) through Industry and Resources have a youth employment program so that youth can have training and employment opportunities with Economic Development. And we think, and the REDAs think, that that's a very important program.

And I just want to finish with a few summary remarks about why Saskatchewan is such a good place for young people. We do have the second lowest unemployment rate in Canada, Mr. Speaker; at 6.2 per cent it's half of the national average of 11 per cent. That is quite a striking difference — 6.2 per cent compared to 11 per cent.

The minimum wage in Saskatchewan for young workers is higher than in every other province except for Manitoba and Quebec. And in fact many of the other provinces of the political persuasion of the members opposite have a two-tier minimum wage where young people are actually paid less for doing the very same work as older workers. For example, British Columbia, which the members opposite often brag about, they pay \$6 per hour for people in their first jobs and \$8 per hour to everyone else. And I think that's an important bit of information to know.

Also a lot of young people like to drive cars. Certainly there's a lot more cars in those parking lots than there were when I went to school. But an 18-year-old single student, female with no claims or convictions, driving a 1996 Chev Cavalier to school will pay \$872 in Saskatchewan. Now you're not going to believe these figures, Mr. Speaker. The same student would pay 2,177 for car insurance in Vancouver, 2,585 in Calgary, 999 in Winnipeg, and 3,504 in Toronto. So these are very high costs for the ability to own a car.

An Hon. Member: — How much in Tory Alberta and Tory Ontario again?

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well we're over 2,000 and going higher, so there we go.

The one thing I'm particularly proud of, Mr. Speaker, is from 1970 to 2000 the University of Saskatchewan has produced 20 Rhodes Scholars. This is more Rhodes Scholars than some of Canada's top universities. And just recently . . . I just want to bring your attention to a young man, Jeff Millar, who was one of only three Canadians to win the Morehead Award and he in fact got a scholarship of 112,000 as a result of winning this award.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I've got a long list of Saskatchewan young people that have been successful in many awards and unfortunately I don't think, because of our agreement to speak for a certain length of time, I'm going to be able to go through all of them. But we have page after page of young people winning awards across Canada, in Olympics, in speaking competitions, in artistic competitions. We just have a remarkable bunch of young people in the province. And I always think that the news every night should have half of the news devoted to bad news and half of the news devoted to good news, because then we could get some of these stories.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the bits of bad news that I want to talk about just for a minute is, I just recently participated in several events for the annual anti-racism and the building of harmony in our society, and certainly intercultural groups, multicultural groups, multi-faith groups, community groups were all involved in this. And it kind of stood out in stark contrast to the remarks of the member opposite who decided that she needed to comment on the fact that the Indian Federated College had incorporated a teepee in their building design.

I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I was pretty shocked to hear this, for a couple of reasons. One is that they did the fundraising for that building and if they choose a design that they feel reflects the cultural priorities and the educational priorities that they have, then I would say, Mr. Speaker, that's their business.

And I would also want to say that the teepee structure is also a commemoration to the veterans who fought in the wars. And it's a functional space. It's not a frivolous space. And you know, even from a pure architectural point of view, I don't want to live in a world covered in cindercrete blocks. I want to live in a world with architecture and with people who are able to have a bit of a vision about how buildings should look.

So I was very disappointed in the member opposite who seems to always have lots to say about the accountability of First Nations people but not much to say about the accountability of her own party. And it leads me into my next theme and that's democracy.

You know, I would be the first person to have not been a big supporter of Grant Schmidt for many of his policies. But the fact of the matter is I was pretty shocked when Grant Schmidt was denied his nomination. When you have 1,200 people come out to a nomination, that shows a pretty significant level of interest.

I think, in fact, that . . . The other thing that's very important, that a lot of people don't know, is Mr. Schmidt was the . . . Oh I seem to have struck a nerve, Mr. Speaker. I can hardly hear my . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — So, Mr. Speaker, this man was the president of his constituency riding for the last five years — apparently good enough to do all the work, but not good enough to have his nomination recognized.

Now this is a party that's refused to listen to their own grassroots. And I don't know how . . . If they won't listen to the people who most closely support their organization, I'm not sure how we can expect them to respect the democracy of the larger community. I think it does reveal that this is an extreme group of people who are prepared to do anything to get power, Mr. Speaker.

And I have to tell you that I have a handful here. These are just a small sampling of letters to the editor where people have written in who are equally appalled by this decision. We have *The Four-Town Journal* in Langenburg. Quote:

The Sask Party has done a huge amount of harm to itself, both within the Melville-Saltcoats riding, and perhaps . . . across the province.

Elwin Hermanson, on — well, it's a quote — on CTV news, explaining why he supports overriding the choices of Sask Party members in Melville-Saltcoats:

We don't want to mess up the good chemistry we have right now in the party.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of different kinds of people in our caucus, and I don't think we've ever ejected anybody because they messed up the good chemistry.

Mr. Boyd, former Devine and Sask Party MLA:

It has the potential to damage the electoral chances.

And Grant Schmidt says:

I don't think the party that I'm a member of will go against the wishes of the people.

Well we'll see when they have their well-timed revisiting of that question because I think Sask Party democracy will be put to the test.

The decision . . . Well here's a few quotes out of letters to the editor:

. . . the decision of 1,200 people is a trifle and an annoyance to the Saskatchewan Party political establishment.

The warning has been sounded loud and clear to Saskatchewan voters: If you cross the backroom boys . . . the Saskatchewan Party . . . vengeance will be swift.

Or this one, the Leader of the Opposition party:

Schmidt doesn't support the Sask Party's position on government investment in the economy.

Well if Schmidt's unfit, then I guess unfortunately the MLA for Lloydminster will have to go as well.

I think actually, Mr. Speaker, as we move into a more open, democratic process with the new rules for the House that were announced in the Throne Speech, that quite frankly we have here a leader that's afraid of what his members will say, and is trying to manage his messaging. And we certainly have many examples of foot-in-mouth disease over on the other side.

So as the Sask Party casts about for a policy . . . And we've heard from them over the years, Mr. Speaker. They wanted to be just like Ontario, they wanted to be just like Alberta, they wanted to be just like BC, and now they want to be just like Nova Scotia, which by the way, Mr. Speaker, has a Crown corporation that invests in the Nova Scotia economy.

I think this is a group that is grasping at straws, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party doesn't have a plan. Looking at the campaign brochure from the Saskatoon Fairview by-election, it's clear what they do promise — a 10-cent slogan and a \$10 billion deficit, Mr. Speaker.

I think Saskatchewan people have been there, we've done that, and we're not going back, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we even got the T-shirt. I think it had a chicken on the front and something about Mr. Devine.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to close by just again affirming my support of the Speech from the Throne. I do believe that our government has a vision and a plan that meets our shared aspirations. It's a balanced plan, it's sustainable, and most important, Mr. Speaker, it works.

So I will be supporting the Throne Speech and voting against the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(15:30)

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to enter into the debate on the Throne Speech.

It was interesting to hear the member from Regina Centre saying that the Throne Speech wasn't long enough. For goodness sake, Mr. Speaker, how long do you need to say nothing? You could go on and on and on and say absolutely nothing. I think it was fairly long enough to say absolutely nothing.

There's nothing new in the Throne Speech. And it's obvious that the NDP is stagnant or heading in the wrong direction. A comment I had heard was that the NDP has placed their government on autopilot. And I would like to tell members something about autopilot.

The autopilot . . . If you have a pilotless machine and put it on autopilot . . . And there's a story that says, briefs the passengers, saying nothing can go wrong, go wrong, go wrong. And that's the kind of autopilot that this socialist government is on. They have no direction and they think nothing can go wrong.

They keep telling people that they are on the right track. Well, Mr. Speaker, they have been on the right track, according to them, for some time. But you know what? In my constituency, the tracks are being pulled. Is that the right track that this government wants to be on? They're on the right track? And then they say they're on the right road. Well, you can hide in potholes in some of the roads yet. Is that the right road that this government is taking us on? And I believe that it is.

And also, they never addressed anything in the Throne Speech about the government using taxpayers' dollars to compete against private business. That would have made one profound statement in a Throne Speech where they could have said, we will stop using government tax dollars to compete against private business.

It did say they had a plan to reduce waiting lists. What is it? The waiting lists in hospitals have been growing for . . . for months and years and years. And every once in a while we hear from across the way, they say we have a plan to fix that or we have a plan to manage it. We never hear it. We just say they have a plan. They talk about us not having a plan and we have a very, very solid plan.

And yet they are supposed to be government — so we thought — and yet they don't have a plan. In fact when they ask us what our plan is, it's intuitively obvious that it's because they have no ideas of their own and so they would like to, like to borrow our ideas as evidenced in the '99 election and even in our ethanol.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech did absolutely nothing to help struggling farm families, increasing crop insurance premiums over the last two years by nearly triple.

Now we wonder, we wonder what drives this socialist machine — this socialist group of men and women. Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I have . . . and I just want to, I want to . . . I want to readdress this because I think people in the public should really know what drives this socialist government. And this is called the *Regina Manifesto*. Mr. Speaker, this was a CCF documentation of 1933 but it's very, very interesting to note that it was reproduced by the Saskatchewan NDP Party, in when? February 15.

Now what I wish to do, Mr. Speaker, is read excerpts from this document to show what drives that party over there. And it starts off:

We aim to replace the present capitalist system, with its inherent injustice and inhumanity, by a social order from which the domination and exploitation of one class by another will be eliminated . . . (we) will supersede unregulated private enterprise and competition . . .

In other words, get rid of everything and have everything for the state, everything for the state. Mr. Speaker, that is what's driving this government.

And it goes on to say:

. . . (we will have) natural resources and (the) principal means of production and distribution are owned, controlled

and operated by the (state) . . .

I will reiterate the date on this is February 15, 2001.

The CCF aims at political power in order to put an end to this capital domination of our political life. Well what a shame, Mr. Speaker. Want to put an end to capitalism. Profit is a poor word. In other words, thump out every business person. And gosh knows they're trying to do it by competing with private businesses. But trying to thump out, through a government organization that believes only in socialism, to thump out private business, that's a shame, Mr. Speaker. That is an absolute shame.

Socialization of finance.

Socialization of all financial machinery — banking currency, credit, and insurance, to make possible . . . effective control of currency, credit and prices, and the supplying of new productive equipment for socially desirable purposes.

My goodness. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a real slap at anybody that's a business person or wants to make a profit in a business or on a farm because this document which is, again I will rephrase, reproduced on February 15, 2001 — two years old, two years old. So nobody can suggest that it's an old document. It may have been originally, but it's re-sanctioned by this organization in 2001.

. . . our main industries (to) be saved from the wasteful competition (and) . . . ruinous over-development and over-capitalization which are the inevitable outcome of capitalism.

A total, total slap at free enterprise — totally. And this is what the people of Saskatchewan have been putting up with primarily for the last 60 years where all this government wants to do is slap around private industry and take over and control it by the state.

Now here's one that I like also:

. . . the evils of the patronage system as exemplified in so many departments of the Government today.

Well there's one they don't even follow themselves, is the evils of patronage.

Mr. Speaker, there's so much in this document that is just basically gut churning. It is absolutely a slap at free enterprise. It's a slap at anybody in this province that wants to make a living outside of government-sponsored industry, government-sponsored positions.

Now the very last . . . The very last paragraph I would like to read, Mr. Speaker, because I think this is the penultimate of what this government stands for.

No CCF Government (insert NDP because it's reproduced in 2001) no . . . government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism (and I want to repeat that, Mr. Speaker, eradicated capitalism) and put into operation the

full programme of socialized planning.

Eradicate capitalism. I mean, how much of a slap can that be at people that want to try and make a living in this province? I think the socialist government, the socialist system has just shown its colours again by reproducing that document.

And I'd like to address, Mr. Speaker, some writings that have come from other places and how they feel about what we're doing in Saskatchewan. And here's one, Mr. Speaker, from the western bureau chief and it says:

Place proves socialism makes things worse.

And that's in reference to Saskatchewan. It proves socialism makes things worse.

And there's some excerpts from this, Mr. Speaker, that I think are very important that one should have on record. And it says:

Sixty years ago Saskatchewan decided the only solution to the Depression was the CCF and . . . Tommy Douglas, Baptist preacher turned social gospeller, decided that the state was the only entity that could be trusted to fix things.

Only the state, and I totally disagree with that, Mr. Speaker.

And this article goes on to have a small comparison with Alberta. It says:

Today, (today) Alberta has a population of three million, a GDP of \$150 billion, and lots of former Saskatchewanians making a lot of money for themselves and others in our province.

Saskatchewan on the other hand has a population of just over 1 million (which this article was obviously just a little . . . wrote a little . . . a few months ago) and shrinking, (and shrinking population and) a GDP of . . . 25 billion, and the exodus of many of its best and brightest (people). This is what socialism has done for this province.

But here is something also that I really enjoyed in this article. And you wonder why Alberta's doing good and Saskatchewan isn't. And this writer has captured this very, very accurately as far as I can figure. It says:

Ah, you say, but Alberta discovered oil in 1947 (that's why they're doing better). Yes, (yes) I say, but Tommy Douglas chased the oil companies and wildcatters out of Saskatchewan in the 1940s, prudently arguing that Saskatchewan's resources be left for future generations. As a result, some roughnecks went poking around Leduc with a rig they had with them when ejected from Saskatchewan.

And now (and now) — oh, the cruel irony of it — Albertans are finding and pumping oil in Saskatchewan.

The royalties from the oil and gas drilled from under the Saskatchewan soil last year by Calgary (by Calgary) companies (by Calgary companies because they were chased out of Saskatchewan) such as Nexen brought the current NDP government a much-needed 624.1 million in

revenue — a record.

Isn't that ironic? You chase them out and then you live on what they're bringing back into your province — 621 million. So in other words the industry created when St. Tommy chased the evil wildcatting snakes from his socialist paradise is now saving Saskatchewan's sorry skin.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just want to go on to the end of this article because I think it's quite befitting:

In the meantime let's take pity on our little neighbour and let's consider the Saskatchewan legislature as the future home of our super province. Perhaps it will give them the confidence they need to bounce back from Tommy's rot.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that about sums it up.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have another very interesting article. And this would . . . may surprise listeners because, I guess I can say it right upfront, this is from a Calgary paper but it's wrote from a person from Saskatoon, who doesn't get heard obviously in Saskatchewan, so wrote this article for the *Calgary Herald*. And, Mr. Speaker, the headline of this article says, "A poor cousin begs for mercy." Please take us in, begs one desperate Saskatchewan resident who wants Alberta to come to the rescue.

Well we know they're coming to the rescue in the oil business. But here's from a Saskatchewan writer that is asking Alberta to look at taking us in. It's a little bit of a tongue in cheek article. There's no doubt. And it goes on in this article, and it talks about:

Yes, I'm writing from Saskatchewan, you know, the East Germany of the Prairies, the province that half rhymes with basketcasechewan. Thing is we've got a bundle of resources: uranium, potash, forests, diamonds, hydro potential, ranching, northern tourism, oil, gas, good urban centres, a hard working ethic, the country's new and only Synchrotron, a giant grain belt — and you may have heard about it — and lots more. But where Alberta has a tradition of creating wealth from its resources, our practice has been to suppress our resource potential.

Way back we shackled ourselves to the sorry creed of socialism. And although we just may oust the NDP in the next election, we're still in a fair thrall to its paternalistic mindset. The current administration is still burdened with statist mentality that's outdated and it's been there since 1933.

Mr. Speaker, or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's just . . . there's a whole bunch more in this article. And really what it does it just really explains what this group of men and women on the other side, they're so ingrained with the socialist philosophy, that they can't see anything but socialism in front of the sorry little programs that they're putting out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to now just address a couple of items from the Throne Speech. And there's so little in the Throne Speech, or nothing of consequence. But I want to identify a couple of issues that are very pertinent to my area.

And it talks about this government's investment in the cattle industry, 433 million. It's exactly what I've been talking about. Why for goodness sake wouldn't we let some free enterprise in there rather than try and control it with government and taxpayers' dollars?

(15:45)

And here is this Throne Speech that's supposed to be our future is wide open, and I just want to quote something and then put some facts to it.

Saskatchewan is home to 25 per cent of Canada's beef cow herd. This year our government will release a 10-year beef production strategy.

Well wake up. How long has this government been in government? Twelve years, and today they have a revelation that they want to do something to the beef production.

Now let me give you some facts. We have . . . In this province we have a million and a half head of feeder cattle a year, of which we ship 750,000 out of this province — specifically to Alberta — to be fed. That just doesn't make any sense. And then along with it we ship our grain to Alberta to be fed to the Saskatchewan cattle. Does that make sense? Then we ship our young men and women to Alberta to feed Saskatchewan grain to Saskatchewan cattle. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is there anybody in this province that can tell me that that makes sense? If anybody can, I will tell you right off the bat they're a socialist who do not want to see any progression in this province.

Mr. Speaker, with the time I have left I want to address a couple of concerns from in my constituency. We talk about, we talk about fastest growing tourism, potential for tourism, but how do you grow tourism when your infrastructure is in such bad shape that people will not come?

Again, in my constituency the road structure is so bad I see people turned away . . . turning away, every other day. And what can we do about that? We could put a little bit of common sense into our highway structure. We could put a little bit of funding in some of the areas that it's needed. It's very easy to sit in Regina and talk about we want to increase tourism. And how are you going to increase tourism only here? I think we have to increase tourism province-wide.

And another factor is cellular phone coverage. We hear a lot of discussion about what SaskTel is doing in telephone service, but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all it takes is for one to look at a map of Saskatchewan and you'll see that my constituency is the one that has a huge area of no cell coverage — no cell coverage. And why would that be? Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why would that be when we want to invest money in Australia for rural cell coverage? Again, we have to have somebody that will give their head a shake on that side except that it may rattle too much if they do.

But here we have a government that's far more interested in investing outside of the province than they are at investing inside the province to provide even such simple things as cellular coverage for rural residents of this province.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing, if this is this socialist government's idea of having a future wide open, I think this province is in for a very, very rough time. Thankfully there's going to be an election soon and thankfully there'll be a government change where we get some new and fresh ideas on the other side.

With that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll be supporting the amendment but definitely will not be supporting the Throne Speech.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to enter into this Throne Speech debate, and of course I'll be supporting the motion in favour of the Throne Speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my constituents, the residents of Saskatoon Greystone constituency, for the trust that they've placed in me over the past four years. I've had the privilege, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of serving for three terms in this Assembly, and it's been a great honour. So I want to sincerely thank my constituents.

And I also want to thank my family, Mr. Deputy Speaker: my mother, Trudy, who has been a very, very strong supporter of mine throughout my political career; my wife, Louise, and my sons Mark, James, and Michael, who have made many sacrifices to facilitate my participation in public life. And I'm very, very grateful for their love and support.

And I want to thank my staff in my constituency office, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Sheila Gillgannon and Puck Janes are two very dedicated people who work to assist me in serving my constituents, and I'm grateful for their help.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm very pleased to support this Speech from the Throne which I think lays out a very exciting action plan for the future of this province. And, Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech comes down as we see a time of significant economic expansion under the leadership of our Premier. We have in Saskatchewan an expanding economy. We've had a growth now in the economy for 10 consecutive months. And over six of those months, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've broken employment records, employment highs, in the province of Saskatchewan.

We see, Mr. Speaker, that the processing that people in this province have talked about for years, how we want to process our own resources rather than exporting raw material outside this province, Mr. Speaker, that processing is now happening. We have 126 plants that now process Saskatchewan crops right here at home, providing jobs for 1,200 people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we're processing our raw materials right here at home.

We've seen, Mr. Speaker, in the last two years, a very significant expansion of our highways network in this province, and see again in this year a commitment to reconstruct and pave another 750 kilometres of road. And we're going to be accelerating the twinning of both the Yellowhead and the Trans-Canada. Simply put, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this

government is fixing the roads of this province in a province that's got a road network that would take you twice around the globe, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we're making very good progress on this front.

And, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I'm proudest about the record of this government is our investment in education and research. This is very important in my constituency which is home to the University of Saskatchewan and to a large number of students, and where the role of Innovation Place is very important to the employment of my constituents.

And I'm pleased to see, Mr. Speaker, that in this Throne Speech we're making a commitment to invest another \$50 million of direct provincial government investment in research, over and above the direct funding that's given to the University of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, over the last five years under this government's leadership we've seen a 42 per cent increase in the amount of money that's being invested in K to 12 education. And I'm very proud of that, Mr. Speaker. And when I contrast that to the proposal of the official opposition, the Saskatchewan Party, that they made in the 1999 election to freeze funding for education, and I think about the difference that our government's record has made to my constituents versus the proposal of the official opposition, I am very proud to be on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech debate unfolds as the world's attention is focused on the US (United States) invasion of the country of Iraq. And our government supports the decision of the Government of Canada not to participate in this war. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a decision that I'm very pleased that our provincial government has taken and that the federal government has taken.

I view the US, United Kingdom, and Australian invasion of Iraq as a very unwise decision. And I say this for several reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker. First of all, I believe that the countries that are choosing to undertake this invasion are setting a dangerous precedent to go to war without the support of the United Nations. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they have not been able to muster even the support of a majority of countries on the UN Security Council.

And I'm also concerned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because with this war I see a large number of innocent civilians being the primary casualty of this war to date, Mr. Speaker. It's been tragic to see troops on both sides dying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it's particularly tragic to see hundreds of women and children being injured and killed as a result of the bombing of Baghdad.

Mr. Speaker, I also worry that this invasion is causing very troubling unrest throughout the Middle East, Mr. Speaker, the ramifications of which we don't fully know yet, but they're extremely troubling. And I regret, Mr. Speaker, that the decision by the United States and the United Kingdom and Australia has caused very serious divisions among our western allies, and that troubles me as well.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is a war that could have been avoided if United Nations weapons inspectors had been given a continued mandate to finish their work. Unfortunately they never got the opportunity to complete the disarmament process that they were making progress on.

And I say finally in this regard, Mr. Speaker, that this war, this invasion will cost at least \$100 billion in terms of spending by the United States alone. And when we think in this Assembly of what one can do with \$100 billion, Mr. Speaker, that is enough money, Mr. Speaker, to permit for clean water, clean water for all the world's people who don't have clean water so far, Mr. Speaker.

It's also sufficient resources to immunize every child in the world against every communicable disease that is causing tragic death and disease in so many countries around the world.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, in addition to those two initiatives which I've just mentioned, it would also be sufficient to allow for the rebuilding of Afghanistan — a commitment, Mr. Speaker, that unfortunately has been forgotten by many in the international community.

And so I very deeply regret the unwise use of resources, given the other pressing needs that we see in the international community.

Mr. Speaker, in light of recent international events, I also want to reiterate the position that I've long taken in this Assembly, that uranium mining in the province of Saskatchewan should be phased out until such time as there are proper international safeguards in place to prevent uranium being diverted for military purposes. And I hold to that view, Mr. Speaker, which I want to emphasize is my personal view and not the position of our government.

But, Mr. Speaker, when I see the evidence before us in the last two to three years, when I see the fact that now India and Pakistan are both testing nuclear weapons and have nuclear weapons, and I think about the role that Canadian nuclear reactor sales played in both India and Pakistan getting the atomic bomb, when I look at the record of France in the last decade illegally testing nuclear weapons in the South Pacific for many years in the face of international protest — and of course France is one of our biggest customers in terms of purchasing Saskatchewan uranium — when I look at the war that is currently underway in Iraq and the previous war a decade ago when the United States and many other nations, including our own, took part in that earlier war in the early '90s against Iraq, Mr. Speaker, and I look at the use of depleted uranium in that war, depleted uranium that is now scattered across the deserts of Iraq, creating serious health problems for the children of Iraq. And I think about the fact that much of that depleted uranium was of Saskatchewan origin.

(16:00)

When I look at those facts, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the sale of uranium from this province to the international community without a proper safeguards regime in place is unethical, Mr. Speaker. And I stand by that position.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I am very pleased with the position that this government has taken with respect to another dimension of the nuclear debate, which is the question of nuclear waste disposal, because I noted with interest the proposal from the Saskatchewan Party's Energy critic that we have a nuclear waste dump in this province, Mr. Speaker. And I was very pleased with the position that our government has taken that we reject that notion because, Mr. Speaker, there is no country in the world that has demonstrated the ability to safely dispose of high-level radioactive waste which all uranium becomes.

And when I see the protests in Germany where the German government has had to bring out 20,000 police, the biggest use of police since the Second World War in Europe, Mr. Speaker, to accompany shipments of high-level radioactive waste, and when I see German citizens — farmers, students, senior citizens — turning out, Mr. Speaker, to protest waste shipments to the point where they will literally tear up their roads and their rail networks to oppose those shipments, I believe we made a wise decision.

I see . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Why is the member from Arm River on his feet?

Mr. Brkich: — Leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you. I wish to, in your gallery, introduce a constituent of mine from Davidson, Keven Duchscherer, who teaches math at Davidson High School. And I understand that the Speaker used to teach him math. And also the member from Regina South, they used to, he informed me, used to have some very good debates of which he used to beat the member from Regina South all the time in debates.

So I hope the rest of the House will join me in welcoming Keven Duchscherer here at the legislature. And I hope he enjoys the proceedings here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Thank you and I would also at this time take this opportunity to wish Keven Duchscherer a good visit here to the legislature. A pleasure to see him here.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. And

welcome to our guest.

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, I am very pleased that our government has taken a strong stand against the Saskatchewan Party's proposal for a high-level waste nuclear disposal site in this province. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that there are . . . this is just one of many areas where members will differ significantly between this side of the House and the official opposition, and will . . . I'm looking forward to the election ahead where we will debate these issues and bring them to some final resolution.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on some other areas of the Throne Speech that I'm very excited about. And I want to focus on social policy for a minute and note that the Throne Speech makes many exciting commitments with respect to advancing this government's record of social justice in the province of Saskatchewan.

One of the initiatives, Mr. Speaker, that is very exciting is the proposal to continue our government's efforts to expand medicare in this province. And the provincial budget will offer increased funding for diabetes education, prevention, and care, which I'm extremely pleased about, Mr. Speaker.

There is also a commitment in this budget, Mr. Speaker, to provide more support for those with disabilities. And employment support programs for persons with disabilities will be extended to provide another 680 people with assistance in fully participating in the labour force in this province, Mr. Speaker.

In the Throne Speech, there is a commitment made to improve our foster care system by looking more to the relatives of children who might go into foster care to provide support for those children when they're no longer able to rely on their parents for care; looking to extended family members for care and providing them with financial assistance rather than placing children in foster care. And I think that is a very, very positive vision that will significantly improve child and family services in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I look, Mr. Speaker, at this government's record which is addressed in the Throne Speech in terms of what we've done with expanding community schools in this province; what we've done, Mr. Speaker, in terms of doubling the number of community schools just in the last three years.

I look at our record, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the employment support program and what that's accomplished in terms of reducing the number of single-parent families who are living in poverty in this province, by more than half, Mr. Speaker.

I look at our record, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Kids First program and the initiatives that we've taken to increase the minimum wage in this province. Just a year ago, Mr. Speaker, the minimum wage was \$6. Now it's \$6.65 an hour, Mr. Speaker.

Then I look at the position that members opposite take. What would the Saskatchewan Party have done, Mr. Speaker? Well it's clear from their comments that they wouldn't have

increased the minimum wage at all. In fact we had the member for Humboldt speaking on behalf of the Saskatchewan Party saying people in this province would be willing to work for less than minimum wage. And I think that tells a lot about the kind of minimum wage policy that the members opposite would implement.

Mr. Speaker, I want to comment for a moment on where else I think we should go in terms of creating and enhancing social justice in our province. And there are three initiatives that I want to touch on.

First, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be encouraging our government in the year ahead to look seriously at introducing a children's dental plan here for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I believe that as part of medicare, all children under the age of 18 should have their basic dental care costs covered as part of the medicare program, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I believe the time has come to increase social assistance rates in this province for all those who are on social assistance and particularly as it pertains to the allowance that is available for clothing, and food, and personal care, and for transportation, Mr. Speaker. It's been many years since we had a transportation allowance for those on social assistance, Mr. Speaker; I believe it's time to reinstate that allowance.

And I also believe, Mr. Speaker, that the allowance that's available for food, clothing, and personal items, which currently sits at \$195, should be increased by at least 40 or \$50 a month. And I want to emphasize that that is my view, Mr. Speaker; it's not official government policy at this point in time.

I also think, Mr. Speaker, that we need to re-examine the decision that we've made with respect to the installation of video lottery terminals in this province which I believe are creating addiction problems, and health and family problems, Mr. Speaker. And I favour a gradual phase-out of VLTs (video lottery terminal) in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to comment for a minute on our government's energy initiatives and say how excited I am about the green energy plan that our Premier and our provincial government is embarking on. Mr. Speaker, this plan that's laid out in this Throne Speech is going to focus our future energy developments on wind power, small-scale hydro, cogeneration of electricity, and that is indeed a very, very exciting energy future, Mr. Speaker, which contrasts sharply with the views of the official opposition that we ought to build a nuclear reactor in this province.

And I'm looking forward to debating this on the hustings, Mr. Speaker, because our government believes that the future for energy development in this province is with the wind and with small-scale green energy initiatives, Mr. Speaker. And with, Mr. Speaker, investments in energy conservation that will ensure that our greenhouse gas emissions are not rising, Mr. Speaker, in contrast to the members opposite who don't support Kyoto and don't believe that climate change is a problem.

And let me say, Mr. Speaker, in closing that I am proud of the record of our Crown corporations and I'm looking forward to debating that record, Mr. Speaker, with the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, this is a record that has generated \$1.6 billion in revenue for the people of Saskatchewan over the last decade, Mr. Speaker, and these people want to do away with many of those Crowns. And, Mr. Speaker, as long as we're on this side of the House, we will never let that happen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, again I want to close by thanking my constituents, thanking my family. I will be voting for the motion in favour of the Speech from the Throne and against the amendment put forward by the Saskatchewan Party. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure today to stand in this Assembly and to speak to the Throne Speech that was most recently presented in this Assembly.

However I must add that it was very interesting listening to the member from Saskatoon Greystone and I'm pleased that he stood to his feet, and it's unfortunate he didn't take a few more minutes because I think every moment he spoke over the last few minutes the Saskatchewan Party was just seeing an increase in voter support across the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — And, Mr. Speaker, when we look at this Throne Speech and as I observed the date of the Throne Speech and looked around the galleries in the Assembly, and I noticed how empty they were. And normally for a Throne Speech . . . There just weren't as many people sitting in the . . . that had come to actually listen to the Throne Speech.

And one has to wonder whether or not the government members were trying to invite people, but the public in general just felt that it wasn't worth taking the time to come and listen to this Throne Speech because they didn't expect a lot. Or the fact that the government members themselves didn't have a lot of pride in the Throne Speech they knew that was going to be delivered by Her Honour, and therefore didn't make the real effort to invite people to come and hear.

Having said that, however, Mr. Speaker, as we listened to that Throne Speech and I'm . . . at some times I felt sorry for Her Honour having to go through the 55-minute dialogue regarding this speech, and this lack of vision, and the emptiness that was in the speech.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, it would seem to me that this Premier, who to date has not really been duly elected by the electorate of this province to govern this province, would have . . . You would have expected this Premier to come forward with a real vision for the province of Saskatchewan as he anticipates going into his first full campaign as the Leader of the New Democratic Party in the province of Saskatchewan.

But what we saw, Mr. Speaker, was in reality a leader who decided to put his government on auto pilot while he sits back and tries to gauge whether or not he should call an election in

the near future, or whether he should put it off to a later period of time in the spring, or even possibly wait until the spring of 2004.

Regardless, Mr. Speaker, of when the Premier decides to call this election, I can suggest to you that have . . . from his lack of vision, his lack of a sense of direction for the province of Saskatchewan, that when he calls this next election, Mr. Speaker, the public of Saskatchewan are going to weigh what this government has done very heavily and . . . when they finally go to the polls and get to the polls.

And as my colleagues and I have been hearing, that's certainly the first question I think that is on most people's minds is, when is the next provincial election? And that's telling me, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan, in many cases, have already made up their minds. They're just waiting for the Premier to screw up his courage and call a general election so they can tell this NDP government exactly what they think of the direction that they are putting this province into.

Mr. Speaker, as well, when we listen to the Throne Speech, and we see the lack of direction and the lack of vision, it's basically telling the people of Saskatchewan that this NDP government doesn't know where it's going. They've lost a sense of direction, and in fact right now, Mr. Speaker, what they've actually been doing is actually been going in the wrong direction and they are certainly — in regards to many people across this province — aiming in a direction that really is not going to build the province of Saskatchewan.

(16:15)

This government talks about the number of people that are working in this province. This government talks about the increases in different avenues of the economy in the province of Saskatchewan. And the Throne Speech talked . . . they talked about the economic activity. And yet, Mr. Speaker, one has to ask, well if we've seen such great economic growth, and if there are more people working today than there even were yesterday, what's happening to the population in the province of Saskatchewan? One has to ask what is really happening. You would think these population numbers would really be going up dramatically. However, we're not seeing that, Mr. Speaker.

So you have to ask the question: exactly what vision does this government have? What direction are they going in? We just heard the member from Saskatoon Greystone. Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the province of Saskatchewan and what this province has, the opportunities that are at our feet, and yet every time we turn around and especially when it comes to . . . And I won't say all NDP members because I think there are some hon. members on the other side of the Assembly who recognize that there are some resources in this province that we need to start looking at developing.

And, Mr. Speaker, certainly uranium is a resource that could play a major impact to the economy in the province of Saskatchewan. And not just the economy of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but we talk about our First Nations people, and we look at the mining sector that is taking place in northern Saskatchewan right now, Mr. Speaker, how many First Nations people are working in those jobs — some very high

paying jobs.

And, Mr. Speaker, it would seem to me that as we talk about building partnerships with our First Nations community, we need to start looking at how we expand the resource sector of this province, giving them the opportunities. And not only giving them the opportunity to be part of our community, but part of our economy as well so that they can reach out to meet the needs of their community.

Mr. Speaker, as I look at this Throne Speech . . . sorry I just . . . As I was sitting there the other day listening to the Throne Speech, it just boggled my mind about the lack of vision, the lack of direction. And while there were a lot of platitudes that were given, Mr. Speaker, for example, the government talked about how they're going to do more for agriculture . . . And as I understand it today, in the budget leak that was released on Saturday, whether or not it was deliberately leaked by the Finance minister without the knowledge of his colleagues or however that information was leaked to the press, Mr. Speaker.

The government in their Throne Speech talked about doing more for agriculture and I think the leak talks about as well increased spending in the area of agriculture. However, Mr. Speaker, coming from an agriculture related constituency, constituency that really relies on agriculture, I would have to say that many people in my constituency, if not all of them in the agriculture related field, feel very let down by this government over the last 12 years when it comes to agriculture.

The Minister of Agriculture just announced crop insurance premiums for this year. And, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the increase and up to 52 per cent in some of those premiums and considering some of the difficulties the agricultural community has been facing, certainly crop insurance is an important component in the economic activity and the viability of many agricultural producers.

But, Mr. Speaker, if we're to face these types of increases on an ongoing basis and you look at the commodity prices where they're at today, many agriculture producers continue to shake their heads and just ask . . . are asking themselves, where is this government going when it comes to agriculture? What commitment? And it appears, Mr. Speaker, that this government really has no commitment.

And we just go back to 1992 when they retroactively tore up the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contract. And since then we've just basically been on a downhill slide in regard to agricultural policy in the province of Saskatchewan and support for agriculture producers.

And when you look at crop insurance premiums, well the Moosomin constituency in general, even last year, was quite fortunate in having more than adequate moisture and there were some excellent crop conditions. And while the fall harvesting became a tried and difficult time at parts of the harvest season, the facts were we did have some pretty decent crops. But a good part of this province suffered through one of the worst droughts in a number of years. And to have an added increase . . . I think most farmers expected a moderate increase, but 52 per cent, Mr. Speaker, certainly is going to hit very significantly in the pocketbooks of agriculture producers.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech talked about putting money into the agricultural industry and specifically expanding our livestock industry. Now we've seen, over the last few years, a number of dollars that have gone into expanding the livestock industry. We've seen expansion in the hog industry.

And of course when it comes to the large hog barns that we're now seeing erected across the province of Saskatchewan, in many cases it creates quite a debate, especially in communities where those barns are created. And it creates a debate amongst neighbours in their community because of the connotations that come with hog barns and the environmental impact it has on communities with the smell and what have you.

But, Mr. Speaker, I know that a number of producers over the past few years have really gone out of their way to establish their hog barns in an area that would not interfere with the well-being of their neighbours and I certainly compliment them for that.

Another area of expansion, Mr. Speaker, is the livestock feeding sector. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we have people in our community, in our constituency, for example Pipestone Valley feeders where a number of farmers and business people got together and decided to do a venture capital fund and raise the funds necessary to build a feedlot and recently just opened a feedlot that will be feeding upwards, I believe at the present time they would be able to accommodate about 6,500 feeders in that feedlot.

What it shows us, Mr. Speaker, is that there are individuals in this province who are willing to invest in this province, who are willing to put their hard work and effort into building this province by building feedlots of this nature so that, number one, it expands the economic activity of their community as well as creating job opportunities. But, Mr. Speaker, this will only take place if we create the right environment. And I would suggest that government involvement all the time is not the way to meet the needs of an expanding economy that we need in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as well, the Moosomin constituency is fortunate to have the expansion of West Central Pelleting of Wilkie in the construction, and now the plant at Wolseley now into full production making pellets out of by-products from the grain industry. And, Mr. Speaker, that while that isn't as large an employer when it comes to the number of people employed that we had in other operations, or have had in other operations, Mr. Speaker, it's just another economic activity in our community and in our area where the people of the area believed that this was a project worthwhile investing in.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated last year where they were attempting to raise just over \$900,000, they ended up having to go to the Securities Commission to ask for an extension because they had more dollars committed and the intention to invest than they were actually allowed. And so they were allowed an extension is of I believe around \$125,000.

What that does, Mr. Speaker, is tells us that people in Saskatchewan themselves, if given the opportunity and the right environment, are willing to invest in their communities and in their futures. However, what does this Throne Speech do? Does

it give us any encouragement to look at investing in our communities and in our futures? Mr. Speaker, I would think as we listened to the Throne Speech we would have to say it was definitely lacking.

Mr. Speaker, another area the Throne Speech talked about was the government's plan includes a major investment in education and training, and no doubt as we move into this 21st century, education is going to be an important component. We need to create the avenues and the opportunities for young people to expand their educational opportunities; whether it means post-secondary education in a university or some of the technical institutes, it really doesn't matter. But our young people need to have the opportunities to expand their learning as they enter the new technology and the new diversities that we see in the economy of the world around us.

And while the government talks about including expansions in education and training, one of the concerns that we see happening in rural Saskatchewan is the fact that many communities are really facing a dilemma as local school boards are looking at the numbers of students in schools and deciding they've got to . . . the only step they can take is to close down schools or take grades out of schools.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to education, especially in rural Saskatchewan, we might have to revisit how we look at education. And it may not include all the schools that we have or all the buildings, but we certainly need to look at how we provide education to our rural communities so that our young people in rural communities have the same opportunities that young people do have in urban communities.

Mr. Speaker, another area that we talk about in the Throne Speech and I want to just talk about for a minute is new green power, I believe is what the government refers to when they talk about the utilities. And basically the Throne Speech says we will welcome small-scale renewable energy proposals that generate environmentally preferred power and beginning this year, proponents will be invited to develop projects that can be fed into the provincial power grid. The first of these projects is expected to come on line in 2005.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when I was listening to Her Honour give the speech and when she came to this part, I immediately went back to 1992. And the government of the day, under the leadership of Mr. Romanow, decided that they would ask communities to put forward proposals in regards to cogeneration projects.

And I know the Gateway REDA community group put forward a project, power proposal, back in that time period. And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, after the five proposals were brought forward at the cost of \$20,000 a proposal that each community had to put down for their proposal, the government of the day decided they weren't going to go ahead with the cogen project.

And I find it very interesting because of the fact that those communities are still annoyed at the fact that when they put the \$20,000 on the table, and they spent time and money and a real effort to put forward proposals, only to have the government shelve their proposals.

And now today we see the government again talking new green power. I think what this government will find is that people are going to look back at what happened in '92-93 and basically they're going to look at this announcement with significant cynicism — wondering whether or not the government is serious, whether it really means what it has said here, or whether it's going to be meaningful to even come forward with projects.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, however there are certainly opportunities if we give people the right venues to work in to develop some cogen projects.

When it comes to health care, Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech talks about securing medicare into the future. And the quote:

Saskatchewan people have told our government that sustaining medicare and improving our access to health services, is a high priority.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the people of the Moosomin and surrounding area really want to see whether or not the government is really committed to that comment about health care being a high priority on their list.

And having looked at the leaked budget, and I believe we see in the news item or the article on Saturday that the government's talking about \$183 million more in health spending in the province of Saskatchewan. We've certainly heard about the federal government putting more money into health care in the province, across Canada, and a significant portion will be coming here.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the community of Moosomin over the last few years has been looking for, as my colleague the member from Swift Current his community as well, looking for a new health facility and hospital. And the community has been working exceptionally hard. And it's not just . . . While we've had communities kind of vying against each other for facilities of this nature, I can assure you that the Moosomin and surrounding area, people in a large surrounding area, have actually taken the bull by the horn and have gone on board recognizing that it's important that not that every community is going to have a health centre, but it's important to have a quality health service and hospital service in the vicinity. For example, to date I believe the community is within the \$7 million they need to raise in order for this project to go ahead.

And for an example, the last couple of years I've been talking about the Moosomin Moose rec hockey team and their attempt to create a new Guinness world book of records for the number of hours continuously playing hockey. And they just this year again had another game and were on the ice for 56 hours, Mr. Speaker.

And as a result of that game, they raised \$220,000 for this project. Last year they raised 125,000. So the Moosomin Moose themselves, over the last two years, have raised upwards of \$350,000 towards the health care project which . . . What it says is that the people of the community and the area really believe this is an important investment in their community, in their region.

(16:30)

And, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to the budget that will be presented on Friday to see whether or not the Premier, through his Minister of Finance, has now recognized the hard work and efforts of the people in the Moosomin area and community.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many other areas I could go on and speak to as well, but I'd like to just make a short comment regarding the highways in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about highways in the province of Saskatchewan, recently I had the privilege of sitting down with a number of community leaders and business leaders and government and civic employees to listen to the Prime Minister make a significant announcement regarding federal funding for a national highways program.

And, Mr. Speaker, at the time that announcement seemed to be something that really was worthwhile and was something that was long overdue. And when I look at the constituency of Moosomin, it really is long overdue. The fact that the No. 1 East is pretty well going to be the last area that will be twinned. And so this announcement was very, very important to the community of . . . the constituency of Moosomin and the twinning of the No. 1 Highway.

However, I must add this, Mr. Speaker. The \$82 million that was promised, Mr. Speaker, is a far cry from the tax dollars — the federal tax dollars — that leave this province and end up in Ottawa, that it would seem right and only fair that they would be put back in the province to maintain our national highway system. Not only to complete today, but on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Speaker, it's quite evident that there's so much more I could speak to in this Throne Speech. But unfortunately, I know a number of colleagues in the Assembly as well want to have their opportunity to speak to the Throne Speech and talk about some of the areas that they've noticed and picked up on. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I can only end by saying this, that I will certainly be supporting the amendment, and not in support of the motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say how pleased I am to be joining again this year the Speech to the Throne. It was a speech that spoke about a great number of things. It began talking about agriculture; it talked about expanding our economy; it talked about our commitment, as a government, to quality education, training; it talked about our support, as a government, for the protection and ensuring that we have a secure environment; it talked about securing medicare into the future; and, Mr. Speaker, it talked about support for secure families and vibrant communities.

And some have criticized it for being a long speech and, Mr. Speaker, it was; but there was an awful lot to say and there's still an awful lot to say as it relates to the Throne Speech and

the future of this province. The future of this province, Mr. Speaker, that I want to say very much hinges on democracy and the democratic process. And one only needs to watch television these days to see how it is so important for us here in the province and in our country to be protecting our families, to be protecting our country, and ensuring that we continue to live in a peaceful country in North America.

And I think it also says that we need to be so, I guess so proud, of what we've been able to build as a province and as a country as it relates to quality education, health care, but most of all maintaining democracy and a strong base for democracy in the province, Mr. Speaker.

We've had some very good successes here in Saskatchewan as it relates to growing our economy. We've been faced . . . boasting 10 consecutive months of job growth, Mr. Speaker. Our resource sector is vibrant and it's growing. The oil and gas activity in our province is up over 80 per cent over last year. And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen in this province in the past eight years, \$1.6 billion from our Crown corporations returned to the people of Saskatchewan to support government services and government programs.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's very much what this session of the legislature is going to be about. It's going to be about our vision as it relates to using Crown corporations as a tool and as a vehicle to create wealth, to ensure jobs. We have 8,000 people working in our four major Crown corporations, all over this province. And it's important, not only for urban economies, but for rural economies.

And we believe, on this side of the House, that it's very important that we protect those assets and we ensure that those assets are there for the people of Saskatchewan to use into the future to maintain stable power rates, stable insurance rates, stable energy rates, stable telephone rates, which is all that those Crowns have been able to deliver.

And so I say, Mr. Speaker, very much on this side of the House, supported . . . these Crown corporations are. What is becoming very clear, Mr. Speaker, that the other side of the House, the Saskatchewan Party, takes a much different view of these vehicles and these tools as a way to ensure that we have a stable economy here in our province, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, our party is a party of democracy. And I want to say that we have a political party that doesn't always agree. Members don't always agree internally. But you know I want to say, Mr. Speaker, there's one thing that we do agree in. We do very much agree on this side of the House in the principles of democracy and the party being able to make a choice of nominations and the people of Saskatchewan being able to make choices during elections that are respected by all of us. And I think that's another fundamental difference, Mr. Speaker, between us on this side of the House and on that side of the House.

And I want to speak, Mr. Speaker . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I want to speak to democracy, Mr.

Speaker, because it has become very, very clear that the Leader of the Opposition and the Saskatchewan Party pick and choose democracy when it suits their particular agenda.

And I want to speak, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to democracy and as it relates to the decisions that we have and the opportunities that we have to make democratic decisions here in this province to the circumstance that happened just a few short weeks ago, as it relates to a decision that the Leader of the Opposition and the Saskatchewan Party have made, as it relates to a democratically elected member of their party in the constituency of Melville, Mr. Speaker.

And I refer specifically to the election in the democratic process of the former member of this legislature, one Grant Schmidt, who represented the riding of Melville. And, Mr. Speaker, he was fair and square elected, he brought together his members as other members did. And they had a secret ballot, Mr. Speaker, after they made speeches. And when they counted those ballots, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Schmidt was comfortable, he was satisfied. The members of the Saskatchewan Party who elected him were satisfied, but the Leader of the Opposition wasn't, Mr. Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition wasn't satisfied with the democratic process because it didn't fit into his particular agenda. And, Mr. Speaker, some of the members of the Saskatchewan Party said, oh it was because he didn't conform to party policy because you see he believes, as we do on this side of the House, that there are times when government investment is appropriate, it's reasoned, and it works.

But ah, says the Leader of the Opposition in his purist style, we don't believe in any government intervention, any government investment — not we. That is not what our political movement is about and so what we're going to do is bring 58 people from across this province together and we're going to overturn that democratic process because you know what, it just doesn't fit in with how I feel about how things should be going. That's what happened, Mr. Speaker.

So they single out the former member for Melville and they overturn the democratic process because he believes sometimes private sector investment makes sense for this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, that was what one of them said, but you know what some of the others and the Government House Leader said? The Government House Leader said it's because he's an embarrassment. He was tied to the former Progressive Conservative Party. He was a cabinet minister. And the Leader of the Opposition's House Leader, he says we can't accept him. And so we want him overturned because he was a member of Grant Devine's cabinet before 1991 and we just can't have that.

And you know, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to do a little bit of research. So I looked through who works for the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, and I looked through a list of who sits in the Saskatchewan Party caucus and who too have ties to the former Grant Devine administration prior to 1991. I looked through that list, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to share that with you and I'm going to share that with the people of Saskatchewan because they have a right to know.

And I'm going to start by one Pat Bundrock who is a Saskatchewan Party candidate for the Sutherland constituency in Saskatoon. He was a defeated Progressive Conservative candidate for Saskatoon Mount Royal in 1995, Mr. Speaker. Oh, and by the way, a constituency assistant for Member of Parliament Jim Pankiw, who we all recognize as well.

And so I go through a list of people who worked for the Saskatchewan Party and I come upon a Tom Lukiwski. And who is this guy? Well he's the executive director of the Saskatchewan Party. And who was he? Who was he, Mr. Speaker? He was formerly the executive director of the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there you've got another one and I go through a list of . . . By golly, I come to the director of communications for the Saskatchewan Party. And where did he work, Mr. Speaker? Well he was a ministerial assistant to a cabinet minister by the name of Murray Meiklejohn who was minister of Education under the Progressive Conservative Party of Grant Devine.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not done yet. I'm checking a little further into their staff complement and I find Reggie Downs, who's the chief of staff to the Saskatchewan Party caucus office. And what did he do in his old life, Mr. Speaker? Well, I'll tell you. Before he became a Saskatchewan Party member, he was a member of the Progressive Conservative Party and he was a ministerial assistant to Conservative cabinet minister Pat Smith, who was then minister of Urban Affairs.

So I've now got one, two, three, four staffers and party people senior who are directly connected to the Progressive Conservative Party of the Grant Devine administration. As was, as was, as was Mr. Schmidt. And then I started checking through some of the MLAs in the Saskatchewan Party caucus. And I see that the member from Cannington was a Progressive Conservative member of the legislature representing Souris-Cannington in '91, re-elected as a PC (Progressive Conservative) MLA in 1995, and now he sits as a Saskatchewan Party member, Mr. Speaker. So he had ties to that administration.

And I checked with the member from Moosomin. First elected as a Progressive Conservative member of the legislature in Moosomin in 1986, Mr. Speaker. And he ran again in the '91 election, '91 election as a PC candidate. And he was elected then, but now he sits as a Saskatchewan Party member.

So I'm thinking, this is interesting. There's a pattern building. I look at the member from Rosthern who was elected as a Progressive Conservative MLA for Rosthern in 1995, Mr. Speaker. And they don't want to hear this. And he now sits as a Saskatchewan Party MLA.

And I checked with the member from Wood River who was politically active in the 1995 election as well, as a candidate for the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan, who now sits as a MLA.

And, Mr. Speaker, I checked further because I'm thinking, is this true? Is in fact there a connection between the Grant Devine Conservatives of the 1990s or 1980s or is there not? And I

come across the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy who was defeated as a Progressive Conservative candidate in that riding in the 1995 election who now sits as a Saskatchewan Party member on the opposition side, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the point I'm trying to make is this. The point I'm trying to make is this, Mr. Speaker.

I thought I was through but I'm not, because I find that the member from Swift Current also had membership in that administration. And I find that the member from Swift Current was a chief of staff to John Gerich who was the associate minister of Economic Development. Under who? I'll tell you who, Mr. Speaker. Under the same Grant Schmidt that the now Leader of the Saskatchewan Party wants to fire after winning a duly democratic process — winning an election, winning it fairly and squarely, but he turns it over. And the Opposition House Leader says it's because he was a former Tory. Well what about his friends that sit around here and what about the people that write the caucus memos, and what about the people that give him political advice?

(16:45)

Mr. Speaker, I say to you that you don't change the spots on a leopard. And whether a Progressive Conservative Party comes from Melville and turns into a Saskatchewan Party MLA, or whether he comes from Swift Current and turns into a Saskatchewan Party MLA, or whether it's from Cannington or from Moosomin, or whether it's from Wood River, Mr. Speaker, you don't change the spots on the leopard. And people of Saskatchewan, as it becomes closer to an election time, beware — beware — and know who these people are, Mr. Speaker, know who they are. Know who they are.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Now, Mr. Speaker, we've got two trains of thought over there. We've got some of them who say we should be investing public money because it may in fact work and it may be good for the economy. And then of course you've got some of the purists who say if you even think that way you can't sit in my caucus.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, it'll become clear next Saturday when the executive of the Saskatchewan Party meets to make a final determination on democracy — not on the future of one member of the Saskatchewan Party but on the future of democracy in that party.

And people are watching very, very closely, Mr. Speaker. And I want to tell you why they're watching. I want to tell you why they're watching. Because as Mr. Schmidt was good enough to be the president of that constituency association for years, and as people by the hundreds voted for his nomination . . . And I want to quote from the *Leader-Post*, March 10, 2003, Mr. Speaker, because this member of the Saskatchewan Party summed it all up as concisely as anybody could. And I want to quote, said Wilf Rieger, who nominated Schmidt, of the council's decisions, and I quote:

“If this is not overturned, it will be a disaster for the Saskatchewan Party. And not just in Melville, but all over

the province. I lived under apartheid (in South Africa) for 14 years. This takes me back to those years (he says). If the Saskatchewan Party can do this, what kind of laws will they make when they get power? It's a black day for politics in Saskatchewan (Mr. Speaker).”

And that, Mr. Speaker, is why I wanted to speak to democracy and the process that we use — the budgets, how we build our budgets, how we choose candidates in this political party. It's based on one member one vote, and it's based on democracy, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to tell you that I'm going to be supporting this Throne Speech. And the reason I'm going to be supporting this Throne Speech is because it did have vision. And it spoke about the future, and it spoke about building the economy, and it spoke about our environment, and it spoke about our children, and it spoke about health care. It spoke to everything that people in this . . . the Saskatchewan province care about and hold dear.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you as well, that members on this side of the House are going to be defending the principles of democracy. We're going to be defending the right of people to represent and be represented in this legislature. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that is a vision. And that's a principle that the Saskatchewan Party never brought to it when it was put together in the middle of the night. They never brought that principle with them, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to say, in closing, there's going to be one other test to the Saskatchewan Party, and that's their commitment to democratic reform. Mr. Speaker, our Rules Committee is going to be meeting tonight and they have an opportunity to live in the spirit of their party policy with calls for democratic reform or they can deny it.

And I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, we'll be watching very closely to see what opposition members on that Rules Committee do. My guess would be that they will deny democratic reform the same as they're denying democracy in Melville, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to say that members of this House have a vision of this future that includes democracy, and it includes fairness, and it includes people. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that there is a clear division between members on this side of the House and members on that side of the House.

And that's one of the principles that the people of Saskatchewan are going to be using. That's one of the issues the people of Saskatchewan are going to be using when they choose a government after the next election, which undoubtedly will be an NDP government. It'll be a majority government.

Mr. Speaker, I am voting against the amendment. I will be supporting the motion because it's a good Throne Speech. There is good policy, there is good direction, and it will be confirmed in the budget on Friday, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a previous life I . . . when I was just thinking about politics and just thinking about public speaking, I joined Toastmasters. And in Toastmasters they have various categories of speeches. And in Toastmasters the House Leader from the NDP just gave a speech that fell into two categories. One, it was fictional; and the other thing, it was humorous. And you know I can't understand what his speech had to do with the Throne Speech or the debate or the province.

Mr. Speaker, the Deputy House Leader was way off base and unfortunately the people of this . . . Saskatchewan aren't laughing too loudly because they would like to have an election and show the deputy . . . the House Leader from the NDP what they think of his Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, as we have seen, the NDP government's Throne Speech was clearly devoid of any new ideas, and the people of Saskatchewan are really asking for an election. They believe that the province is going in the wrong way. The trend of this government is going in the wrong way. The population of the province has been going down for the last four years, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan are really looking for a change. They believe that this province should have a . . . improving the climate for economic growth, and this Throne Speech says nothing to improve the climate of the business sector in this province.

Mr. Speaker, as we have seen in the health sector, we still have the longest waiting lists in Canada, and clearly the people of Saskatchewan are struggling in many areas, including they will be . . . in the rural areas they'll be struggling with increased crop insurance premiums.

Mr. Speaker, the government has said on numerous occasions that the Saskatchewan Party doesn't have a plan. Well I'd like to just let the people of Saskatchewan, and the NDP, and the House Leader for the NDP possibly just to listen to the Saskatchewan plan.

The Saskatchewan plan . . . the Saskatchewan Party has put together a plan to grow the province by 100,000 people over the next 10 years. It's made up of five components, Mr. Speaker. The first component is cutting taxes on growth and productivity. The Saskatchewan Party would eliminate the small-business tax for small businesses in the province — eliminate it. And the sad reality of this, it would only cost — it's at six per cent right now — it would only cost the government \$60 million. That unfortunately shows how few small businesses there are in this province.

As we know, when we need to grow the economy, we need to grow the small-business sector, we need to expand the small-business sector, and that's . . . the small-business sector is the area where new jobs and investments are created in this province, and this government is just doing exactly the wrong thing and deterring small businesses from expanding and growing in this province.

The other . . . Step two is to stop the expansion of the Crown corporations. We would stop the Crowns from competing with small businesses in this province. And we've seen example after example, Mr. Speaker, of this government using the

Crown corporation, using taxpayers' money to compete with small business, again stopping or interfering with small businesses' growth and development in this province.

The Saskatchewan Party plan would build on Saskatchewan's natural strengths. We would focus on economic expansion in the areas of agriculture, technology, value-added manufacturing, processing, and natural resource sectors. I think it's fundamental that we build on our strength in this province. Communities all over Saskatchewan have different strengths and we as a government would help those communities and help those regions and areas to develop with their strengths in those very important areas.

Number four in the Saskatchewan Party plan, we'd have smarter, more efficient government, core service review of all the government's activities, agencies, and corporations, and ensure that taxpayers receive the most for their tax dollars, Mr. Speaker. A core service review of all government activities — that would root out all the inefficiencies in this NDP-Liberal coalition government and get the province and the government's books in order and get the province moving in the right direction.

And of course number five, Mr. Speaker, is cut personal income taxes. Raise personal and family tax exemptions so families can have more disposable income, putting more hands into the pockets of small . . . of families and small businesses and individual taxpayers in this province so that they can go out and invest in the province and create more jobs in the province, Mr. Speaker.

Just as a point of this government's inefficiency and wrong-headedness, I'd just like to point out some of the areas where the NDP have gone well astray, let's say, Mr. Speaker, in the last few years.

The NDP, through an Atlanta, Georgia-based dot-com, lost \$7.5 million. Another example . . . (inaudible) . . . lost \$4.1 million. Another example, Mr. Speaker, is a Newfoundland-based cable television which lost \$9.5 million. A Nashville, Tennessee-based company that provides streaming video services lost \$2.4 million, Mr. Speaker. Vancouver-based telecom company lost \$2.5 million. SaskTel established Clickabid.com in 2000 to compete with America Online auction giant eBay.com. How much did they lose, Mr. Speaker? \$1.9 million. Lost over \$2 million on a Richmond, BC-based software company that provides mobile payment systems for businesses such as restaurants and delivery services. Also, Mr. Speaker, SaskTel established IQ&A in 1999 to sell personal health information across Canada — lost \$2.3 million, Mr. Speaker. And of course Channel Lake lost \$6 million. And of course the most recent loss is the \$28 million in SPUDCO, Mr. Speaker — \$28 million and it's a huge loss.

Mr. Speaker, it's just an example of government interference in the business community. And that tax money should be used for cutting taxes so there's more money in peoples' pockets to invest in this province and more money in small-business hands to invest in this province, or maybe more money to go in health care, Mr. Speaker, and . . . or to reduced property taxes.

Mr. Speaker, in the last three, four months I've been holding

open houses across my constituency and people have been coming and laying out the problems and concerns that they have with this government and with the economic conditions. I met with many reeves, councillors, alderpeople, and mayors and they have said that one of the biggest problems, Mr. Speaker, is a lack of a tax base, lack of a tax base. And they're being dealt a blow with having to put millions of dollars, hundreds of thousands of dollars, out into infrastructure programs for water and sewer upgrades and improvements, Mr. Speaker.

And these community leaders are working very hard to try to broaden their tax base and encourage people to come to their communities to live and they are having troubles. They feel that the government is in place that restricts the communities. They're looking to the provincial government for some help to get rid of regulation and red tape so that they can grow their economies in these communities. And naturally in the RMs one of the big concerns is the drought that we've had in the last two years; in some areas, it's three, four, and five years.

Mr. Speaker, seeing that it's 5 o'clock, I would just like to stop now and continue at 7 o'clock.

The Assembly recessed until 19:00.

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