

EVENING SITTING

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to continue my speech concerning the Throne Speech debate. I would like to take this opportunity now to congratulate the two new members that were recently elected, the member from Saskatoon Fairview and my colleague and seatmate, the member from Battleford-Cut Knife. Congratulations to both of you.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just continue on. I held a number of open houses around my constituency, and this one gentleman by the name of Clarence Williams from Borden, Saskatchewan . . . He's a retired farmer, but still active I believe on his farm and certainly active in his community. And we discussed many issues, and he put it in a letter form and I would like to just speak to and about what his letter says about his feelings about the problems in this province which the — I think you would agree and the people of Saskatchewan would agree — the Throne Speech does not address.

The number one point is revenue sharing from the province has decreased every year since 1997, and as we know that has been a big item in this province concerning the school boards and municipal governments in Saskatchewan. Of course, part of that is the loss of elevators has reduced the tax base in this province. He speaks of SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency) rates having been increased dramatically.

The fourth item is policing costs has increased as well. Naturally we all know about the energy rates for villages . . . have increased dramatically over the last few years. He also goes on to speak to the school tax increasing for everyone, especially farmers in this province. And he said that there should be a rebate on provincial or Crown lands used for grazing when the number of cattle is restricted due to drought when the grass is suffering.

And one other item he mentioned is just recently . . . was made compulsory for villages to have a secretary with a certificate, and he says the municipal governments can't afford them. And he signs the letter on behalf of small villages and farmers, Clarence Williams, from Borden, Saskatchewan.

So this gentleman and the people at the meeting were well aware of all the concerns that are really hurting rural Saskatchewan, small town Saskatchewan, the farmers and business people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

One item, Mr. Speaker, that is . . . the Throne Speech speaks to is concerning the infrastructure program that the government

lays out in the Throne Speech in such glowing terms. And I'd just like to read a letter from the Canadian-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program, CSIP, to Ms. Pam McMahon, administrator, village of Perdue. It's:

Dear Ms. McMahon,

The CSIP Project Review Committee has now received your municipality's project proposal.

While your proposal was an important project for your municipality, and eligible under the program, the committee members were unable to recommend any financial assistance. The committee determined there was a greater need to fund other projects with the available funding based on the information provided in the application and supporting documentation.

The letter goes on to say:

Thank you for participating in this year's Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program, however, since the CSIP is a multi-year program, we encourage your municipality to apply again next year. We anticipate that we will be mailing applications of the above program for the next fiscal year to all municipalities in July. Sincerely, Terry Gibson, Federal Co-Chair, and Russ Krywulak, Provincial Co-Chair.

And I'd just like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that this is the third year in a row that the village of Perdue has applied for the infrastructure program. It's the third year in a row they've applied because of the drastic situation of their water and sewage infrastructure that is deteriorating. They've made many stop-gap procedures which have cost considerable amount of money, and now waiting for this infrastructure program to come through.

And, Mr. Speaker, they have been told that this infrastructure money would be coming this year, and now they get an official letter saying that the program does not . . . they do not fall within the criteria of the program. This leaves this village in a desperate situation, Mr. Speaker. And again, I'm sure they will apply again for the fourth year in a row. But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this village cannot go on and continue on without making some changes in their drinking water and their sewage facilities. It's getting to be a very serious concern for all of them.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to touch briefly on the Kyoto Protocol. As the new environment critic, this is one of my first opportunities to speak on this area, and I'd like to just make some comments about the Saskatchewan Party position on Kyoto.

As you may well remember, the Saskatchewan Party made an amendment to the NDP resolution on Kyoto. And the Saskatchewan Party had supported the 12 principles adopted by the provinces and territories as the basis for negotiating a made-in-Canada, made-in-Saskatchewan plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that balances the important goal of protecting the environment with the equally critical need to get

Saskatchewan's economy growing again. And I think it's very important that we have to have that right balance between economic growth and sustainable environment and both go hand in hand because it is very important that we keep our environment for our children and our grandchildren's future.

Specifically, the principles are that all Canadians must have an opportunity for full and informed input into the development of the plan. The plan must ensure that no region or jurisdiction shall be asked to bear an unreasonable share of the burden and no industry, sector, or region shall be treated unfairly. The costs and impacts on individuals, businesses, and industries must be clear, reasonable, achievable, and economically sustainable. The plan must incorporate appropriate federally funded mitigation of the adverse impacts of climate change initiatives.

Number three, the plan must respect provincial and territorial jurisdiction; number four, the plan must include recognition of real emission reductions that have been achieved since 1990 or will be achieved thereafter.

The plan must provide, Mr. Speaker, for bilateral and multilateral agreements between provinces and territories and with the federal government. The plan must ensure that no province or territory bears the financial risk of federal climate change commitments. The plan must recognize the benefits from assets such as forests and agricultural sinks must accrue to the province and territory which owns the assets — and I'd like to come back to this point a little later. The plan must support innovation and new technology. The plan must maintain economic competitiveness of Canadian business and industry, and Canada must continue to demand recognition of clean energy exports. The plan must include incentives for all citizens, communities, businesses, and jurisdictions to make the shift to an economy based on renewable and other clean energy, lower emissions, and sustainable practices across sectors.

And the last point, Mr. Speaker, the implementation of any climate change plan must include incentive allocation system that supports lower carbon emission sources of energy such as hydroelectricity, wind power generation, ethanol, and renewable and other clean sources of energy.

And just in closing, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out an article in the *Leader-Post*, Wednesday, March 19, with Kevin Hursh's comments on the federal government's really lack of interest in allowing carbon sinks, agriculture carbon sinks to be used for the benefit of an individual farmer or a region or province. The federal government looks like it wants to take the credit and the benefit on a Canada-wide basis, and this is something that we must definitely not support, we must argue against.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I will not be supporting the motion and I will be supporting the amendment to the motion that was presented by the Leader of the Official Opposition from Rosetown-Biggan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I just want to wish you well during the course of the coming session. I know how difficult your job can be, to keep order and to keep the members debating on point and on the subject. And so I wish

you well in these coming days and weeks, Mr. Speaker.

I want to also, at the outset, congratulate the two new members of the Legislative Assembly — the member for Battleford-Cut Knife and the member for Saskatoon Mayfair. Both are members who have a distinguished record of community service in their own communities. I think they will acquit themselves well. I think they will add to public debate and to the formation of public policy in our province, Mr. Speaker. So I want to wish both members well in their terms of service, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to recognize the contribution made by the mover of the motion in support of the Throne Speech, the member for Cumberland. As he was speaking, or as he was finishing, I was struck by two things, Mr. Speaker. One, that, you know, it's some ways unfortunate that he speaks both in English and Cree because it seems to limit the amount of contribution that he can really make to the Legislative Assembly because he's in a sense making two speeches, one in each of the languages. So I wish there had been more time to listen to his remarks.

I was also struck by the fact that the member, who has been here since 1986, is and has been and will always continue to be a passionate, informed, articulate voice for the people of northern Saskatchewan and for Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — I also want to recognize the contribution by the member for Regina Wascana Plains who has also made an informed and reasoned contribution to the Throne Speech debate as she seconded the motion, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes that I have tonight, I would like to briefly discuss history in Saskatchewan. I've always been a student of history, Mr. Speaker, but there are some remarks in particular that cause me to have a renewed interest in the history of Saskatchewan, and this arises from the remarks made by the member for Swift Current exactly one year ago — well, maybe one year ago tomorrow — on March 25, 2002. And for those people who are at home and who wonder what it is that I'm talking about, they can always access the member's remarks by going to the Web site for the Legislative Assembly, which is www.legassembly.sk.ca, and if they . . . once they get to the Web site, if they click on *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, and then go to that date, March 25, 2002, and to page 266 of *Hansard*, they will see what it is that I'm talking about.

The member talked in great terms about the history of Saskatchewan, and these remarks, I might say, were enthusiastically received and applauded by his colleagues. Now, what is it that he said, Mr. Speaker? What he said is that for 60 years — 60 years — Saskatchewan has been heading in the wrong direction.

An Hon. Member: — Who said that? Who said that?

Mr. Van Mulligen: — And that's the member for Swift

Current.

Now the basic points seem to be that because for 60 years we have chosen at times in Saskatchewan to do things collectively through government as opposed to a complete and total reliance on free enterprise, Saskatchewan is just in a terrible mess today. And that seems to be the thesis of the remarks delivered by the member for Swift Current and remarks that were also echoed to some extent this afternoon by the member for Wood River, Mr. Speaker.

(19:15)

And the member for Swift Current, Sask Party member, he said that this has been the case, that is that for 60 years we've had it wrong. He said that this has been the case. Now I want to quote him, and again people are free to go to the *Hansard* and to check out this quote. He said, quote:

... (that this has been the case) on the economic side of government and on the ...soft or social side of government.

So just let me say that again. He said that for 60 years — 60 years — Saskatchewan people have had it wrong and that this has been the case on the economic side of government and on the soft or social side of government. And these are the remarks that were wildly, enthusiastically applauded by the Saskatchewan Party opposition, Mr. Speaker.

And what he's saying in effect, too, is that Saskatchewan people have had it wrong for 60 years. He said that we have seen the same approach by all governments for these past 60 years. Well I've got to say, Mr. Speaker, that one really hurts. I mean to be put in the same category as the Devine PCs (Progressive Conservative) — that one really hurts, Mr. Speaker. And I might say that's what really got my attention.

Incidentally, incidentally, Mr. Speaker, when the member for Swift Current is saying that, when the member for Swift Current is saying that, that you have to understand that this is self-serving, politically motivated comments to try and to put distance between the Sask Party and the Devine legacy that so many of them are associated with, Mr. Speaker.

But to say that the NDP (New Democratic Party) shares the Devine legacy, well, Mr. Speaker, those are fighting words and I must say that I completely, totally reject their analysis.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Now you have to remember, Mr. Speaker, that the member for Swift Current's thesis is that for 60 years Saskatchewan people have been voting to support, in the main, CCF-NDP (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation-New Democratic Party) government. And oh yes, we saw one Liberal government, and we saw one Progressive Conservative government, but he bunches us all in. And he said that for 60 years Saskatchewan voters have been getting it wrong. The people of Saskatchewan have been getting it wrong, and that we have erred in Saskatchewan on the economic side of government and on the soft or social side of government.

Now economically I take the position, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to do just fine, thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — That's the position I take, Mr. Speaker. Not that the economy could not be improved, and we are always working hard to improve the economy and employment opportunities for young people. And that's what the Throne Speech addresses in great detail, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to do that. We could always do more with moisture and good crops and decent prices, but that's not something that we control and even the Leader of the Sask Party opposition understands that and he speaks to that because he always qualifies anything he says by ... well of course if we have good rain.

But outside of agriculture, Mr. Speaker, our economy seems to be doing not too badly. Not too badly at all, Mr. Speaker. We continue to see excellent job growth. We continue to see, on a monthly basis, that we have higher numbers of employment in Saskatchewan as compared to the same month in a previous year, Mr. Speaker. That's not the sign of a failing economy, Mr. Speaker. That is a sign of a strong economy. And you have to remember, you have to remember that this job growth in Saskatchewan — yes, job growth in Saskatchewan — is notwithstanding one major part of our economy that is seemingly crippled these last few years by drought, Mr. Speaker, where we see terrible problems on the farm. But notwithstanding that, in all other sectors of the economy, we continue to do just fine, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, in December I believe we had the highest percentage increase in job numbers of any province in the country — any province in the country. And we continue to have one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada, Mr. Speaker, and I understand that youth employment is at a 10-year high.

By my reckoning too, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the mid-year financial statement and when I've been ... In terms of following the debate between Saskatchewan and Canada when it comes to equalization matters, it seems to me that Saskatchewan is also poised to again become a have province, Mr. Speaker. That is to say, by way of explanation for the people at home, a province that does not receive equalization money from Ottawa. And people will remember that, that equalization money has been greatly reduced because of the strength of the Saskatchewan economy.

At this time there are two have provinces in Canada, provinces that do not receive equalization money from the federal government, and those two provinces are Ontario and Alberta, as opposed to the have-not provinces. And BC (British Columbia) is usually a have province but it's not a have province today.

Have provinces, Mr. Speaker, have provinces — that is to say, provinces who do not receive equalization money from Ottawa — are characterized by strong economies that are able to generate the needed tax revenues to support provincial

responsibilities such as health care, education, and highways, and what have you. On that basis, Saskatchewan has the third strongest economy in Canada, Mr. Speaker — the third strongest economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Now we've been in this position before of having have status, Mr. Speaker, but it points to one thing. It's Saskatchewan . . . Saskatchewan at this point is again poised to, in my view, to become a have province. This means, Mr. Speaker . . . Not by us, but by all kinds of external criteria, criteria that we have no control over. Not the criteria that are put forward by the Sask Party opposition, but by external criteria in this country, we are regarded as having a very strong economy in the country of Canada, Mr. Speaker. And those are the facts, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — So, Mr. Speaker, how is it then that we have had it wrong these last 60 years, economically speaking? How is it that we've had it wrong if others judge us — others judge us — as having one of the strongest economy in the country?

Now the member for Swift Current says that, for the first time, and I want to quote him:

(For) the . . . first time in 60 years that any political party has understood how we can grow this economy (Mr. Speaker).

Here he's speaking of the Sask Party opposition that they, for the first time in 60 years . . . no one else in the last 60 years has understood anything about growing the economy. The only party that's capable of growing the economy, the first time anyone's understood this in 60 years is the Sask Party opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — The first time. None have any experience in governing, but they understand. They know how to do it, Mr. Speaker. No experience but they know how to do it. Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the only comment I can make to the comment by the member for Swift Current . . . that this is the first time, and I want to quote him, in 60 years, that any political party has understood how we can grow the economy . . . their arrogance is not exceeded by anything that they have, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, inevitably when they talk about the economy, they also talk about population. They say that because at times we're losing population, that we have got it all wrong on this side, whereas they have it all right. They know what to do. They have a plan to change that. What they don't say, Mr. Speaker, is that our population losses were the greatest — the greatest — in

the last years of the failed Devine government, Mr. Speaker, the result of failed right-wing economics, Mr. Speaker; economics that so destabilized the Saskatchewan economy that no one had any confidence in the economy of Saskatchewan, and people refused to invest here, Mr. Speaker. Those are the facts of the situation.

What they don't say is that our population trends are the same as everywhere else on the Great Plains, whether it's Canada or the USA (United States of America).

Mr. Speaker, I was very happy to attend this past year since we last convened last spring, to attend a meeting of the Midwest Legislative Conference, which is a conference of the Midwest states, the members of the state legislatures from the Midwest states and of which Saskatchewan is an associate member, I believe the term is. And we go to their conferences, not because there are great similarities in our political systems necessarily, but because we share great similarities when it comes to demographic and economic trends, Mr. Speaker. And that is one of the reasons that I'm very interested to attend a Midwest Legislative Conference because I feel that as a member of the legislature in the province of Saskatchewan, the world just doesn't end or stop or begin at our borders, that we are part of a larger world. And in this case, we are part of the Great Plains of North America, and those Great Plains don't stop at our border, and everything doesn't change just because of our border. No, we are part of those Great Plains.

And I was interested at the Midwest Legislative Conference to hear a presentation by Dr. Richard W. Rathge who is a doctor at North Dakota State University and he talked about the changing population profile of the Great Plains. And his abstract starts by saying, quote:

The redistribution of population in the Great Plains has dramatically transformed the region's landscape. The many rural towns and villages that once dotted the region are vanishing. These communities which flourished as trade centers for agriculture are depopulating as generations of young families move to larger cities.

You know, when you hear that debate and you hear those comments by those members opposite, Mr. Speaker, and we hear them often, you would think that you're only talking very narrowly about Saskatchewan. But this is a trend that affects all of the Great Plains region. This is not unique to Saskatchewan. This is something that's happening across the piece in rural and agricultural Great Plains areas. This professor goes on to say:

Population change in the Great Plains has followed a very consistent pattern over the last half century.

Which is consistent with Saskatchewan where we have been seeing these declines in population since 1936. He goes on to say, quote:

. . . the dominant flow of people is clearly from rural-to-urban. Researchers largely attribute this pronounced movement to agricultural restructuring brought on by technological advancements.

And then he goes on to say, quote:

Technological advances in agriculture have dramatically increased both production and efficiency. As a result, farmers and ranchers can operate greater amounts of land thereby reducing the need for labour.

And I think that's true for Saskatchewan as well, Mr. Speaker. And then he says, quote:

Farm population losses during the last half century have been overwhelming.

And I think that's too mirrored here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, where we see much the same trends. I might say too, Mr. Speaker, that this is not just unique to Saskatchewan and to census districts in rural Manitoba, but this is also something that's happening in census districts in Alberta.

To hear members opposite speak about it, they'd say that, you know, universally across the piece everything is booming and everything is going well in Alberta. But even in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, there are census districts . . . these are rural areas where population is being lost as people move from rural areas for the reasons I mentioned or Dr. Rathge has mentioned. People are moving to urban areas.

(19:30)

So these things are, in terms of population shift, these demographic shifts, Mr. Speaker, are widespread across our Great Plains. But they say, well no, here in Saskatchewan it's not because of these trends that are taking place in the Great Plains, here it's because we've had the wrong kind of government for 60 years. Well I beg to differ, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, now here's the thing, if I just might digress for just a minute, that I find really interesting, that they say — that is the Sask Party opposition says — they say that not only will they stop, stop these population trends; they're going to reverse them. And they say, never mind what's happened anywhere else in these rural areas of the Great Plains; just put your blinkers on, we're going to change that in Saskatchewan. And not only are we going to stop it here, but we're going to change it dramatically, Mr. Speaker. So dramatically that they propose to increase the population of Saskatchewan by 100,000 over . . . I forget what number of years, Mr. Speaker.

Well it is so over the top, it is so farcical, Mr. Speaker, that it flies in the face of reality. It really does fly in the face of the reality that's evident on the Great Plains of North America.

I mean, here you have census districts in Alberta that are losing, that are losing population. And notwithstanding all of the wealth that Alberta has, and notwithstanding also policies that they so greatly admire in Alberta that they say that they would put into place here because that would create such a transformation here, and notwithstanding these things, notwithstanding these things, Alberta cannot halt, arrest, let alone turn around the decline in population in census districts within the province of Alberta, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say their plan flies in the face of reality, Mr. Speaker. Now it may, it may well be, it may well be an admirable goal, but it's not very realistic, Mr. Speaker. It's also,

it's also I might say, if this is the basis, the basis for their whole approach to government, that this is a shaky premise for an economic plan, Mr. Speaker. Because these plans, Mr. Speaker, if you're not right, you will in effect take, you will in effect take hundreds of millions, billions of taxpayers' dollars to put it into a plan that is doomed to fail because the reality says that plan will fail, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I only have a few minutes left, but speaking of population, did you happen to catch the news out of Alberta, Mr. Speaker? I gather this topic of population also seems to be on the mind of their energy minister, Mr. Speaker, a Mr. Murray Smith. It is reported that Mr. Smith said that Saskatchewan would be a good place to build a nuclear reactor that could in turn supply power to the Alberta Athabasca oil sands project.

He also said, Mr. Speaker, because we are less densely populated in Saskatchewan, fewer people would be endangered if there were ever a nuclear accident. What a kind, considerate person this Mr. Smith is, Mr. Speaker.

But wait, that's not all. He also said that our economy could use the boost from such a nuclear reactor, Mr. Speaker. Well first we have Mr. Klein preaching to the homeless, and now Mr. Smith preaching to Saskatchewan. These Alberta politicians, they sure have a lot to say to others, Mr. Speaker.

What is it about them, Mr. Speaker? Are they confusing the good fortune of Alberta with their own leadership abilities, or to paraphrase it in baseball terms, Albertans are born on third base but their leaders think they'd hit a triple, Mr. Speaker.

And you know what? The Saskatchewan opposition seem to think, no they haven't hit a triple; they've hit a home run. That's what I gathered from their remarks when they say, well we agree with this Mr. Smith from his approach.

Also speaking of the economy, Mr. Speaker, when the Saskatchewan opposition talk about the economy, they also like to talk about Crown corporations. They say that one of the barriers to economic growth . . . one of the barriers that's holding the province back is the Crown sector. But don't ask them what they would do with the utility Crowns because that's when you get, oh shucks we wouldn't touch them, we wouldn't do a thing; well maybe just a little bit. Oh, no.

They say there's a barrier but they wouldn't do a thing, Mr. Speaker. That's what they say if you can believe them, Mr. Speaker. And once in a while they will criticize us for financial management. But not much, Mr. Speaker. After all, the credit rating agencies are far more credible on that score. I might say though, perhaps Mr. Grant Schmidt will have more to say about that. After all, he is the only one of their potential MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) with actual cabinet and Treasury Board experience. Now that's a scary thought, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reality is that NDP governments mean high credit ratings. The right wing brings us declining investor confidence and bring us lower credit ratings, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to wrap up my remarks by saying one thing and . . . just one more thing. And they say that, because

for 60 years we have chosen at times to do things collectively through government as opposed to a complete reliance on free enterprise, that we have been heading in the wrong direction. They say, they say that this has been the case, not just on the economic side of government but also on the social side of government.

Would that be social, Mr. Speaker? Social as in health care which is a social program, Mr. Speaker? Well I don't have time to get into all of the details tonight but if they are saying that we would have been better off to have pursued a free enterprise health care system — and someone said this recently; the member for Weyburn comes to mind — as opposed to our public system, I would simply say they're wrong. They're wrong. They're wrong. And I'll keep saying it, Mr. Speaker, and all the people in Saskatchewan will say, except for the right-wing zealots, they're wrong, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Our system, our publicly funded, publicly managed system is a superior system, Mr. Speaker, because of the strength of this party during the course of the last 60 years. On the other hand, they also say with respect to medicare, trust us; we wouldn't change a thing. You can trust us; we wouldn't do anything, Mr. Speaker.

Well enough of history. Enough of history, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say with respect to the future that I support the Speech from the Throne. This speech provides a plan, a vision. Our future is wide open. We talk in this Speech from the Throne about expanding our economy, protecting medicare, Mr. Speaker, opening the doors to the future through education and training, building a sustainable future through environmental protection, and making sure that our families are secure in vibrant communities, Mr. Speaker.

That is the path I want to go, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to go this dimly lit path that they advocate with their drums and are beating about that we should take because great, great peril awaits us under their leadership, Mr. Speaker. I choose the Throne Speech — that's the direction I want to go. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, I'm requesting leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Speaker, and I particularly wish to thank the hon. new member from Battleford-Cut Knife. I've interrupted your maiden speech before it even got going, but for good cause.

We have this evening, Mr. Speaker, a group of Cubs from the north end of Regina. There are 19 Cubs, and I was told there was going to be seven parents. I didn't take the time to count,

but I will when I'm meeting with this group shortly and I look forward to meeting them. I believe we'll be meeting in room 218 shortly.

Mr. Speaker, I especially want to acknowledge for the Cubs and the parents Wednesday is their normal evening that they meet. They've switched it this week only so that they could come and share part of this evening with us here at the legislature. So I want to acknowledge that, thank them, and ask all hon. members to join me in welcoming the Cubs.

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. Lorenz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a newly elected member to your Assembly, I was listening to the Throne Speech I guess from home, not having the opportunity of being here after the by-election. And I guess I look . . . I listen for issues that may attract some opportunity in our constituency as well. And in the Throne Speech I heard about vision — vision of opportunity — where the future is wide open, a vision of expanding economy from which no one is to be exposed.

We heard about government-driven economy, and we sometimes wonder if government-driven economy is good, and we have debated that here since I've had the opportunity of listening to the debate.

We also wonder about winners and losers. And I'd like to speak about some of the opportunities I've had through some of the projects of economic development that we have worked on within our Battleford-Cut Knife region.

I would just like to touch on a number of those: The Northwest Terminal, West Central Pelleting, and two new projects that are trying to be developed in that area, which is the feedlot and the mineral spa.

The Northwest Terminal is a project that's been community driven. It's a project that's been driven from the people. There's \$12 million that's been put into this project and the majority of those dollars have come right from the community and the people from that surrounding area, and it's something that's been driven not by government but been driven by the people and by business themselves.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lorenz: — It employs some 18 people. Something in the neighbourhood of \$2 million is pumped into the economy on an annual basis. There's about \$45 million worth of revenue that's generated for the people in that area as well. Problems and

issues that they have with that project — property tax . . . Education and property tax is a huge problem and it's a non-stimulus in the sense of economic development when we're looking at developing our economy.

West Central Pelleting is another project that I've worked fairly closely with, and it's another one that's been driven by the community and only by the community itself. I've had the fortune of sitting into a meeting when this project was first put into place. We had people from the Department of Economic Development out talking to the proposed project steering committee, and at that time it was touted that we had to lose the venture, buy it back at 50-cent dollars and then it would only be a viable project. But this is a project that's been proven over time that it's viable on its own.

It's also been expanded into Wolseley, and Wolseley is a prime example of community expansion and community development through economic development. And again it's locally driven opportunity that's taken that on as well. There too there is something in an order of about two and a half million dollars that's put into the economy through the 12 to 14 full-time staff people that are being employed in both of those facilities.

Now those are two projects that have been driven, driven entirely by its own economy, by the people itself in the regards of how those projects have gotten off the ground. There has never been any indication of any support coming from other ventures in any government initiatives. Where are the winners and losers? Those are the winners, but nobody has come along and provided the direction and the guidance to make sure that those projects were up and running. So there was some picking and choosing going on there as well.

There's a prime example with the feedlot that was proposed for that region as well. They raised something in the order of \$1.6 million which would have employed eight to ten people, again putting into the economy about \$2 million worth of salary — a project of about \$3 million. They needed a partner, they needed somebody to come in and help them support that project but there was nobody that came to their door, there was nobody that provided that incentive that brought some partners along to boast that project, to provide that opportunity to happen in this province.

(19:45)

We talk about the livestock industry as being a prime driver of the economy of this province but when we have an opportunity of that type in west central Saskatchewan, there's nobody that comes to those projects and says, let's find a partner, let's find somebody that can drive that project to its fullest extent.

Mineral spa is I guess another project that I'm very closely involved in. And I know there's been some question of why I come to the Assembly in the sense of promoting that we don't have government participation in a project. Here's a project that is going to run in the neighbourhood of about \$13 million, employ about 60 people, putting about \$4.5 million of value into the economy as such as well.

But when you are out looking for dollars to support these type of projects — and this is the third type of project that I've been

involved in, in that part of the province — it is very difficult to find investment dollars to come into these communities. The people that you go and talk to, as far as investing into rural Saskatchewan, rural revitalization, is very, very difficult to bring forth.

So to say that you can create economic development in rural Saskatchewan, you need to create an environment and an attitude and an economic thrust in rural Saskatchewan that is not government driven, that is driven by industry, that you have the confidence of the industry.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lorenz: — With the four projects, which are only a few that are out there right now that are being worked on in that area, there's some 100 jobs, some \$11 million worth of value, about \$70 million worth of true economy value that could be pumped into that area.

We have labour-sponsored equity funds that are supported by the government and they are . . . there is dollars that go into these projects as well. They basically tout that there's a requirement of 18 to 22 per cent return that's required before they'll even look at any of these projects. So these projects need to, need to be able to be brought up on their own. They need to find some investment that comes from the people themselves and there needs to be incentives developed as far as the local economy, the local people, the province itself investing into these projects.

We need a level playing field. We need a playing field that all partners can work together, that there isn't competition and picking on the ones that you are going to support and the ones that you're not going to support in the economic development field.

We need to restructure taxation. Taxation on property tax. Income tax is huge in the sense of economic development in our region. We can identify that about 30 to 35 per cent of the taxes that are generated in the income tax basis — the personal income tax basis — is generated from government-driven projects and government-driven employment. That's a huge impact that goes on in our economy, that you have that type of government-driven influence that happens in this province. We need to develop a province that is business driven, that is driven from the people, not driven from the province that can have that kind of an influence on the economy of the province as well.

I stand here today in support of the amendment and I do not support the Throne Speech. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased to enter into the debate on the Speech from the Throne at this time. Before I begin my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment in the strongest of all possible terms the member from Battleford-Cut Knife and his first speech in this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I found the remarks by the new member from Battleford-Cut Knife to be fluent and eloquent. I was extremely

impressed with the way he laid out his hopes and dreams for the future and his guiding motivation for seeking election. And I have to say that in many ways, Mr. Speaker, I agree almost entirely with the member opposite in what he says.

He talks about how to create an environment and an attitude in rural Saskatchewan that is driven not by government but by industry. Mr. Speaker, I entirely agree with that. At the same time I do have to point out that government is necessary for a stable and consistent attitude of high-quality services so that the hopes and dreams that the member opposite talks about can be fostered and encouraged.

Mr. Speaker, we need to have a stable government so that we can give optimism and hope for the future. We need the sound health care services that government provides. We need the sound and positive public education services that government can provide. We need the good transportation services and the good clean water and sewage services that government can provide. Those are all proper and good roles for government.

And at the same time, as the member opposite says, we have to ensure the government stays out of the way of industry developing its area of expertise so that together, working in tandem, working in partnership, business and government, we can create a strong, stable, secure society here in Saskatchewan so that our young people can grow up here, find jobs here, build a future here.

Mr. Speaker, I have many more things I would like to say on this topic but I note the hour now and in deference to the member opposite, the member . . . the new member from Battleford-Cut Knife who, I'm sure, would like to celebrate his first speech in this House, I would therefore at this time move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 19:53.

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