

The Assembly met 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a number of constituents in the constituency of Cypress Hills who are very concerned about the government's policy on renewing Crown grazing leases. And the petition they have asked me to present on their behalf today 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 lessees maintain their first option to renew those leases.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by producers from the communities of Abbey, Hazlet, Cabri, and Gull Lake.

I so present.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of residents of my hometown of Swift Current who are very concerned with the state of their current hospital and desiring of a new one. 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.

And once again, Mr. Speaker, the petition is filled with names of residents of the city of Swift Current.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here, citizens wanting to improve Highway 42, hoping this government will because it's the right thing to do.

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by good citizens of Tugaske, Caronport, Marquis, Keeler, Regina, Moose Jaw, Eyebrow.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise

again in the Assembly to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the government's handling of the Crown land leases. 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.

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

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, on this petition are from Shell Lake and Parkside.

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 taking necessary steps to have Crop Insurance reverse the 2003 premium increases; and

Addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 5 and 12.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 13 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: what was the final balance between revenues and expenses for Saskatchewan Crop Insurance in 2000, and were the funds from Saskatchewan Crop Insurance transferred to the General Revenue Fund in this year?

And I have similar questions, Mr. Speaker, for the past 10 years.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 13 ask the government the following question:

To the Environment minister: due to the dramatic increase of the elk herd in zone 50, will your department be increasing the number of bull and cow elk hunting licences for the fall of 2003, and if so, by how much?

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 13 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Learning: how much funding did kindergarten programs receive in the fiscal year 1998-99?

I also have similar questions for the fiscal years 1999-2000, 2000-2001, 2001-2002, 2002-2003.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 13 ask

the government the following question:

To the Minister of Social Services: how much funding did licensed child care centres, that is child care centres and family child care homes, receive in the form of either subsidies or grants in the fiscal year of 1998-99?

I also have similar questions for the fiscal years '99-2000, 2000-2001, 2001-2002, 2002-2003.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two groups of guests today, and they've conveniently sat in the same gallery together.

I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce to you and all members, the women's group from the Salvation Army Regina Downtown Community Church who have come to view today's proceedings. Maybe give a little wave up there — there they are; we had lunch together. And they are accompanied by their pastor, Captain Denise Walker. The women's group strives to incorporate four areas into their programs: worship, education, fellowship, and service. And today the group's program is educational.

So I'd like all members to join me in warmly welcoming the Salvation Army Regina Downtown Community Church's women's group here today. Thank you for coming.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — And, Mr. Speaker, I started out with one group of movie guests and I see now that we have two rows of movie guests. But it is with great pleasure that I introduce to you and all the members of the House, John Ketcham of John Ketcham Productions. John, if you could give a wave.

Accompanying Mr. Ketcham is Candice Fonagy, her daughter, Bobbie-Joe, as well as Ms. Valerie Creighton, CEO (chief executive officer) of SaskFILM. And I see in front as well, Mr. Gerry Sperling. I forget the other gentleman's name . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay. John will take care of you, Mr. Sperling.

John Ketcham Productions will begin principal photography on *I Accuse* — a 3 million movie being shot in several locations in and around Moose Jaw and Regina. Mr. Ketcham who's producing and directing this production also produced *The Hurricane*, an award-winning, true story starring Denzel Washington.

I Accuse is based on a true Saskatchewan story. It captures a woman's courage and determination to fight for justice. The film will include John Hannah from *Four Weddings and a Funeral* as well as *The Hurricane*, and Estella Warren of *Planet of the Apes* and *Driven* fame.

Now they're here today because in May 2001, SaskFILM went to Los Angeles to let people know about the Saskatchewan advantage, and that, Mr. Speaker, is a good thing.

I ask all members to warmly welcome our guests.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce one of my constituents, Gerry Sperling. And he's a movie producer in his own right. And he has with him today two other movie producers who are working on a movie here in Saskatchewan.

I'd like to introduce Kim Engelhart who is a producer from Oslo, Norway, and his partner in a production that's taking place here, Freddie Braidy, who is from Hollywood. The movie they're working on is *Lost Angel* and they plan to do three more movies in Regina in the *Wings of the Dragon* series.

I'd ask all members to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, I would like to join the minister in welcoming the women's group from the Salvation Army Downtown Community Church. We're very pleased to see you here and we would like to express our gratitude for the ongoing work that you do for the well-being of your community.

Thank you and welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join the minister in welcoming the people involved in movie production here this afternoon. We on the opposition side hope that you enjoy the proceedings this afternoon and we hope that wherever your travels do take you, they are safe ones. So enjoy your stay here this afternoon.

Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming a special guest, Candice Fonagy. Her parents farmed just outside of Kipling. In fact her mother and I had the dubious opportunity of actually beginning our education in a one-room schoolhouse, moving into the larger community centre.

So a special welcome to Candice and her daughter at this time.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Joining us today in the west gallery, our three very competent and capable New Democratic Party caucus employees. And I would like all members of the legislature to welcome Gail Fehr, Jannet Shanks, and Gail McNab.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Concern for Canadian Soldier

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, this session many members have expressed an opinion on the situation in Iraq. We can all agree I think that in one way or another, either directly or indirectly, we are all affected by what is happening half a world away.

In particular, I want to refer to a story in yesterday's *Leader-Post*, a story about a Regina family that is very concerned for the safety of one of its members who is serving with the United States Navy. Alexis Dawn Dustyhorn is serving with a naval mobile construction battalion, the first Aboriginal woman to join these ranks.

Although information about her unit's location and activities are not clear, it is obvious that it could very well be in harm's way. Her family is proud of her accomplishments thus far, and justifiably worried about her safety.

I should add, Mr. Speaker, that we know of at least four other Saskatchewan First Nations youth serving in US (United States) units, and we wish them safe passage as well.

Mr. Speaker, I mention Alexis Dustyhorn in particular because her mother, Gail McNab, was formerly a member of my staff, as she was for the members for Cumberland and Saskatoon Southeast. Currently she works in our caucus office.

Mr. Speaker, we all share Gail's anxiety. We pray for her daughter's safety and for the safety of all in harm's way. Most of all, we desire peace for our fragile world.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Congratulations to the Estevan Bordertown Bruins

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Estevan Bordertown Bruins carved themselves out a little piece of history this past Sunday becoming the first club to win the Saskatchewan Hockey Association Midget AA Championship three years in a row. In what turned out to be a classic barnburner of a game, the Bruins, led by the outstanding play of goalie Trevor Preugger, downed the Saskatoon Raiders 2-1 to clinch the title.

Although they have accomplished a major goal, the Bruins still have some work to take care of. They began the South Saskatchewan Minor League hockey finals Tuesday night against the Weyburn Encana Wings. This team was really pumped when they learned they were going to play against Weyburn. This is a best of three game series with the third game, if necessary, taking place in Estevan on Sunday.

Congratulations and best wishes to the Estevan Bordertown Bruins.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Qu'Appelle Valley Recognized by Harrowsmith Country Life Magazine

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, *Harrowsmith Country Life* magazine has recognized the Qu'Appelle Valley as one of the top 10 places to live in rural Canada. It was selected, Mr. Speaker, because of its history, its natural beauty, its potential for small-scale agriculture, and its ability to provide a comfortable rural life.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to represent a small part of the valley and pleased that I have had the opportunity to spend a fair amount of time in and around it. Mr. Speaker, anyone who has spent any time in the Qu'Appelle Valley will agree that it is indeed one of the prettiest places in the country, and a great place to live.

Mr. Speaker, the article notes that the Qu'Appelle Valley is one of Canada's best kept secrets and with The Future is Wide Open campaign, it will be a secret no longer. It's a wonderful place to live and work, whose assets include hobby farms, market gardens, and a relatively inexpensive price for land.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to add to that list of the valley's assets: its value for large-scale farming; its recreational opportunities; its fine, friendly people and their vibrant communities.

Mr. Speaker, *Harrowsmith* magazine is absolutely right, the Qu'Appelle Valley is a great place to live. And notwithstanding the Sask Party's disease of negativity — gloom and doom — this entire province is a great place to live and the future is wide open.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

Southwest Saskatchewan

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well tomorrow the Minister of Finance will deliver the budget and the people of southwest Saskatchewan will be listening very carefully.

You see, Mr. Speaker, our region of the province has been sending truckloads of money to this NDP (New Democratic Party) government. Indeed just last year in oil royalty revenue alone, the Southwest sent to this government \$130 million. That is in addition to the gas royalties and the revenue from land sales for the oil and gas industry, Mr. Speaker.

So the people of the Southwest are particularly disappointed then that this government appears willing to ignore such important issues as the beef and ranching industry in the Southwest vis-à-vis the issue with respect to Crown land lease renewals. They're disappointed that they seem ready to ignore the basic infrastructure needs of the Southwest. And they're especially disappointed, Mr. Speaker, that this NDP government makes the people of southwest Saskatchewan beg for a service so basic as a modern, clean hospital facility in Swift Current. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, southwest Saskatchewan

sends enough oil royalty revenue in just 45 days to pay for the NDP's share of a new hospital in Swift Current to serve the entire region.

So on behalf of the Sask Party MLAs from southwest Saskatchewan and on the eve of the budget, we want to let this NDP government know that we're watching. We know that they've been taking the golden eggs, Mr. Speaker, while they've been ignoring the goose, and the goose has had enough.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Doug Wilson Award

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday night the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union held its Excellence awards ceremony to recognize outstanding students, teachers, volunteers, and staff.

Pat Atkinson, Jean Burgess, Gens Heliquist, Deb Hopkins, Diane Nicolson, Skip Kutz, Mel and Kate McCorrison, Peter Millard, Richard Nordahl, Neil Richards, Bill Slights, Judith Varga, the Honourable Justice Catherine Wedge, and Norman Zepp — or as they were known in 1975, the Committee to Defend Doug Wilson — received the Doug Wilson Award.

Doug Wilson was a U of S (University of Saskatchewan) College of Education masters student whose degree was stopped because the College of Education said he could not supervise practice teachers because he was gay.

The Committee to Defend Doug Wilson brought together the students' union, the Federation of Labour, as well as individual students and faculty members. Its efforts ultimately led the university in 1979 to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, and then to the expansion of The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code by our NDP government to include sexual orientation.

Mr. Speaker, I praise the efforts of the 15 members of the Committee to Defend Doug Wilson and congratulate them on their well-deserved award.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I wasn't . . . Order. I wasn't able to pick up whether the member was quoting or not, but at any rate I would just remind the member that use of peoples' names who are members of the Assembly should be referred to by . . . as represent . . . the constituency they represent.

Lakeland and District Citizens of the Year

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as all members of our honoured Assembly are aware, volunteerism is an integral part of Saskatchewan's fabric. Women and men from every corner of this province give freely of their time to ensure that our local communities and our province is and will be a better place to live.

Mr. Speaker, it is therefore a distinct pleasure today to be able

to bring news to this House about the 20th annual Lakeland and District Citizen of the Year Award. Twenty years ago, when this event was first envisioned, the local organizers were unsure that such an event would have such a long-lasting effect and success.

Mr. Speaker, on Saturday last, March 22, the good citizens of Lakeland honoured a dynamic couple whose love and commitment to Lakeland was honoured at its 20th annual Citizen of the Year banquet. William and Margaret Courtney have spent decades celebrating and promoting Lakeland, hence these two well-known and respected citizens were honoured, Mr. Speaker, last Saturday evening.

Bill and Marg helped form the Lakeland and District Firefighting Co-op, the Lakeland Lions Club, were involved with the Lakeland Chamber of Commerce, and numerous events associated with these organizations.

Although Bill and Marg are looking forward to handing the reins over to a new and equally committed group of Lakelanders, their example has set a standard for everyone who dedicates themselves to volunteerism.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the Assembly join me in congratulating William and Margaret Courtney.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatoon Firm Wins SaskPower Award

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to inform the Assembly about one of the many thriving businesses in my constituency of Saskatoon Sutherland. This company is Quality Steel Inc.

This past February, Quality Steel was awarded a Power of Business Award from SaskPower in recognition of the important role that it plays in SaskPower's success, as well as its contribution to the Saskatchewan economy.

In 1991 Quality Steel began operating as an existing foundry that was previously idle. Quality Steel produces cast steel parts for the cement and mining industry as well as others. Quality Steel began with a staff of 16 and it now employs 52 people.

Since 1993, Quality Steel has completed about \$1 million worth of business with SaskPower. It supplies 150 different types of parts to SaskPower for its coal-fired electric generating stations. And, Mr. Speaker, approximately 80 per cent of Quality Steel's output is exported out of Saskatchewan, with half of its exports destined for the United States.

Quality Steel is further proof that Saskatchewan companies are competing and succeeding in Canadian and world markets and are representing this province very well.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the Assembly to join me in congratulating Quality Steel on their accomplishment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan people are absolutely outraged about the NDP's negligence when it came to overseeing gaming revenue. This is public money. But how was it being spent? Trips around the world on the Concorde, luxury hotels, limousines, golfing, \$800 sunglasses. And at the same time, Mr. Speaker, many First Nations people in our province live in poverty.

The NDP allowed Dutch Lerat to blow nearly \$1 million on extravagant personal expenses. It's absolutely disgusting.

Mr. Speaker, Dutch Lerat usually did not travel by himself. To the minister, did any government officials ever accompany Mr. Lerat on any of his trips?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member continues to press the issue that we've already discussed.

With respect to the investigations that have been already carried out, the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) investigated. The Provincial Auditor investigated. There was another independent audit that was completed and, Mr. Speaker, the Justice department reviewed the entire file and found that there were no reasons for prosecution.

Now I'm not sure how much further we need to go to explain that we've made a great deal of progress. We've addressed those issues and people have been held accountable, Mr. Speaker, and the matter should be resolved. I'm not sure where the member wants to take this.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, this is incredible. No one has been held accountable. Dutch Lerat flies around the world, stays in luxury hotels, goes golfing, spends money on shopping. And at the same time, First Nations people in our province live in poverty and this minister and this NDP government thinks it's okay.

Well it isn't okay. And the public is demanding answers and they have a right to have these answers because this is their money — this is public money.

Mr. Speaker, again to the minister. Will the minister provide a list of exactly who travelled with Dutch Lerat on his numerous trips?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, we have a forum through the Public Accounts Committee that has the legislative authority to call SLGA (Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority) to a hearing and if SLGA is called before the Public Accounts Committee, it will oblige. And that is the forum that this exercise can be carried through.

Mr. Speaker, again I'm totally confused as to where that opposition is coming from. There's got to be some dispute between their leader and their members. I'm going to quote this again from the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* in a speech that the Leader of the Opposition delivered to the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) in February 2002. This article says, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Would the member continue.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — And I want to quote what the Leader of the Opposition told the chiefs of the First Nations in this great province of ours. The article says, and I quote:

Hermanson praised (praised) the FSIN for running a successful gaming business and complimented it for addressing "governance challenges" at SIGA.

Where are they going, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Again we have no answers from the NDP. I asked a simple question. No answers from the minister. That is why the taxpayers of this province are outraged — \$800,000 goes missing and no one is held accountable. I would like to read a quote from the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker. And it talks about the use of public funds. And it reads:

As a result, SIGA has reduced profits available for distribution to . . . First Nations Fund, community development corporations, and the General Revenue Fund of the Government.

This is from the Provincial Auditor in fall of 2002 and he is talking about the present circumstances surrounding Liquor and Gaming.

Mr. Speaker, \$800,000 is more than many First Nations people will see in their lifetime, yet this government allowed Dutch Lerat to spend that in one year.

How did the NDP let this happen and who is going to be held accountable?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's quite obvious that the members opposite have no appreciation of all the good that has been done through the agreement that we have with FSIN. When that member talks about losing money from the public coffers, she's totally incorrect, Mr. Speaker. We have recovered \$1.36 million. The \$800,000 that is owed to SIGA, they are looking into it and have indicated that they will be looking at the possibility of taking action to recover it.

I mean, Mr. Speaker, the numbers of people that are working as a result of our gaming agreement, the amount of money that comes into communities to help build communities and help people is very evident — hundreds of thousands of dollars, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — It is the minister's responsibility to ensure the proper use of public funds; \$800,000 is missing.

Mr. Speaker, the minister says they've learned their lesson and everything is fixed. But that's not true because 19 of the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor have . . . there were 19 recommendations and only 7 of the 19 have been met.

Last year — this is last year — SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) paid \$550,000 in unauthorized payments. They have improper accounting policies; their financial reports are inadequate; they make inappropriate sponsorship payments; they use money for golf fees and for golf memberships — these are the findings of the Provincial Auditor from fall of 2002.

Mr. Speaker, how can the NDP claim that the problems have been fixed? Have they learned nothing from the past? Why is Liquor and Gaming not doing their job and why is the minister allowing this to happen?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor was reporting on the period ending March 31, 2002 — one year ago. Since that time the Provincial Auditor's focus on outstanding issues that needed to be addressed were addressed. The significant benchmarks that were met allowed us to go back into negotiations for a gaming agreement. The sustainable benchmarks are continued to be worked on and there has been a great deal of progress made in that respect.

So they've met their benchmarks, Mr. Speaker, for governance and accountability. As a result, SIGA has reduced its expenditures by millions of dollars and doubled, doubled its net profits that are going to benefit all the people of this province.

So is there more work to be done, Mr. Speaker? Yes, there is. And we continue to work for them, with them, in mutual respect, Mr. Speaker, and that's how we resolve issues and that's how we continue to support the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

Ms. Bakken: — The minister stands in his place today and says that things are fine and things are improving at Liquor and Gaming. Mr. Speaker, according to the auditor's report last fall in 2002, and I quote:

SIGA paid \$400,000 to the FSIN and \$150,000 to Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Licensing (SIGL). Although Liquor and Gaming specifically approved these payments, we think the 1995 Casino Operating Agreement does not authorize . . . (these) payments.

And further on it says:

Management also told us SIGA paid \$150,000 to . . . (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Licensing) because Liquor and Gaming authorized SIGA to do so.

The minister stands in his place and he tells us everything is

fine. And yet his department is still authorizing payments that are not appropriate according to the Provincial Auditor. Will he stand in his place today and tell us what he is doing to correct these inefficiencies?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, the arrangements that came with the agreement in 1995 had certain opportunities to allow both SIGL (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Licensing) and SIGA to work together to ensure that the licensing body of SIGA would be allowed to arrange an opportunity to license their own gaming issues, attend to their own gaming issues.

Mr. Speaker, I understand what the member is saying, that there is a great deal of progress still needs to be made. And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that when the auditor reports in his next report, there will be recognition of significant changes. There will be recognition of significant amounts of dollars that will be flowing back to First Nations and to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Public Health Concerns

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. There are concerns today that a case of severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, may have turned up in Saskatchewan — specifically in the Saskatoon Health Region. The region announced yesterday the particular patient was being isolated and that precautionary measures were being taken as tests were being carried out to determine the nature of the illness and whether or not it indeed was a SARS case.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update about this case and whether or not SARS has been confirmed?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the member for this question because I think it relates to an issue that's of concern to all people in Saskatchewan, but also people in Canada and around the world.

They are still doing the tests. Not all the tests have come through. But it appears that it is a suspected case and they are operating in that fashion.

What happened in Saskatchewan almost two weeks ago, March 14, was the chief medical health officer contacted all emergency wards, all of the medical health officers in the province to warn them about this notice that had come from the World Health Organization and the center for disease control.

So the province has been in a ready state for almost two weeks now. There's continued monitoring all the time right across the province. This particular case is being dealt with. And we want to basically assure everybody in the province that all steps are being taken to make sure that it doesn't spread here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, SARS is proving

to be a highly contagious ailment. And the province of Ontario has announced extraordinary measures to fight the outbreak of the disease in their province. This includes an unprecedented number of quarantines and the declaration of a provincial health emergency.

Mr. Speaker, given the seriousness of the situation and the potential for SARS to become a health concern in Saskatchewan, will the minister detail what plans are in place if indeed this patient's diagnosis proves to be SARS, and is there detailed contingency plans in place in order to quarantine and to make sure that this does not spread beyond this initial case?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — What has happened in Saskatchewan, as I mentioned, is that approximately two weeks ago all of the medical health officers, emergency wards across the province were put on alert. All of the various procedures are available, including quarantine and these various things if they're necessary.

Obviously the work done when a suspected case shows up is to isolate that person to make sure that there's no spread at all. That's the stage that we're at now.

If something more does come, well then all of the appropriate steps will be taken. We have a very good public health system in Saskatchewan that deals with these kinds of cases.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the spread of SARS in Canada and perhaps now in Saskatchewan is of course of great concern. But so is their growing concern about West Nile virus as we approach warmer months and particularly the mosquito season. The fact that the virus was detected in Saskatchewan last year means that people are preparing for its arrival again. And although no human cases were found in this province last summer, it is probable that there could be a human infection this summer.

From the public health standpoint, will the minister explain how his department is preparing to deal with the potential of West Nile virus infection in this province this summer?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Approximately two years ago a provincial West Nile virus committee was set up. This is a coordinating group and basically includes SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association), SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), the health regions, Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre, Saskatchewan Health, Saskatchewan Environment, and Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization.

The plan is to develop a response. As we all know, the testing has taken place over the last two summers to identify where the West Nile virus has gone. On February 4 this year the Government Relations minister announced a \$1.2 million funding to deal with West Nile virus. Everybody is working on how we're going to respond to the concerns over the coming months as it gets warmer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister mentions an announcement in February when the government announced a funding program for municipalities to support efforts to control the spread of the West Nile virus, but there were no details about the nature of the programming in the announcement other than that the government would cost share on a 50/50 basis between the provincial government and municipalities. The announcement also indicated that the program was targeted to municipalities where the risk for the virus is high.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities are trying to make budget decisions at this time and I have been contacted by many of my . . . and many of my colleagues also have been contacted by municipalities wanting more details about this program. Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain exactly how the program will work and what municipalities are deemed to be high risk, and when will this information be made known to municipalities so they can plan their mosquito control program?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. The program will include about \$1 million that will be shared on a 50/50 cost basis with municipalities around source reduction and mosquito control programs, primarily larvicide applications. There will be \$200,000 of the money will go for targeted programs where there's especially a high risk of West Nile virus. The criteria have been discussed by Saskatchewan Health around allocating this mosquito control funding with SARM, SUMA, and the provincial West Nile working group. And the funding criteria is just being finalized right now, which is why some of the municipalities haven't heard.

It's anticipated that the most comprehensive mosquito control programs will be around the larger centres but we anticipate where there are hot spots across the province, the money will go there. That's how the whole program's going to work and it should be announced very shortly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Provincial Finances

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's nothing I enjoy more than a good book, especially one written by a well-known Saskatchewan author. There's a new book out that talks about how the current Premier and his government have messed up the province's finances.

You know, Mr. Speaker, and it's not by the Fraser Institute; it's not even by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation; it's by none other than the former NDP Finance minister, Janice MacKinnon.

Mr. Speaker, for the past two years the NDP has been trying desperately to hide a huge deficit. But Janice MacKinnon clearly states that the NDP is running a deficit budget. Will the new NDP Finance minister finally admit what Janice MacKinnon is saying, that the NDP is running a deficit budget?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — You know, Mr. Speaker, there have been many books written in Saskatchewan by politicians, and I'm sure that there will be more books written in Saskatchewan by politicians and former politicians.

But the reality of the day, Mr. Speaker, is that we have had nine consecutive balanced budgets in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — And stay tuned, Mr. Speaker, because tomorrow we're likely going to announce the 10th consecutive balanced budget in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — And, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the finances of the province of Saskatchewan, I will take no advice from the members opposite, recognizing their track record in the 1980s, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — You know, if the minister won't take advice from the official opposition, I'm sure he'll want to take advice from the former Finance minister of that government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Janice MacKinnon talks about her decision to quit the NDP government. Just three weeks after the new Premier was sworn in, she said, and I quote:

The new . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. The member will continue. The member will continue.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the member from Moose Jaw North, I am quoting from Janice MacKinnon's book:

The new government was going to increase spending by 8 per cent when revenues were declining, which meant that balancing the budget would require a major drawdown of reserves so I would have to support a deficit budget — a deficit budget after all the years I spent fighting deficits.

Mr. Speaker, Janice MacKinnon refused to support a deficit budget. That's why she quit. Will the minister stand in his place and admit the 2001 budget is a deficit budget, the 2002 budget was a deficit budget, and tomorrow's budget will be a deficit budget as well?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan, since 1925, there has been something that worked like a fiscal stabilization fund. And the minister, the former minister of . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — And, Mr. Speaker, the former minister of Finance who is being quoted as having written a book, actually used retained earnings from the Liquor and Gaming Fund to balance budgets in the 1990s.

Now, Mr. Speaker, every province in Canada has a contingency reserve or a fiscal stabilization fund of some kind and they utilize them so that we don't get the wild shifts in taxation policy or deficit financing. This is prudent cash management and the Provincial Auditor has said that this government is very good at its cash management practices, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, and some governments set up a line of credit that contains no money and they call it a fund. You know, that's the irony here, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is not me calling this a deficit budget. It's the former NDP minister of Finance, the minister who was largely credited with balancing the budget. Mr. Speaker, she says that drawing down reserves means you're really running a deficit.

That's what the NDP did in 2001. That's what the NDP did in 2002. And according to the recent budget leak, that's what the NDP is going to do in 2003.

Mr. Speaker, it would be nice to see the new minister set a precedent and tell the truth about how big is the deficit in tomorrow's budget.

(14:15)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I'll advise the members opposite that the budget will be presented in these chambers tomorrow morning. I won't be getting on a TV set in an auto mall to deliver the budget. I'll be delivering the budget right here and all their answers . . . all their questions will be answered tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

But I will tell them today that I won't take the criticism of the members opposite when we talk about the cash management or management practices of the finances of this province, Mr. Speaker. I will go to the credit rating agencies who have given this province 10 credit rating upgrades.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — And, Mr. Speaker, we'll even look at the Fraser Institute who have praised the Saskatchewan government and its cash management practices, Mr. Speaker.

And you know what? I understand that even the Premier of Alberta is now talking about having a fiscal stabilization . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — There's a big difference, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in this House last year, the Alberta fund has over \$12 billion of real dollars in it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — This is imaginary. This is a line of credit, Mr. Speaker. It's a line of credit.

Mr. Speaker, Janice MacKinnon had one more reason for quitting. She wanted to rein in Crown Investments Corporation but the Premier wouldn't let her. She said, and I quote:

My goal was to move out some of the wheeler-dealers who have lost their sense of accountability to cabinet and caucus.

Lost their sense of accountability. Doesn't that sound familiar, Mr. Speaker? That's how we wound up with the SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company) scandal. That's how we wound up with the SIGA scandal. No accountability. No responsibility. And people like Janice MacKinnon quitting because the unelected Premier gives more power to his unelected officials than to his cabinet ministers.

Mr. Speaker, how did the NDP get so far off track?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I invite . . . I invite the Finance critic across the way to take a thorough read — to take a thorough read of Ms. MacKinnon's book. He ought to take a read of the first many chapters of that book, when Ms. MacKinnon talks about the record that was left behind in this province by that political movement. That's the chapter he ought to read.

He ought to read the chapters where Ms. MacKinnon talks about how close to virtual bankruptcy that group of men and women put the province of Saskatchewan. He ought to read the chapters that talk about how this group of men and women . . .

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

New Child Care Spaces

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, our government believes that investing in our children is the most important investment we can make, and I am therefore pleased to announce to the House the largest expansion of child care spaces in the history of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, over the next four years we will be supporting the provision of 1,200 new child care spaces to Saskatchewan families. These new spaces are part of The Early Learning and Child Care Agreement signed with the federal government earlier this month.

The new spaces will help us to meet two important goals: our continuing commitment to early childhood development, and our commitment to supporting working parents and parents within school or training. The federal investment of \$800,000 in early learning and child care is modest but welcome in the 2003-04 with increases over the following three years.

However, because we believe this investment in our children and families is so important, I am pleased to inform the House that the province is investing an additional \$2.2 million for the coming fiscal year which will bring the total investment in child care Saskatchewan for 2003-04 to 3 million new dollars in funding.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, this will allow us to develop 500 of those 1,200 spaces in the first year. We will also increase early childhood services grant funding by \$200,000 to address wage and human resource requirements associated with the new spaces. There are number of child care centres operating — 250 child care spaces around the province — without the benefit of the early childhood services grant.

And I want to commend those communities and individuals for their initiative in developing these spaces and for their commitment to the children of our province.

I'm pleased to announce as well, Mr. Speaker, that beginning next week we will provide early childhood services grant funding for those 250 spaces. Mr. Speaker, this is in addition to the 1,200 new spaces.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — And, Mr. Speaker, in addition capital funding will be available in 2003-04 to support the development of new spaces, whether it be through building development, renovations, or ensuring facilities meet fire, health, and safety standards.

The addition of the 500 spaces means that there will be almost 7,900 child care spaces available to Saskatchewan parents by the end of the next fiscal year, supported by an annual budget of over \$22 million. By 2007, there will be 8,600 child care spaces in the province.

I'm also pleased to announce that beginning in June, parent subsidies will go up by an average of \$20 per child per month to help parents afford quality child care when they go to work or improve their educations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan supports working families in a whole host of ways. We offer a \$2,500 child tax credit — the only universal tax credit in all of Canada. In addition, we offer working families the Saskatchewan employment supplement, the family health benefits, as well as the Saskatchewan Child Benefit.

This child care announcement is just one more way our government supports working families and their children. Our children are our future and this government believes there's no better investment.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments regarding the ministerial statement and the additional funding to child care spaces in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the government is certainly adding funding to their child care spaces, when over the next 10 years they expect to see a reduction of some 30,000 students in the K to 12 (kindergarten to grade 12) system. However, Mr. Speaker, when we look at . . . on the one hand they're talking about reduction of children, but it's important to also realize that there are people out there who do need assistance in helping them raise their families.

When you look at these extra expenditures, one has to ask themselves if the government would have moved ahead without federal funding. I think it's important to realize, that I think if I'm not mistaken, that over the period of time, most of the funding will eventually come from the federal government for these child care spaces.

Mr. Speaker, as well let's recognize the fact that there are working families who need support, but also we need to compliment the families across this province who make choices of their own to be a single-income family so that they can provide the care for their families as well.

So while we recognize that, we also acknowledge that there are individuals who need two . . . are both working parents to work and need some support, and in that regard we certainly compliment the government for these child care spaces. We trust that they will be treated equally and equitably across the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and provide responses to written questions nos. 2 and 3.

The Speaker: — Responses to question 2 and 3 have been submitted.

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.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to rejoin the debate on the Speech from the Throne, cut short a little bit yesterday on my comments because we were running out of time. But I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to rejoin the debate today.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a few words about my constituency of Moose Jaw. It truly is a great community — great community pride, great community spirit. It's a wonderful place to raise families and work but, Mr. Speaker, there has been some tough years in Moose Jaw.

But I have to say over the last probably five years when you're out and about around Saskatchewan, and other communities start to use Moose Jaw as an example of the wonderful things that can be accomplished, it's with a real sense of pride that I represent that community which has built itself and promoted itself to a very successful spot in our province.

Dream big, work hard, plan well. Mr. Speaker, a group of Moose Jaw citizens had a huge dream. They worked hard, put together some very good plans to rejuvenate our city, to build on the history and the assets that Moose Jaw as a community has. Those plans involved the whole community — municipal government, provincial government — but they worked hard — worked hard, planned well, and dreamed big.

And, Mr. Speaker, everyone knows how it's paid off in Moose Jaw. And when we hear the promotion that's going on across Canada about Saskatchewan's future being wide open, Mr. Speaker, that rings true in Moose Jaw as it does in many other communities, if not all communities, across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it's been a very busy year and a half since I've had the opportunity to serve as Minister of Labour. And it's gone by very quickly. It's been busy but it's also been very productive. And with the support of my government colleagues, we've made some very progressive changes to the province's labour legislation — changes to labour standards, workers' compensation, the increases to the minimum wage. It was a very busy year but a very good year for working people and businesses across this province.

But as minister, Mr. Speaker, it's distressing that the Saskatchewan Party continues to minimize the contributions that working people make in this province. Their comments of job killers and offering folks up to work for less than minimum wage are well documented. They have been talked about a number of times and they are in fact in Hansard.

But now we see the Saskatchewan Party trying to put a little milder face on themselves now, Mr. Speaker. But those same old attitudes are still there and it isn't working. People realize that they . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right. You can't change the spots on a leopard.

Now we keep waiting to hear some details about some of their plans — any details, any plan. We'd be happy just to hear something. But no such luck, Mr. Speaker, they're still out hiding in the bushes. We don't hear anything but vague statements — democratic unionism, collaborative approach to collective bargaining. It kind of dawdles on and on but doesn't really say anything.

In fact, the Saskatchewan Party leader said in Hansard on March 20, and I quote:

. . . a Saskatchewan Party government, not only in its first term but early in that term, will correct the unfair and

unbalanced labour laws in this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Labour, besides being concerned at the extreme and divisive attitudes that the Saskatchewan Party puts forward, I wonder, when we live in a province where this government and the people of this province believe in balance and a balance of rights between — rights and wrongs, responsibilities — between employers and employees, I wonder what part of that balance don't the Saskatchewan Party agree with.

So is it occupational health and safety? Occupational health and safety ensures workplaces are safe and the end result is a more productive workplace. Is that something that the Saskatchewan Party feels is unfair? They don't want safe workplaces for our citizens, our children, and our grandchildren?

(14:30)

Or is it labour standards that seems to bother them a little bit? All labour standards does, Mr. Speaker, is provide very basic workplace rules that regulate your hours of work, your days of rest, overtime, maternity leave, termination notice, making our workplaces more civilized and more progressive. Is that something that the Saskatchewan Party feels is not fair?

Would they rather we were back in the industrial age, Mr. Speaker, where child labour, working seven days a week, no time off, no health and safety? Would the Saskatchewan Party consider that fair?

Or, Mr. Speaker, is it The Trade Union Act that really bothers the Saskatchewan Party? An Act that is built on the principles of our democratic process. Mr. Speaker, we live in one of the most democratic countries in the world. Freedom of speech, freedom of association are enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Democracy, Mr. Speaker; rights that we believe in and have lived by. Now which of these rights would the Saskatchewan Party take away, think are unfair? I would like to know, Mr. Speaker.

We enjoy a democratic process that sets Canada apart, the envy of many countries and many peoples throughout this world. But as usual all we get from the Saskatchewan Party is vague and evasive statements, trying to be a little coy. A comment the other day was, well elect me and just see what happens. That's the kind of comments we get.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people have worked too hard to build what we have and they won't be taking that gamble on the next election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, one of my responsibilities over this past year with the reorganization of government was to have the privilege of becoming the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

It's been a tough year. We have gone through many meetings and spoke to many women's groups — had some very good meetings in fact, Mr. Speaker. The changes are being well received and we're continuing on the process, and we will

continue to address the issues that are facing Saskatchewan women.

One of the big things we did after having meetings all throughout the province was to organize a forum last November where women's' groups throughout the province came to Regina, spent a day discussing issues, looking at solutions, how best that we can work together to solve the issues and problems that are out there.

And, Mr. Speaker, last night when I was thinking of my comments today, the question came to me. So what have I learned over the year of being the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women? And, Mr. Speaker, the biggest thing that has struck me is that women throughout this province, no matter where they live, are committed and dedicated resourceful people that form an extremely important part of our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — I had the pleasure of travelling around the province on March 8. We were celebrating International Women's Day. And, Mr. Speaker, to have the opportunity to travel around this province and meet with women, see the projects that they were working on, seen the celebrations that were drawing attention to the things they were doing in their communities was a wonderful day, Mr. Speaker. It truly was.

This government believes in equity and we believe in the inclusion and the advancement of all citizens in this province. And the announcement that the minister just made, along with the Premier this morning, about the \$3 million for additional child care here in Saskatchewan is one more step along that way.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to have the ability to represent this portfolio and to be a window into government for women and a contact point for women throughout this province to contact the government.

Now with women 50 per cent of the population — over 50 per cent of the population — I went through and tried to find something that the Saskatchewan Party had even said about women; any comments or policy that they had made. And there was absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't find anything except for one old quote from the Saskatchewan Party leader. When he was asked why there wasn't more women candidates recruited for the Saskatchewan Party, the Saskatchewan Party leader said, it was difficult since, and I quote:

Their concerns are with the home and (I quote) they don't like dealing with conflict.

Now, Mr. Speaker, he said this in 1999. Now as offensive as it may be and as extreme an attitude as it may be and as out of touch with today's reality as it may be, there is nothing said on record since then about women, from the Saskatchewan Party — 50 per cent plus of our population ignored; absolutely nothing said. It's a disgrace, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — And it's something that this government

will not ever agree to or stoop to.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has criticized our Throne Speech. They said it's all old stuff, old hat. Well that just points to me their lack of vision.

They have no vision. They have no ability to look at the big picture, to look at the wonderful foundation that this government has worked to build in this province, a foundation that will move us into the next century, Mr. Speaker.

And I'd like to quote from an article in the Leader-Post a couple of days ago and it said, Mr. Speaker:

The purring sound of a provincial economy powered by oil and gas revenue to better-than-Canadian-average growth this year could define the coming provincial election battleground.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand and support the Throne Speech put forward by this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into debate on the Speech from the Throne on behalf of the people of Thunder Creek, people who go to their jobs and businesses, and work their farms and ranches every day, and are among the most productive people in this great province.

The people of my constituency are not takers; they're givers. They're not complainers; they're problem solvers. They're not boastful; they're modest. They're not shirkers; they're achievers. They're not part of the problem in this province; they're part of the solutions.

Mr. Speaker, the boundaries of Thunder Creek have been changed quite dramatically and at first as I became familiar with the changes, I felt regret that I would not be able to represent my fine constituents that I have represented since my election. Now that I've become acquainted with more and more people in the new areas of Thunder Creek, I realize that they are wonderful folks as well, just like people all over this province — people that inspire me, people that I believe in, and people that I have confidence in.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in Saskatchewan. I have confidence in Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatchewan. I'm certain that we can be much more than we are, that we can create opportunity for our people, and that we can be one of the most prosperous and desirable places in North America to call home. And I believe that we can build a province where our children will want to make their lives and raise their families.

I believe that Saskatchewan is naturally the richest jurisdiction in North America. We have within our borders huge oil and gas reserves. We are the world's largest producer and exporter of potash, producing over 30 per cent of the world's supply.

Our uranium deposits are richer by several times over than the next richest deposits in the world. And like potash, we are the

world's largest producer and exporter of uranium, producing and exporting about one-third of the world's supply every year.

We have gold and diamonds and huge coal deposits and sodium sulphate, and we have 47 per cent of the farm land in this vast country.

We have well-educated people with a superb work ethic. We share the longest unprotected border in the world with the richest nation on earth, the United States of America, with whom we have a special trading relationship. They want what we produce and they can pay for it. What nation or province or state in the world wouldn't be happy to trade places with us?

So I wonder, as you do and as others do, Mr. Speaker, why do our children feel that they have to leave to seek opportunity elsewhere? Why do so many of our more affluent seniors leave this province to retire? It doesn't make sense, and the rest of the world must shake their heads in disbelief.

I believe the answer to these questions lies in an examination of our history, Mr. Speaker. Near the end of the Second World War, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan had over 1 million people and Alberta had a little over 600,000. Alberta chose a course of private enterprise at that time and things must not have looked very promising for them . . . not enough people, not near as much good farm land as we had, no oil industry — that was in Saskatchewan too — virtually no known mineral deposits, fewer cattle than Saskatchewan, fewer hogs than Saskatchewan, and at the time they owed a huge debt to the federal government which was in default.

At that same time, with over a million people, Saskatchewan was the third most populous province in Canada. With our vast rich farm land, burgeoning young oil industry, flour milling, meat-packing, more cattle and hog production than Alberta, we were the crown jewel of Western Canada and the centre of power was moving westward every year. But we chose a different path. We followed a charismatic young preacher, a great orator, and no one who heard him would question his commitment to the province. Unfortunately he and his party were also committed to a socialist ideology as evidenced by their drafting of a document called the Regina Manifesto — a blueprint for a socialist society that is still considered to be the foundation upon which NDP policy is built.

Among the ideals laid out in that Regina Manifesto is the elimination of capitalism. The Regina Manifesto can be found on the NDP Web site at www.saskndp.com under the history tab. We all know what has happened in Saskatchewan and in Alberta since then. We now have a little under a million people and Alberta has 3 million and building an infrastructure for 6 million over the next 20 years. We deficit budget and Alberta has budgetary surpluses year after year. We have a debt that the government admits to of over \$12 billion — and which is really over \$20 billion if we include such things as unfunded pension liability — and Alberta has no debt.

Our young people flee this province to find better opportunities for themselves and Alberta is the destination for bright, ambitious young people from all over the country and the world.

Mr. Speaker, the great CCF-NDP (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation-New Democratic Party) socialist experiment has failed. Government owns 46 per cent of this . . .

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

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, the great CCF-NDP socialist experiment has failed. Government now owns 46 per cent of the economy of this province and their only solution to our economic woes is to squander in excess of \$100 million of taxpayers' money annually in investments, both here and all over the world.

Not only do most of the government's investment schemes fail, but they also create winners and losers in the province and drive away potential private investors who do not wish to compete with the treasury of the province — investors who would bring new money to the game. New money is what is required to expand any economy. It's not good enough to recycle taxpayers' dollars into government equity positions and businesses and pass that off as a plan for economic expansion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stewart: — That is nothing more than a socialistic plan to gain more and ever-increasing control of a small economy. It's not any kind of a sincere attempt to expand the economy for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan.

Let's talk about just a few of the NDP's latest business fiascos at taxpayers' expense.

Channel Lake, 1997. SaskPower got playing gas futures at extremely thin margins, a practice known as arbitrage. Of course they lost about \$15 million at this — all taxpayers' money, all taxpayers' money. At the time Jack Messer, former NDP cabinet minister, was president of SaskPower. He resigned when this became known. Of course SaskPower didn't mention this in their annual report in 1997 but when it did, when the information did come out, Jack resigned and left with a \$300 . . . \$300,000 severance package.

Guyana. SaskPower again, in 1997 under Jack Messer, invested a . . . planned to invest, to invest about 31 million I think in a decrepit power company in Guyana. Fortunately for the people of Saskatchewan, civil unrest broke out in Guyana and the government only managed to lose 2 million in that one.

(14:45)

NST (NST Network Services of Chicago), Mr. Speaker. With this one SaskTel lost the people of Saskatchewan about 16 million. The company was set up to install fibre optic cable in the Midwestern United States, and through 1995-96 lost \$16 million of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money. And of course, typically, no mention was made in the annual reports of SaskTel for either 1995 or 1996 of these losses.

SPUDCO, SPUDCO, Mr. Speaker. Losses of \$28 million and climbing. I don't need to explain to anyone in the province what SPUDCO is — the government's aborted effort at expanding a potato industry. Not only did the government lose \$28 million

of taxpayers' money in this investment, but lives were ruined, marriages broken, businesses bankrupted, and the private sector lost over \$40 million in SPUDCO.

All of this the government called a success and hid the fact . . . and hid the economic and financial structure of the SPUDCO corporation from the people of Saskatchewan for six years.

Information Services Corporation, Mr. Speaker. Information Services Corporation of course is the NDP's failed attempt to computerize our land titles system. The cost of this was originally estimated to be \$20 million. Now at about 90 million over budget, we're weighing in at \$107 million of taxpayers' money and still we don't have a land titles system that works.

SaskTel, SaskTel in 2001. Here's some interesting facts about SaskTel in 2001. Four companies owned by SaskTel in the year 2001 — Retx.com (Retail Energy Transaction Exchange) in Atlanta, tappedinto.com in Nashville, Craig Wireless International, and SoftTracks Enterprises — collectively lost \$12.5 million that year. SaskTel of course did not break down which companies lost how much money, but SaskTel's Navigata Communications lost 2.5 million and SecurTek lost 1.3 million, bringing SaskTel's 2001 losses in various business ventures to \$16.3 million. All taxpayers' money.

Lately FarmGro Organics, a huge organic flour mill just out of Regina, a business that couldn't possibly work with the kind of debt they were carrying, lost over \$5 million of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money. A venture that Saskatchewan people wouldn't invest in but our government knew better.

Ongoing — \$20 million in a hamburger plant in Saskatoon in partnership with a company that had left \$12 million in unpaid debts in Alberta; 15 million for a hog enterprise in northeastern Saskatchewan; 80 million invested in Australian communications and infrastructure, and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

This is far from a comprehensive list of this government's recent losing ventures by any stretch. We calculate the total losses from non-core Crowns alone in the last fiscal year is in the neighbourhood of \$30 million.

The core Crowns — SaskPower, SaskTel, SaskEnergy, and SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) — besides these four Crowns that everybody knows about, there are well over 80 non-core Crowns, most of which lose at least some money every year.

We, in the Saskatchewan Party, believe in the private sector as the engine of growth for the province and we have a comprehensive plan to grow the province by 100,000 people in 10 years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stewart: — In fact the first test for any new policy of the Saskatchewan Party is: will it help to grow the province by 100,000 people, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, there's no mention in the Speech from the Throne about how this tired, old government led by this non-elected Premier plans to stimulate the private sector to expand the economy. And that's because there is no plan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is blessed with abundant resources. We're the second-largest oil producer in Canada behind Alberta and the third-largest natural gas producer behind British Columbia. And I've already mentioned potash and uranium and other minerals.

Right now Saskatchewan produces about 20 per cent of Canada's oil. We have substantial recoverable reserves that have not even been tapped. We are on the last frontier . . . We are the last frontier in North America for oil and gas exploration. Now is the time to advance oil and gas exploration in this province. We have a shrinking window of opportunity to develop our great resource. The Kyoto accord, which this government supported, when fully implemented has the potential to seriously penalize oil and gas development. The oil and gas industry has a serious impact on the province's economy.

And we understand that companies need better incentives to explore and develop oil fields in Saskatchewan. We also understand that oil and gas companies have the potential to kick-start Saskatchewan's economy by mobilizing quickly.

Our plan will reduce royalties on new oil and gas wells to 1 per cent until capital costs are recovered. We will cut the corporate capital tax in half.

We understand that we need to reduce red tape and government bureaucracy and our plan will create a single-window approach to obtain permits and clearances from all departments at all levels of government. We'll arrange a seamless and simplified and uniform approach when it comes to taxes, mill rates, and environmental regulations.

I acknowledge that we need to address oil and gas field power rates. They are among the highest in the country and far higher than commercial rates in this province.

And we want to encourage cogeneration of power and the sale of excess power into the provincial grid at compensatory rates.

We just need more oil and gas wells and mines in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I can't in all conscience take my seat without mentioning some remarks made by the member from Saskatoon Greystone this past Monday in this Assembly. That member talked about processing in the province and how we want to process our resources.

But in 1992 he was a leader in an environmental lobbying effort that cost this province the uranium processing industry that we could have had — could have had.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stewart: — In so doing, Mr. Speaker, that member has cost the people of this province billions of dollars in good

salaries, in government revenues, and in other spinoff to the private sector.

How can he sit there, Mr. Speaker, and claim to represent the people of this province?

Mr. Speaker, he went on to say that he favours a phase-out of uranium mining in this province. Uranium mining is one of our largest industries and one that has huge growth potential.

Is it any wonder that industry avoids investing in this province when a long-time government member talks like that about an industry that is one of the great engines of our economy, that provides fuel for power generation for a large chunk of the world, helps pay for our health care and education and social services and infrastructure? And an industry that provides high-paying jobs for our people, and particularly the people of our North.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Greystone went on to criticize our American neighbours, and our former British and Australian allies as well, for their courageous efforts in bringing the butcherist tyrant Saddam Hussein to heel and for their efforts toward ending his brutal regime and disarming Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, does that member not know that Saddam Hussein and his regime have murdered thousands of innocent people, mostly in the northern part of his own country and mostly with chemical warheads? And does he not know that the United States of America would defend us in a heartbeat from any enemy in this very dangerous world and may very well be called upon to do so?

I suggest that that member, Mr. Speaker, just for once that he hold our enemies up to the same scrutiny that he holds our friends.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stewart: — That member goes on to praise the federal government and this NDP government for their cowardly stand on this matter. And, Mr. Speaker, let me simply say that I have never been less proud to be a Canadian.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech is a blueprint for disaster and a road map to oblivion, and I will not support it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take it as a great privilege that I have opportunity to stand here in this House and represent Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, also that it is a rare privilege to have the opportunity to work with this government to help build what I see as a very successful and growing province.

Mr. Speaker, I've been representing the people of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley now since 1999. When I was elected, I told them that I wanted to come into government to try and make a difference, to try and help this province build even faster and better than what we had in the past.

I came in and joined a government where I saw people who

were committed to building a solid foundation, and that foundation we have continued to build on and we will see this province thrive and prosper for all the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — As a part of my constituency the town of Lumsden has been really a wonderful place to get to know people and to build relationship. And with the redesign of the boundaries, I will not be representing the town of Lumsden and some of the area around there any longer. And I will miss that relationship, Mr. Speaker. I've enjoyed working with those people, but I will also be happy to welcome the people of Normanview West who will be a new part of this constituency, and I look forward to serving them through many years ahead.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech was criticized for not being flashy, for not having a lot of new ideas in it. But, Mr. Speaker, what I see this is as a foundational document that talks about building on a solid past and building a tremendous future for the people of Saskatchewan.

We have seen the economic development in this country . . . or this province just grow at a tremendous rate, outstripping in terms of growth per GDP (gross domestic product) even the province next door that our opposition members, the Sask Party, love to talk about. We have led in terms of economic development on many occasions and, Mr. Speaker, I think we are positioned to lead again.

I want to talk about . . . a little bit of our nation and where our nation is going. I found an article from the *Montreal Gazette* called "How did we become the tiger of the North?" How exactly did Canada become the world's developed economy . . . leading developed economy? Was it sheer dumb luck? What did we do right on the way to becoming number one?

Such questions arise as the northern tiger continues its remarkable performance. After Friday's employment report, 55,000 new jobs were added in February. We're the only — get this, Mr. Speaker — the only major economy in the world that's growing. We're running, as a nation, budget surpluses and we're pumping money into social programs while everybody else is in deficit and cutting back.

Now the *National Post*, which is not quite as extreme as many of the members opposite and the taxpayers' federation and some of the other right-wing bodies around, the *National Post* has spent the last few years lecturing our federal government on the urgent need to cut spending, to lower taxes, and so improve productivity. Well I'm not sure the federal government listened and yet we are the tiger of the North. I'll quote again, we're the only major economy in the world that's growing.

Now we've been getting a lot of advice from the Sask Party, from the Saskatchewan taxpayers' federation, from the Fraser Institute, from all kinds of institutions that tell us we should be doing that same thing — cutting programs, that we should be cutting taxes even more, and it's that way that we're going to grow the economy.

Well let's take a look. Regina *Leader-Post*, and I quote from Bruce Johnstone's article, the *Leader-Post*:

Saskatchewan's economy will post 2.6-per-cent growth in 2003 — slightly ahead of the national average of 2.5 per cent thanks to rising oil and gas revenues.

(15:00)

And, Mr. Speaker, that is thanks to the foundational work that has been done by this government in setting the royalty rates for exploration that call people into the province to do even more work to help build this economy so that all the people of this province will prosper.

That's what this government is about. It's that foundational work that will help build this province, and it will be on a solid base, Mr. Speaker. It will not be a house built upon sand that we would get from those people opposite. It will be a house built on a solid foundation for all the people of this province.

Part of that foundation, I will say, is seen in the work that has been done in industry and resources. Let's see what's happened in the last while. We have had good, strong, sustained growth in oil and natural gas with record land sales and gas wells drilled. Natural gas production increased 4.6 per cent and drilling for oil and gas has increased by 188 wells. There has been an increase in this sector by 68 per cent.

An Hon. Member: — How much?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Sixty-eight per cent. Manufacturing shipments up 9.6 per cent — \$563.2 million. Business incorporations up 16.7 per cent — \$462 million. Home construction up 32.3 per cent in urban centres and one point — get this — 1.3 per cent in rural centres.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Building permits are up by 44 per cent — \$62.4 million. Retail sales increased 5.3 per cent — \$909 million. New car sales, 5.7 per cent. We have one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada. And social assistance caseloads continue to drop, continue to drop to the lowest levels in almost a decade.

Mr. Speaker, this is incredible growth. This is a province that is on the move, a province that will prosper.

Now let's listen to what we get from the Sask Party. We get an empty slogan about growth. We get them talking about how they're going to grow this province. They have to get in power, they say, so that they can restart the economy.

Well, Mr. Speaker, restart the economy? That means that somebody's got to stop it — and we're not stopping it so it must be them. If it's got to be restarted, it's because they'll stop it.

We are building this economy. We are growing this province. We have a plan. That plan is outlined in our Throne Speech and it is working for the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — There is optimism in this province and there is a momentum that we have not seen for decades. It

doesn't matter what that former Finance minister says in her book. The planning that has gone on is solid, foundational planning that will continue to grow this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have tremendous opportunity in this province because we've got a way of seeing and thinking that is positive and hopeful. We used to be blocked by kind of a scarcity mentality.

The chamber of commerce in this province identified how terrible the attitude problem was, and we see that negative attitude every day from the members across the way. Negative, doom and gloom — this will not grow the province. The chamber has made clear it will not grow the province. They understand that.

And the last two years that we have met with them, Mr. Speaker, it has felt like a partnership. We are working together. We are growing and building this province successfully.

Mr. Speaker, the people are seeing jobs here. They are moving back. We've got people coming in from Alberta, taking up the farm land in this province, and they are building and developing. As we see more continued growth, as I referred to earlier, we will see more and more and more people coming back for jobs.

This Future is Wide Open program that is being talked about, not just in Canada but around the world, people are picking this up. They're understanding what the possibilities are in this province. Mr. Speaker, this is a destination for people who want to work and who want to prosper. They will come here. This province is growing and will continue to grow because of the solid planning this government has done for the last decade.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — We will continue to see employment grow. Job growth means increasing population.

No hollow slogan from this party. The NDP is committed to a plan that will make things happen, Mr. Speaker. This is no hollow slogan like we get from the people over there. This is about making a province prosper for everyone.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have also had a tremendous privilege to be a part of building the infrastructure for this economy. I am thankful for the opportunity that I have had to follow behind our past ministers of Highways and Transportation to help build this infrastructure.

We have a Highways department that is second to none — people committed to making sure that we build the highways and the roadways that will help this province prosper. We have area transportation planning committees that have been set up around this province. Volunteers, people who love this province, who want to see it prosper, who come from all areas of the province, rural and urban, who are working together with us to identify the main economic corridors. Once those corridors are identified, once the priorities are set, then we work together to find out where we will build.

And we build those highways, we repair them, and we're taking

the best of our technology, the best that this Department of Highways can offer. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, they offer tremendous good work. The work that they are doing and the resources that this government has provided over the last three years has enabled us to move ahead like we have never moved ahead before. And I am counting on that work continuing.

We have seen developments in short-line rail. We have seen developments in twinning. We have seen a Prairie Grain Roads Program that has managed, with the help of people from SARM and SUMA, to identify those prairie grain roads that need to be built.

Mr. Speaker, this is a province on the go. This is a province that is prospering for all people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — And I am happy that this department is laying that foundation to help build the infrastructure.

We have worked hard for these last few years to make sure that we are not working alone. We also work with the provinces of Manitoba and Alberta and British Columbia. We speak together with one voice on major transportation issues and we have been able to move the federal government in its programming. We were able to get substantial funding for twinning and we are looking beyond these temporary programs. As a body, the council of western ministers is clearly pushing to make sure that we will have a federally funded national highways program like every other one of the G-8 countries.

It's about time. The Prime Minister made it clear when he was here the other day that he recognizes that with their surplus it's time that more money was put into highways and transportation. We will continue to build better, safer highways. Why? Because, Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has been dreaming big, planning well, and working hard, and we're building a future for all the people of this province. And I'm thankful to be a part of it.

Thank you very much. I am in favour of this Throne Speech.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is again an honour for me to rise in this Assembly and respond to the Throne Speech on behalf of the people of the constituency of Estevan.

But there are a couple of things I would like to mention first, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to congratulate the two newly elected members, the member from Battleford-Cut Knife and the member from Saskatoon Fairview. And as they know, they are making a contribution to this province in a way that very few people get to do and I think that they will or probably have already realized that it is an honour, but it's also a very humbling experience. So congratulations to both of those.

And, Mr. Speaker, as well I would just like to say a few things about what is happening over in Iraq. And just to say that our constant thoughts and prayers are with those serving in Iraq and no one does like war. And 9/11 left an indelible mark on all our

lives and there were more lives lost in the terrorist attack of that day than there were in 1991 in Desert Storm.

And, Mr. Speaker, when the member from Kindersley mentioned Auschwitz in his speech the other day, it reminded me of a friend of mine who had visited there a couple of years ago. And her friend . . . pardon me, her son teaches school over there. And they went to Auschwitz and some of the things she saw and related to me were just grim reminders of what had taken place there. And the mood there is still a very sombre mood. And she expressed to me how we should all just be grateful that we live in a land of freedom.

And, Mr. Speaker, I live about 25 miles from the US border and I'm very proud to have the United States of America as my neighbour. And they are always the first country to come to the aid of anyone in need.

And through you, Mr. Speaker, I ask the members over there, if you don't support George Bush and the United States in this matter, who do you support?

So in closing, Mr. Speaker, I just like to say God bless Canada, God bless the United States, and God bless the troops serving over there.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech was empty, simply devoid of any vision. We have a tired, old government with 1933 mentality.

The government recently shuffled its cabinet and, Mr. Speaker, usually when you shuffle a deck, you keep the aces and you throw out the jokers but guess what? Mr. Speaker, in this cabinet, the cabinet of this unelected Premier, the aces are missing and they've kept all the jokers.

Mr. Speaker, the people in my constituency are very fed up with this government — from the ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan) fiasco to SPUDCO. Huge cost overruns at ISC have made it comparable to the federal Liberals' gun registration. SPUDCO has cost the taxpayers of this province at least \$28 million and the list goes on.

This is a very arrogant government with a total lack of respect for rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, when the member from Regina Wascana Plains was responding to the Throne Speech, she was talking about health care and she said, I quote:

So we know that people who need services get them.

And I think perhaps she should have added, eventually.

Mr. Speaker, I have a constituent who has been waiting 42 months for a knee replacement and has written the minister, has not had a response from the minister. And I'm telling you, a comment like that is a slap in the face of this person and any person in this province who is on a long waiting list — the longest in the country.

This same member said, and again I quote:

We've recently reduced the PST to 6 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, who raised it to 9 per cent in the first place? It was this government.

And this member went on to say also that there had been no particular questions about highways. I say, please don't interpret that as satisfaction in the rural areas. Perhaps it is indicative of the quality of answers we get from this arrogant government and that minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — I wish the Minister of Highways would tour my constituency. I'd be happy to escort him out there, although I do insist we take his vehicle because I refuse to put mine over those roads any more than I have to.

And there's just a few, Mr. Speaker, that I have had comments on recently, and one in particular I've had a lot of calls on and a petition is circulating regarding the condition of Highway 47 South. The people are fearful when their children are on those school buses travelling this stretch of highway.

Other concerns, Mr. Speaker, Highway 13 south of Oungre, Highway 39 to North Portal — and these are both . . . or all three of these are links to the United States; Highway 18 west to Lake Alma, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Highways' response when I asked him about Highway 47 South was, well, there's mining being done in that area and perhaps when they're done mining, you know, maybe we'll have a look at it and we might be able to do something.

And, Mr. Speaker, I remember last fall when I attended a CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) meeting here in this building, and the member from Regina Victoria was also in attendance at that meeting. And we were discussing the upcoming CPA convention that Regina is going to be hosting in 2005. And the member from Regina Victoria expressed concern that there was no signage at the international border crossing at the North Portal entrance into this country to indicate that you are entering Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, everyone knows when they are entering Saskatchewan. They don't need signage. All they have to do is take notice of the condition of that highway . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and the windshields, that's right.

Mr. Speaker, the other day I was looking at a copy of the *Regina Manifesto*, the CCF plan dated July 1933, reproduced by this Saskatchewan NDP government in February 2001 and actually on their Web site. What a scary document stating they will not rest content until capitalism is eradicated from this province.

(15:15)

One example of this was the NDP land bank. And, Mr. Speaker, I just thank goodness that they were thrown out of office before this dream came through. Surely, Mr. Speaker, these people can't believe that socialism works. Every other jurisdiction is

tearing down the barriers, but lo and behold, this NDP government barricades every opportunity, working at putting their little blocks of socialism back in place.

This is a government that accepts no responsibility whether we are talking about SPUDCO or Dutch Lerat. Mr. Speaker, what do you have to do over there to get fired? All they do is point fingers. No one accepts responsibility.

SPUDCO cost the taxpayers of this province \$28 million; Dutch Lerat misspent over \$800,000 of taxpayers' money, money that should have been spent to better the lives of First Nations people — \$800,000. Mr. Speaker, that is not small potatoes to the people of this province, the taxpayers of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — I don't know how the NDP classified this amount but they claim a \$28 million loss in SPUDCO was a roaring success.

Mr. Speaker, this government claims to support agriculture and rural revitalization. I beg to differ. For the last decade or more, this NDP government has shown no vision for the agriculture industry in Saskatchewan and has given up this province's traditional leadership role in the development of national agricultural strategies and policies. Because of this, the federal Liberals has had opportunities to make decisions to counter our interest, with little or no resistance from this NDP government.

Agriculture is a very important industry in this province and should not be used as an excuse for this government's poor economic record.

Mr. Speaker, this government, this NDP government, is taking leased land from ranchers. They are hiking crop insurance premiums to the tune of 52 per cent. Is that supporting the agricultural industry? No, it is not. This party of land banks . . . Eradicate capitalism, that's their plan.

Well their plan does not fit well with my constituency or the other constituencies that we represent on this side of the House. And if the unelected Premier ever musters the courage to call an election, we will have many more members as we form government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has driven people off the farms. They've created such roadblocks that people in small town Saskatchewan cannot make a living.

And just two or three weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Rosetown-Biggart, was in my constituency and we toured the Boundary dam power station, the Shand power station, and Luscar mines.

We had the opportunity to ride on a dragline which was absolutely thrilling. This is a huge piece of machinery with a 100-yard bucket. And to put that in perspective, Mr. Speaker, the operator of this dragline said it would take him three minutes to dig a basement.

When the member from Rosetown-Biggart questioned as to what the cost of this machine was, the answer was between 70 to \$90 million. Mr. Speaker, that company is paying point six per cent corporate capital tax on that machine and they have more than one dragline plus millions and millions of dollars in other equipment.

But the corporate capital tax, Mr. Speaker, on that one piece of machinery each year is at least \$420,000 — \$420,000 a year, Mr. Speaker. And this is a serious disadvantage in attracting new investment, business activity, and jobs to this province. And a Saskatchewan Party government will address this problem by cutting this corporate capital tax to point three per cent in the first term.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Mr. Speaker, I would like at this time, if I may, I would just like to thank those responsible, the management and staff at the Boundary dam power station, the Shand power station, and Luscar mines for being gracious hosts when we did visit them. They were most accommodating.

Mr. Speaker, this government that speaks of democracy should be reminded of their record in the 1999 nomination in the riding of Saskatoon Meewasin. The June 8, '99 edition of the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* says, and I quote:

The party executive did not . . . to be in a position where it had to defend such a record and it's a safe bet that Premier Romanow would not have signed Sambasivan's nomination papers.

And I understand that there was another situation in the 1991 election, Mr. Speaker, so perhaps the members opposite should practise a little bit of what they preach.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party in 1999 received more votes than that NDP government, and it's the Liberals that are propping them up — the Liberals saved them from a near-death experience.

And, Mr. Speaker, when asked what he thought of the former Liberal leader joining with the NDP government, the present Liberal leader, David Karwacki said that at the time, it was probably the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, is it any wonder that the Liberals are in the shape they're in in this province?

Mr. Speaker, member after member over there gets up and brags about the number of people who have left the social assistance caseload. And I hope those numbers are down because of the right reasons and not because these people have become so fed up with this arrogant government that they've packed their bags and left the province as well.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour, when she gave her speech a few minutes ago, she made some comments on women's issues. And I would just like to remind her that the member from Watrous, the member from Kelvington-Wadena, as well as myself just today attended a noon luncheon at the Regina Inn and it was for the Regina Council of Women, Mr.

Speaker. And this group is celebrating their 108th birthday.

And, Mr. Speaker, neither the Minister of Labour nor any other MLA from the NDP government side was there so I hardly think that that minister is in a position to claim ownership on women's issues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the Throne Speech went on for 55 minutes, the content was very limited. And when I think of the NDP, I think of the words of Helen Keller and they are:

There's one thing worse than being blind — that is being able to see — but having no vision.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Eagles: — And with that, Mr. Speaker, I do not support the Throne Speech but I do, however, support the amendment. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to enter into the Throne Speech debate.

First of all, might I, like many of my colleagues, acknowledge the good work that you do, Mr. Speaker. I've certainly appreciated your interesting interventions at times over the last several sessions in the legislature. And as a former seatmate of mine, we miss you down here. But you do a great job, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to also take the opportunity while I'm on my feet to congratulate the mover from Cumberland and just take a moment, if I could, Mr. Speaker, to say how much I've appreciated the good work that he's done on behalf first of his constituency, but also on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

And might I say, from a personal perspective if I could, I've enjoyed getting to know the member from Cumberland over the years, and probably having a better opportunity than some of the others on my side of the legislature to spend time with him in the northern part of our province, and on many occasions travelled together to and from our respective constituencies. And I want to thank him personally for all of the good work he's done for all of us in Saskatchewan, but I think most particularly for First Nations and Métis people and northerners and really having brought their voice here to the Chamber.

So thank you very much to him and congratulations on the . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — I'd also of course like to congratulate the seconder of the Throne Speech, the member from Regina Wascana Plains, who also has represented her constituency very well over the years. And thank you for that good work as well.

And of course I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity

to congratulate and welcome the member from Saskatoon Fairview and also the new member from Battleford-Cut Knife. I know they both represent very different philosophical views but they best . . . the interests of their constituents I am sure are uppermost in their minds, and they'll do the very best job that they can. So congratulations to both of them.

If I could, I think it's appropriate as well, Mr. Speaker, on a daily basis, particularly those of us in cabinet but also MLAs were served very well by people who work behind the scenes. And I want to take this opportunity to thank Don and Fraser and Jennie and Jody and Kendra in my office here in the building. They put up with me with a lot of things, Mr. Speaker, provide me with a lot of information. And I think they often think I'm not able to absorb all of it and they're absolutely right.

But I want to thank them very much for the very helpful work that they do for me. And I think probably I don't appreciate it as much as I should.

And of course back in the constituency, I want to thank Susan and Adriane who have worked for me for years — and in fact particularly to Susan who has been my constituency assistant since 1991, who has been with me in my office from the day I was elected in October of 1991. So thank you very much to you, Susan.

And to my family who . . . I know several of the members in the legislature on both sides have acknowledged that the support that you receive from family is very, very important — very, very important. And often we wouldn't get through I think if we didn't have that support and commitment either here or back at home. And I want to thank my wife, Virginia, and my children, Mayson and Meika, who have been just a joy. And it's great to go home and to get away from the workday sometimes and just enjoy your family. So thank you very much to them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — And lastly in term of thank yous, I want to thank the people of the constituency of Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker, who have sent me to this legislature for three consecutive elections now, Mr. Speaker, and I am humbled by that. It is a great honour and privilege to represent the constituents of Meadow Lake. It is a great constituency and a wonderful bunch of people and I've certainly enjoyed representing them.

The area that I represent . . . I know that we all talk about how wonderful our constituencies are, Mr. Speaker, but I'm the one who's actually telling the truth about the constituency being the greatest in the province. Mr. Speaker, it is, it really is the greatest constituency.

It is hugely diverse. It is reflected, Mr. Speaker, in the many, many freshwater lakes that are there. It is reflected in the agricultural economy that's in that constituency. It's reflected in the tourism. It's reflected, Mr. Speaker, in the . . . through the First Nations and the Métis communities, Mr. Speaker. It's reflected in the forestry sector. We really do have a very, very diverse constituency.

And I want to acknowledge those communities, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, the First Nations of Joseph Bighead, Ministikwan, Onion Lake, Waterhen, Makwa Sahgaiechan, and of course Flying Dust. Communities like Goodsoil, St. Walburg, Loon Lake, Pierceland, Paradise Hill, and of course Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker. Dorintosh. All of those are great communities to represent.

And I want to take the opportunity, maybe before an election — we never know when the election might be called, Mr. Speaker, but maybe before the election — I want to thank those communities that I was able to represent who will no longer be in the constituency of Meadow Lake after the next election, those communities of Pierceland and of Paradise Hill and the First Nations of Ministikwan, Onion Lake, and Joseph Bighead. It's been an honour representing you.

And also I want to take the opportunity to say that I look forward to representing, for many, many years to come, Mr. Speaker, the communities of Leoville and Victoire and the First Nations of Thunderchild, of Witchekan and of Pelican Lake First Nations, Mr. Speaker. Certainly it is and will be exciting representing those new areas which will become part of the Meadow Lake constituency.

My constituency, Mr. Speaker, as I said, is made up of many First Nations. The Meadow Lake Tribal Council is a very exciting and dynamic organization in our community, Mr. Speaker. It represents five or nine . . . I should say, nine different First Nations that speak both Cree and Dene and, Mr. Speaker, they're one of the most economically successful tribal councils, in fact I daresay, in all of Canada.

(15:30)

They are one of . . . In fact a lot of people probably provincially don't know this but certainly in our community they know it, and I know at a not-too-long-ago chamber of commerce meeting that I was at, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council is in fact one of the largest employers of people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, in our entire community. And I want to thank them for their very progressive attitude and attitudes in working with First Nations and non-First Nations people, Mr. Speaker. They have really . . . they are a huge success story not only in our community but across Saskatchewan and across Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — I have referred to this several times but not so much as the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation, but in some of my previous portfolios when I've been in meetings, particularly in Ottawa or larger centres in Eastern Canada — but most particularly in Ottawa. The Meadow Lake Tribal Council, I've been surprised to learn, has been referred to often down there as a model for success back here in Saskatchewan and one that can be used across Canada. And again for that, I certainly congratulate them.

I would like to just congratulate as well my hometown, Goodsoil, Mr. Speaker, where by the way, my parents still reside out on the farm, John and Dorothy Sonntag, and they continue to be an inspiration to me and it is to them that I owe a huge debt of gratitude. My hometown recently . . . By the way it's a community that's growing as well, Mr. Speaker. Our

whole area in northwest Saskatchewan is I think very lucky to be one of the . . . a number of the communities continues to see both economic and population growth, Mr. Speaker, and that's very exciting for me.

In my hometown very recently through the Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program, we are in the process of building a brand new water treatment plant that will provide safe drinking water for the community of Goodsoil for years to come, and I suspect will probably create an environment for growth in that community for many years to come.

I'd also like to, and if I could, thank the former minister of Learning and the current Minister of Finance, who was very instrumental and involved in what I am about to say. I'd like to acknowledge his participation in the announcement around the new North West Regional College. And I should say that I should, while I'm on my feet, also acknowledge the former minister of Learning before that as well, the minister from Moose Jaw . . . Wakamow? No, Moose Jaw North. So the minister from Moose Jaw North, he was . . . he also worked very hard on this and thank you very much to him.

We're about to build a brand new regional college in Meadow Lake which will be attached to the current joint use facility which again I say has been a huge success. It is a high school that is attached to what was the old SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) building where the Flying Dust First Nation actually participated in building a model and a school that is, I am told, the first of its kind in Canada— where there was actually funds through Indian Affairs that were directed off-reserve for the construction of a brand new facility; where there is a council created where representatives from the Flying Dust First Nation actually are involved in determining with the board of directors, with the school board of directors, some of the programming through the school. And it's just a wonderful model and great co-operation between our communities.

So to the former ministers of Learning and to the current Minister of Learning, who I suspect will be there for the grand opening, Mr. Speaker, sometime after the provincial election I suspect — although we don't know that for sure because they're constructing it very quickly, Mr. Speaker — I want to thank all of them and it's just a . . . it's just a wonderful thing to see that coming up in our community.

The title of the Throne Speech, "A Vision. A Plan. A Future Wide Open," Mr. Speaker, I think is very appropriate, Mr. Speaker. And the people of Meadow Lake have certainly seen that future already and they certainly continue to experience and will experience that wide open future into the future, Mr. Speaker, when they continue to re-elect New Democrat governments.

Mr. Speaker, I want to refer if I could — this might seem a bit strange — but I want to refer to the guiding principle, number one of the Sask Party *Resolutions Handbook*. I found it on page 5, Mr. Speaker, and I quote. It says that:

Economic growth and job creation through the private sector, not government, as the engine of the economy;

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think my constituents are reasonable and pragmatic people, Mr. Speaker. And while they certainly acknowledge the huge contribution that the private sector makes to the economy, Mr. Speaker, they also are pragmatic enough to know that what really makes our economy work, Mr. Speaker, is partnerships — partnerships between the public sector and the private sector, Mr. Speaker.

The partnership, Mr. Speaker, that my constituents recognize certainly is a partnership that . . . One of the most recent ones that I can reference is the partnership between Crown Investments Corporation, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, the Northwest Community Wood Products, and Tolko Industries out of BC (British Columbia).

That partnership, Mr. Speaker, once it's up and running — and by the way most of the construction is done already — will employ 260 people directly, Mr. Speaker. It has employed huge numbers of people right now already in the construction of that. It has employed huge numbers of local contractors. It has employed huge numbers of Saskatchewan contractors, Mr. Speaker.

But if the Sask Party had their way, Mr. Speaker, that would not exist in my community. As unbelievable as it can be, the Leader of the Sask Party was in my riding about a month ago saying how he detested the notion that Crown Investments Corporation or the government would partner with the private sector. In my community, Mr. Speaker, he would say that.

Well needless to say, after he left, Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of people that had a good laugh about that because they know about all of the great jobs that have been created through partnerships. And they know, Mr. Speaker, they know how success is built in communities — it's working together, Mr. Speaker, with the public and private sector.

In addition to that, certainly the Sask Party is opposed to partnerships like the ones we've just recently announced with the Government of Saskatchewan and the Flying Dust First Nation where we built a brand new, big provincial building, Mr. Speaker.

The building was constructed with mostly local contractors. I understand there was a few from out of town but mostly local contractors. There was a requirement that — because Flying Dust First Nation owns the building — there was a requirement that they would have, as I understand it, a minimum of 25 per cent Aboriginal people employed. In fact, I'm advised that they had . . . over 50 per cent of the construction workers were First Nations or Métis people. And this was not by design. This was simply because the contractors hired the best employees around, and they are great employees, Mr. Speaker. They've done an amazing job.

And I was privileged to have the Premier there, along with the chief of the Flying Dust First Nation, Chief Rico Merasty and the chief, the grand chief of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Chief Richard Gladue present for that opening.

In addition to that, we had several of the elders. And I regret to say one of the elders who was there, Elder Ben Lachance just — who has been so instrumental in encouraging economic

development within First Nations and within our communities — who just passed away yesterday unfortunately. And myself and the Minister of Environment will be attending his funeral on Saturday. But we will miss him terribly in our community. And it was just great that he could be there to see that opening that day.

Certainly if the Sask Party is opposed to partnerships, they would be opposed to the partnership that we've created between ourselves and the town of Meadow Lake where we opened up eight new affordable housing units that give local people all kinds of opportunities. Apparently that should have been built by the private sector, but I know the people who are living in those affordable housing units are very appreciative of the partnership that now exists and will continue to exist for years to come, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, and this one is really ironic you know, the Sask Party would be opposed to the partnership that created the Millar Western Pulp mill up in my riding, Mr. Speaker, that employs on a permanent basis, right directly, 200 local people. That partnership was created through Crown Investments Corporation and their government before. Certainly the financial arrangements were made . . . probably leave some question about the way it should have been constructed, but in terms of partnerships it's a bit ironic that they would be opposed to that at the same time as of the . . . when they were government that they actually created that partnership.

So to them I say, thank you for creating that partnership; it's been wonderful in my riding. But again, a bit strange when the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party runs around my constituency criticizing the fact that partnerships would exist between the Crown Investments Corporation and the private sector because that's exactly the partnership that they created in my own community.

You know, Mr. Speaker, if I could just refer back to the principle number one again, if you could just believe them on the notion that this should be done all by the private sector, Mr. Speaker. You know, the problem is they talk the line but the record on this principle is anything but.

Their record, that of the Sask Party and the Devine Conservatives and the Conservatives period — same thing, Mr. Speaker — their record says that they intervene in the economy to a greater degree than any governments have ever done before. They rack up deficits, Mr. Speaker, largely to fund lots of those interventions in the economy, Mr. Speaker. It's quite amazing that this same party would now adopt as a principle a notion that they should not intervene in the economy and it should be left entirely to the private sector. It's a bit ironic that they would say that, Mr. Speaker.

In fact as I pointed out, the people in my constituency would not agree with that and certainly have been appreciative that they've not held to that principle in the past and they're certainly appreciative that our government is prepared to partner with the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, we look across the floor and we see a group of people with a dream of economic growth, they say, and of job creation through the private sector. But as I said, we haven't

heard a single word that talks about a sustainable plan, Mr. Speaker, that would be able to afford any of the promises that they make. Certainly they talk about slogans that would say that everything should be left to the private sector and free enterprise and the government should just get out of the way. But, Mr. Speaker, the truth is they really don't have any sort of a plan.

Yesterday the member from Swift Current said that, first and foremost, their goal is to grow the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that isn't a plan, just saying that you're going to grow. That's just a slogan. I mean, it's a good slogan. I agree with it. It's a great slogan, but it sure is not a plan, Mr. Speaker.

The point is, Mr. Speaker, that the constituents of Meadow Lake know that partnerships and investments by the province, and investments by the province and certainly partnerships with our community is exactly what they appreciate.

Mr. Speaker, I want to very quickly, if I could, I want to very quickly if I could make several references to things that I'm very excited about with respect to the Throne Speech. In the Throne Speech one of the initiatives as minister responsible that I'm just really excited about is the ninefold increase in wind power generation over the next three years. You know, this is so popular across the province.

Everywhere I go people say thank you to our government for, first of all, through SaskPower, building this but in addition to that, the partnership — by the way, partnership, I say — that we've entered into with the construction of the first windmills in southwestern Saskatchewan. It is, is and will be, hugely exciting for our province into the future.

So for that initiative and many, many of the initiatives in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, I say I will absolutely be supporting this Throne Speech. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be back here in the Legislative Assembly again representing my constituency of Shellbrook-Spiritwood.

I first of all want to take the opportunity to welcome to the Legislative Assembly the member from Battleford-Cut Knife. I also want to take the opportunity to welcome the member from Saskatoon Fairview to this Assembly.

The member from Cut Knife, as I understand, was the mayor of the town of Wilkie as I was the mayor of the town of Spiritwood. So the mayor from Wilkie and now the MLA will bring a great deal of intellect and knowledge to our party and to this Assembly.

The member from Saskatoon Fairhaven who I knew — Fairview, pardon me, Fairview — I understand that he grew up in the Whitkow area which is now and possibly will be in the new constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook which I hope that I will be the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for that area.

(15:45)

But I just want to say to the member from Saskatoon Fairview that the . . . I know a lot of people from the Whitkow area, a lot of the Iwanchuks that he is associated and familiar with, as far as family. There's good people from that area; they're all Ukrainians. And my wife is Ukrainian, and man, can they cook.

In regards to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, when I first heard the Throne Speech I thought why is the Lieutenant Governor actually reading it? I thought the Throne Speech was supposed to give some direction, some vision, some hope for this province. And what was in there, Mr. Speaker? Very little. In fact so little that the Premier didn't even like it.

I thought this Throne Speech would enhance what the government of the day, the NDP, would do in the future for this province. But it was lacking in every which way, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that the paper that it was written on, which probably came from Prince Albert where you are part of, I'm sure they themselves would be disappointed that that paper actually was a Throne Speech where there was nothing in it. It was a waste of the paper that they actually made.

Mr. Speaker, in regards to agriculture, my constituency is probably two-thirds agriculture, one-third forestry.

Now with the boundary constituency changes that are coming about, I would have to say that the top third of my constituency, which is areas like Big River, Debden, Canwood, they will not be part of the new constituency that I hope to represent. And it's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because the . . . my critic area of forestry entails that area. But it's not very far from my hometown of Spiritwood and I definitely will be going up there to keep the people up there in touch, as I have been throughout the last three and a half years.

The biggest part of my constituency which is agriculture, and now the new boundary changes have put in the southern part of my constituency places like Whitkow, Hafford, Redberry, Blaine Lake, and all those areas right up to Rosthern — and those areas are all strictly agriculture.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if we go back to last year, the worst drought in history was through that area. The farmers in that area were dismayed; they didn't know which way to turn. There was no government or little government help in regards to agriculture. They felt like how the North feels when it comes to government, as being left out.

The farmers in that area suffered from the lack of rain and moisture, and again this year, Mr. Speaker, with no snow, they're going to have the same problems they did last year. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the areas that I'm talking about this year with no snow will again have no water for their dugouts, they will have no water for their cattle operations, they will have no water for their cattle operations, Mr. Speaker. So how are they going to keep going?

In talking to many of the elders — the older farmers in that area — they have told me that last year, last year . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the lights have

dimmed quite a bit and I'm just wondering, did the NDP pay the power bill?

Mr. Speaker, the drought caused serious consequences to the people of that area.

And furthermore the problems that we have in that area, we now have a problem with the Crown land leases. Now we've talked about this a few times, in fact my colleague, the member from Cypress Hills, has been asking questions regarding Crown land leases. The member from Humboldt has also asked questions, and I cannot believe the direction this government is taking on Crown land leases.

Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech it says they're going to look after the farmers a better way. Well how can they relate to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, in regards to agriculture when they turn around and do this to the farmers?

You know something, Mr. Speaker, my deputy critic position is Aboriginal Affairs. The member from Humboldt's critic position is Aboriginal Affairs. And this has bothered me for some time, Mr. Speaker.

You know, back in the late 1800s they talked about treaties. We, on this side, have said the treaties need to be honoured, and I can guarantee that members on the opposite side agree with me.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there was a treaty known as the Crow rate. That was to the farmers, a treaty. Where is it today?

Mr. Speaker, also when we're dealing with farm land Crown leases, farm land Crown leases, Mr. Speaker, which dates back to the early 1900s because my dad signed a 100-year lease which he's still operating on. Was that not a treaty? I say to the Minister of Agriculture: is that not similar to a treaty that was signed in the late 1800s? You bet it was.

The farmers of my constituency and farmers all over the province feel that they have a treaty when it comes to Crown land leases. And this government is taking that privilege away, them treaty . . . that farm land leases as a treaty to the farmer. They have been paying taxes for years and years and years and years as a stewardship people of that land.

And, Mr. Speaker, in my area right now the farmers don't know what to do because, first and foremost, there is no rain to fill the dugouts for their cattle operations, and now by the government standing up and saying you may not even have your leases.

Tell me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what do you think the farmers are supposed to do? Is that how our present government, the NDP, feel about farmers? Is that what they say, we're going to help the farmers by taking away more? Because that's what they've done for years and years and years is take away more.

It's time to stop, Mr. Speaker. Our farmers are value-added people to this province. They create jobs. But they're not going to create jobs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if they haven't got the land to operate their business on.

Mr. Speaker, or Deputy Speaker, pardon me, I would like to

read into the record two letters. One from the RM (rural municipality) of Medstead. And this lady writes as an administrator just to tell the people exactly how that area feels about farm land leases and what the government should do. And I quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

The R.M. of Medstead No. 497 is writing to you to express their concerns over the recent letter we received from the Saskatchewan Landowners/Lessee Rights Group stating that the government is reviewing and possibly changing the existing lease policy on crown land.

We, too, have a number of crown land quarters in this R.M. and our . . . (taxpayers) rely on this leased land to sustain their existing livestock herds. Without this leased land some of . . . (our new) farmers we have left will have no choice but to leave the area and find other means of supporting themselves. (In other words move possibly to Alberta.) This will just be another reason for people to leave the province.

Some things in this province should remain the same, one thing being the existing lease holder having the first right of refusal and first right to purchase crown land when the opportunity arises. Who else is going to keep this province viable . . . (if the existing taxpayer is not?)

We trust your government will make a decision that will be fair to everyone involved and not . . . focus on third party interests.

The second letter, Mr. Deputy . . . or, Mr. Speaker, pardon me, is from an individual from the Leoville area. Now this individual is in an area where it is surrounded by a lot of leased land. And he's very, very concerned that where the government is going with this. And I would like to read this letter also, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

Dear Premier Calvert:

Some points to consider with regards to these Provincial Agriculture crown land leases.

The early settlers came in and opened up the agricultural lands. The provincial crown lands were offered as grazing . . . (leases) for livestock to help farmers and ranchers maintain their herds. These lands were developed with fences, trails, dugouts in some cases for water management. This was done with extraordinary time, labor, and money investment.

It is only fair that intergenerational transfers of developed leases be honored.

If there are further TLE claims, they can take undeveloped crown lands. If outfitters or other interested parties want crown land, they too can be directed to . . . (develop) crown land areas.

It is totally unfair (Mr. Speaker) that the right of first refusal would not be honored or offered to original lessees. Their work and management on the leases has been a vital part of their livestock operations and a major part in wealth

creation of this province.

The transfer of leases to sons and daughters is vital to keeping them here in Saskatchewan and to maintain what has been built up . . . (for) so many years.

It is of (the) utmost importance that we encourage rural population to . . . (maintain the) support the current tax base and further the development of agricultural economic enterprises (in this province).

We ask your consideration in this matter for maintaining Saskatchewan's future.

Mr. Speaker, both those letters are concerned letters. And that is why these people are concerned with the operations that we have in this province and where the Minister of Ag is taking them. Because, Mr. Speaker, without Ag there is no small business. Without small business, the generation of new jobs, what is left as new money created for this province? We cannot rely, Mr. Speaker, on taxes and taxes and taxes because taxes are hurting this province, especially when we live right next door to Alberta who do not have a provincial PST (provincial sales tax) tax.

The people that live alongside the Alberta side . . . And I know and feel for the member for Swift Current, my colleague, who says we have to do something with the PST. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, I come from the town of Spiritwood and it's unbelievable the amount of people that travel on weekends to Alberta to do their shopping. Why? Because of the PST. We have to change our tax policies. We have to if we want this province to exist.

Our party, Mr. Speaker, is doing that. First and foremost we have a grow Saskatchewan . . . we're going to grow the Saskatchewan by 100,000 people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allchurch: — That will bring more taxpayers to the province and keep the ones we have in this province. We need them to stay here in the province and that is why my leader is so prominent on the fact that we're going to grow this province.

You know something, Mr. Speaker. I've always maintained that government should be in government and run it like a business but stay the heck out of business. And that's what we need in this province. We don't need the government running the province; we need private enterprise to run this province.

And our party, and our party will ensure that private enterprise is a driving wheel of this province and that's what we need.

Mr. Speaker, the third point I want to bring up is regarding my forestry critic area. And we know that the softwood lumber issue in this province and in this country of Canada hurts the forestry industry and it is not going to go away until the Americans resolve that problem. All I can say to the minister responsible for this is, I hope he's on the case of the federal government to bring a conclusion to this problem because there are many jobs and lives and families in this area that rely on the

forestry industry — especially in my constituency as it speaks now — that need those jobs. The softwood lumber industry has to be dealt with and solved, the sooner the better.

Mr. Speaker, again in regarding the Throne Speech, there was virtually nothing in it. I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, that the budget speech coming out tomorrow will have more meat and potatoes in it than what was delivered here last week on Monday, because the people of this province, the people of Saskatchewan, need to know where this government is headed.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(16:00)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I, as always, am grateful for the opportunity to participate in the debate in this legislature. It is a high honour and privilege that is afforded to we who enjoy the confidence of our constituents and have the ability to speak in this most democratic of institutions.

I want to, because I've not had a chance in this Throne Speech debate, Mr. Speaker, to do a few things initially. I want to first of all extend, through the debate in the Chamber, our thanks and congratulations to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor for her presentation of the Throne Speech in this Chamber.

I want to extend my own very personal thanks and congratulations to the two members of government who moved and seconded the Throne Speech — one, our friend and long-serving member from Cumberland, the hon. member from Cumberland, the first, Mr. Speaker, the first Aboriginal person in the province of Saskatchewan to occupy an office in the Executive Council, to serve as a minister of the Crown.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, while the member from Cumberland has made a decision not to seek re-election, we know that he will continue to serve the people of Saskatchewan, to contribute to the life of this great province through his own work, very much focused around education. So I want to thank very publicly today in the Chamber, the Hon. Keith . . . sorry, check that, Mr. Speaker; the member from Cumberland who has contributed so greatly to the province of Saskatchewan through his elected work.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And equally, Mr. Speaker, I want to extend thanks to the member from Regina Wascana who seconded the Speech from the Throne in a fashion that said, in my view, what needed to be said about the future of this great province and the commitments and the hope and the optimism that is contained in this Throne Speech.

And, Mr. Speaker, I do want to this day very, very publicly thank the member from Regina Wascana for the tremendous leadership that she has shown in the voluntary sector initiative in bringing forward a policy — a plan that you'll be hearing much more about, Mr. Speaker, in the days and weeks to come

— to celebrate and to strengthen the tremendous voluntary sector which is Saskatchewan. You'll know, Mr. Speaker, we have per capita more volunteers than any other province in Canada. That is a tremendous strength of our province and the member from Regina Wascana has brought us a report that talks in consultation with the community, that gives us a clear path forward, and as I say, you will be hearing more about that in the days and weeks to come. And I want to thank the Regina . . . the member from Regina Wascana for her work in that regard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Then, Mr. Speaker, I do want to take a moment also to welcome the two new members of the legislature, the new member from Battleford-Cut Knife and the new member from Saskatoon Fairview. I wish them both very well in this, their first session. They have both, if I may say, appointed themselves very well in the early days of this session. It is my prediction, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Fairview will have a long, long career in provincial politics.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And it is my prediction, it is my prediction, knowing the good folks of Wilkie, that the new member from Battleford-Cut Knife will have a long, long career in municipal politics.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — My congratulations to both for, I think, well-thought campaigns in the by-elections, and deserving wins.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, before I move more directly to the Throne Speech I want to, as most members have an opportunity to do in the Throne Speech debate, and that is to thank the constituents of Saskatoon Riversdale for the privilege they afford me to sit in this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I tell you this. In my experience of this great province of Saskatchewan — and I have opportunity to see every corner of this great province — in my experience of the province of Saskatchewan and all of our constituencies' members, I believe that the constituency of Saskatoon Riversdale is the most culturally diverse, culturally rich constituency in the province of Saskatchewan. That's my view, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And I say this. This tremendous future that lies before the province of Saskatchewan, this future which is wide open, is a wide open future for the constituency of Saskatoon Riversdale. Why is that, Mr. Speaker? Because the constituents of Saskatoon Riversdale, the people of Saskatoon Riversdale — indeed the people of the entire west side of Saskatoon — are a people who are seizing their own future. If we have challenges, we have answers in the community, Mr. Speaker. And I can see that wide open future.

I see a new school in Montgomery. I see a new elementary school being built in Montgomery.

I see the new White Buffalo youth centre on 20th Street. I see the tremendous work that's going on with Aboriginal young people, particularly in the White Buffalo youth centre. I see the art project, the mural that now adorns the White Buffalo youth centre.

I see the Little Chief fire station . . . the police station, the old garage now converted to a community police station serving the needs of our community.

I see the Arbor Green Development in Riversdale, the Arbor Green housing seniors in Riversdale, making long-term retirement homes in my constituency.

I see, Mr. Speaker, on a weekly basis, the work of the Riversdale BID (Business Improvement Development), the small business community.

I see the work of the Enterprise Zone that has been established in Saskatoon Riversdale.

I see the cultural festivities that are springing up: the Dragon Boat Races, the Victoria Park Festival.

I see the new infrastructure that the province has teamed with the city of Saskatoon and the federal government in managing traffic on the west side of Saskatoon.

And what I see is a future that is wide open for the constituency of Saskatoon Riversdale.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, to turn my attention to the Throne Speech, a speech that, the vote which will come later this afternoon, I will be exceptionally proud to stand and support, Mr. Speaker. A speech that is based on vision, Mr. Speaker. A speech that is based on vision.

Now later in my remarks I will be making some comparisons between this speech and this vision with what we're hearing from Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition these days.

But I want to start, Mr. Speaker, by talking about the vision — the vision of this government, the vision that is laid out in the Throne Speech, the vision which, Mr. Speaker, I believe is a vision shared by the vast majority of Saskatchewan people. This vision, Mr. Speaker, to quote directly from Her Honour's text in the Throne Speech:

(This) vision is (of) a province of opportunity, where the future is wide open to those prepared to dream big, plan well and work hard.

It is a vision (reads the Throne Speech) of an expanding economy from which no one is excluded.

“. . . an expanding economy from which no one is excluded.” Mr. Speaker, in this Throne Speech, we make that statement with great confidence in the future of the Saskatchewan economy — confidence that is based not in empty rhetoric, not in empty promises or slogans, but confidence that is based in the realities of today.

And I want to speak a bit about the realities of the day, realities that have come about in the last two years. We have gone, Mr. Speaker, from a situation where we were losing jobs in this province as if jobs were going out of style. We have reversed that, Mr. Speaker. We have reversed that so in the last five or six months we have led job creation in all of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — A situation — a situation, Mr. Speaker — where there are now 10,000 more people at work than there were a year ago in our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — A situation, Mr. Speaker, where we have seen in recent months an 80 per cent increase in oil and gas drilling in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, a situation where it was recorded just yesterday in the daily papers of Saskatchewan that venture capital investment in Saskatchewan led all of Western Canada last year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Industry and Resources stood in this House yesterday and said, this is a province on a roll, he was absolutely correct. This is a province on a roll. And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell members opposite, I want to tell members of the public, this is a province on a roll but we have only just begun — only just begun.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you why this is a province on a roll and why this is a province with a future wide open — because here in Saskatchewan we understand what builds success in our province. And if I may say, there is one political movement, one party, and one government that understands this secret of success in Saskatchewan.

The secret of success in Saskatchewan in an expanding economy is an economy that is the mix — the mix of a healthy, strong private sector, private investment, new money, new investment coming in, new investment private coming from our own people in communities.

It's a mix that includes a strong public sector that believes in strong public services and strong public infrastructure. And if I may say, Mr. Speaker, a strong Crown enterprise sector to provide the basic utilities and needs of the Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And the true secret, Mr. Speaker, the true secret in Saskatchewan of an expanding economy — and, Mr. Speaker, I could document this from 1905 to present — is

the mix, the mix of the strong private investment and the strong public sector in partnership, Mr. Speaker. That's the mix that works in Saskatchewan. And it's working today.

But I want to say this, Mr. Speaker. Of all of the words contained in the Throne Speech — and I know, I counted them; there are several thousand — Mr. Speaker, of all the words in the Throne Speech, the words that stand out for me are these: when this government sets as its vision the following:

. . . an expanding economy from which no one is excluded.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Our vision, Mr. Speaker, our vision of a great Saskatchewan and an expanding and growing in a future wide open is a vision that will not exclude anyone — not exclude anyone.

And today, Mr. Speaker, as evidence of our commitment to opening this future to all — not just to some, not just to friends, but to all — was an event that I participated in this morning with the minister of community resources and employment, an event where today we made commitment to the largest single increase in child care spaces in Saskatchewan's history.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — An announcement which says, Mr. Speaker, we have resources made available to us through a growing and expanding economy, new income tax resources, new resource resources. Some of those resources, Mr. Speaker, are going to our children and our parents because that is investment in a wide open future.

And if I may say, Mr. Speaker, with a very particular thing in mind here, we want to ensure that our parents have the ability — have the ability — to access employment and access education. And we want to ensure that the youngest of our citizens have the opportunity for early childhood development and early childhood education because when we build strong children, we build strong adults and we build a wide open future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now just as an aside, Mr. Speaker, just as an aside, just as an aside, I have not heard one word, not one word from the party opposite about the support for child care, daycare, or for their parents — not a word. Not a word, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, Mr. Speaker — you will know this, members will know this, and many of our public will know this — in addition to the support that we're providing for those parents and children who will utilize child care, we are supporting all the families in Saskatchewan because no one's to be excluded here. We have crafted and now put into place the only, the only universal child tax credit in the nation of Canada. The only province to do it — available to all of our families, all of our citizens.

And we have crafted in Saskatchewan an employment

supplement program, a health supplementary benefits program to ensure that those of low income, to ensure that those who have few financial resources in our province are able to escape, escape the social services trap that used to exist. And we're seeing hundreds and thousands of people moving from dependence to independence because we believe, Mr. Speaker, that this expanding economy should be one that is open to all and not just to a few.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I want to say, Mr. Speaker — I want to say, I want to put it on the record, I have said it in a thousand speeches, and I want to say it in the legislature — it is the view of this Premier and this government that there will not be social progress in our province without economic progress. There will not be social progress without economic progress.

But, Mr. Speaker, contrary to the folks opposite, we also believe there should not be economic progress without social progress.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(16:15)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The economic progress that we've seen . . . The economic progress that we are achieving in record numbers is an economic progress that must benefit the people of our province and not just a select few that happen to be friends of a political party. That's the plan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now, Mr. Speaker, there is so much more to opening the future, and an open future for our great province, than just economics, than just expanding an economy. As important as that is, there's more. Mr. Speaker, we need to preserve this God-given, beautiful environment that is the province of Saskatchewan, not just for us, not just for our children, but for many generations to come. That is the future. That is the future, Mr. Speaker.

And again, as an aside, I have listened, I have read the *Hansards* of the Throne Speech debates. I hear nothing, not a word from members opposite about environmental sustainability or plans to build and sustain a green Saskatchewan. We have a Throne Speech that commits to the vision of a green Saskatchewan. That's the difference.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker . . . and, Mr. Speaker, you will hear more from us about creating a green Saskatchewan, much more in the days and weeks ahead. And it's not just preserving the environment. You are going to hear more from this government in the days and weeks ahead about immigration, about welcoming people from across Canada, from around the world, to this province.

You are going to hear more from this government about School^{PLUS} and Kids First and community schools. You're going to hear more about that.

You're going to hear more, as I said earlier, about the volunteer sector initiative. Stand guard, keep tuned, you're going to hear more.

You are going to hear more from this government in the coming days and weeks about Team Saskatchewan, when we will partner . . . partner with business and partner with our municipal partners to speak to the nation and perhaps even to the world.

You will hear more in this session, as a result of this Throne Speech and the budget that will be delivered tomorrow by the Minister of Finance, you will hear more about investments in publicly funded medicare in this province because we are building and sustaining medicare, Mr. Speaker.

You will hear more, Mr. Speaker, you will hear more about our commitments to education, to community schools, to pre-kindergarten, to our post-secondary institutions. And again, Mr. Speaker, you'll remember last year, you remember the debate in this House when we committed to capital needs of our educational system. What did they do over there? They opposed us; they voted against it. They opposed us every day.

Well I repeat, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing that they will say or do that will prevent this government from investing in the educational needs of our young people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, you are going to hear more, as a result of this Throne Speech, you are going to hear more about this government's commitment to building the infrastructure, the public infrastructure of Saskatchewan. You are going to hear more about our investments in the highways and roadways and the rails of Saskatchewan. You're going to hear more about that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again a bit of an aside. I make this commitment today to the House. If somewhere over on that opposition, during the course of this entire session, they can't find one question for the Minister of the Highways and Transportations — we've gone two sessions, not one question to the Minister of Highways and Transportation — I make this commitment: if we don't get a question some of these days, I'm going to stand up myself and ask the minister a question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — So you're going to hear a whole lot more about our highways and roadways and rails. You're going to hear about our public investments and infrastructure. You're going to hear more about our infrastructure in the economy of today — the new infrastructures, the digital cellars and the high-speed Internet, extending high-speed Internet to communities across the province. You're going to hear more about that.

And by the way, Mr. Speaker, this government, this province, has the capacity to deliver high-speed Internet service to our smallest communities for one reason — one reason alone, when no other province in Canada can do it — because we have a publicly owned, publicly administered telephone company. That's our reason, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The very company, Mr. Speaker, the very company these people would sell as soon as they got to the benches of government. You can mark my words on that.

You're going to hear more, Mr. Speaker. In this session, you're going to hear more about delivering and developing the livestock industry, particularly the feedlot industry in this province. You're going to hear more in this session about the ethanol industry. You're going to hear more about mining and mineral expansion.

Why, Mr. Speaker? Because this is a government that believes in this province; a government that believes in its potential; a government that believes that the future of Saskatchewan is wide open — wide open.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now, Mr. Speaker, it has been, it has been an interesting debate. For those who follow the legislative debates, it has been — if I may say — an interesting and illustrative debate in this House since the Throne Speech debate began.

I have listened on a daily basis. I have not heard one new idea, one new idea, from the Saskatchewan Party in this legislature. Not one new idea other than the sloganeering and plan — so-called — that we've heard over the last now, I don't know, 18 months.

Now it is illustrative, Mr. Speaker. I have in my hand here a Throne Speech that runs to some 21 pages, that only begins to talk about the plans this government has for the future of the province — 21 pages.

Well I have in this hand the plan of the Saskatchewan Party. One page — one page, Mr. Speaker. Now I notice members. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . oh, the minister has it right. I notice what's happening about their plan. The letters are getting bigger — that's what's happening. The letters are getting bigger. Look it, now you can almost read it from where you sit, Mr. Speaker. The letters are getting bigger.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell members this. I have a son who plays in a band, a rock band, and when they're playing a concert or a gig I know what goes on there. When they can't think of anything new to play, they play something they've already played — they just play it louder. That's what they do.

Now I look at this. And this is like when you've got nothing new to say, what do you do? You just say it a little big bigger. There's nothing new here, Mr. Speaker. There's nothing new here.

We've heard this, we've heard this so-called plan. It's a plan that says all you've got to do is cut all the taxes — cut the taxes particularly for the corporate folks — cut all the taxes, you know, you sell off some of the Crowns, and I tell you what, you get rid of labour legislation that protects workers, and somehow this is magically going to turn into 100,000 people. Well we know what the experts have said about it.

Now maybe, maybe, I'll give them the benefit of the doubt. Maybe there's more to their plan than they're saying. Now it's interesting though because I see here in *The Estevan Mercury* from January, where the member of Estevan was speaking to her own chamber of commerce.

An Hon. Member: — What did she say?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well she said I have to apologize, friends, I have to apologize to the Estevan Chamber of Commerce. Now I'm going to just quote here, Mr. Speaker, from the newspaper. She said she's "not able to be very specific regarding her party's stance and ideas regarding a number of provincial issues." She said why. Did you hear her say why?

She answered it. She answered the why right here in the paper. She said, well because if she says anything about their ideas, we'll steal them. Let me make it perfectly, let me make it perfectly clear to the legislature today, let me make it perfectly clear to the member of Estevan and to her leader and all of her colleagues: go ahead, talk about your plans because I tell you what, we're not going to steal your plan to cut Social Services by \$50 million.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — We're not going to accept your plan to freeze funding to education and health care. We're not accepting any of your plans, Mr. Speaker, the opposition's plans. We're not going to accept those plans which would privatize health care delivery in Saskatchewan. And for sure we're not going to accept their plans to sell off our Crown corporations, STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company), SaskTel, you name it.

And, Mr. Speaker, one other thing, one other thing, Mr. Speaker, that we're not going to steal from that party. We're not going to steal their commitment, their now rock-solid commitment that they will never, never invest equity investments with a private sector company.

Now you know this is exactly what their House Leader said in his own . . . (inaudible) . . . They will never do it; they will never ever do it. Well, Mr. Speaker, they won't do it.

If we had that policy in place, there'd be no spa in Moose Jaw. There'd be no Mitchell's in my own constituency. There'd be no Great Western Brewery. There'd be no millions and hundreds of millions of dollars flowing into the treasuries.

No, we're not going to accept their plan. And I think I should say now to the newly elected member from Battleford-Cut Knife who suggests that we should, as government, invest in a spa in Wilkie. Well he should talk to his House Leader, he should talk to his leader and say, what's the policy here? Should government invest or government not invest?

Mr. Speaker, with due diligence we will partner with Saskatchewan people, we will partner with Saskatchewan companies, and we will partner with investments outside the world . . . outside the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, my time, my time has elapsed. Let me say this. The other thing we will not adopt of the policy of the Saskatchewan Party is to reject the democratic wishes of people in our communities. That's the other thing we will never ever accept.

Mr. Speaker, for a party, for a party that will not accept the democratic desire of its own party members, how could that party be trusted to accept the democratic choices of the people of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, let me finish. I've been travelling the country — Central Canada, Western Canada — speaking about the tremendous wide open future potential that is Saskatchewan. Speaking about our great resources, speaking about our people, speaking about the great potential.

And, Mr. Speaker, I finish each one of these presentations outside the province with these words, a small quote from a recently graduated young woman from the University of Regina. She said this of our tremendous province, she said of our great prairie, she said the following:

The prairies are earth's window, open wide to a blue sky, no matter what the season. Wind piling dust on to new frontiers, (but) never collecting to make a hill. But the vastness and the openness is not desolate or lonely; it is (our) home.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is the vision of this government that the future is wide open and this will be home to ourselves, to our parents, our grandparents. It will be home to our children; it will be home to their children. It will be home to all who want to come, dream big, plan well, and work hard.

And for that reason, Mr. Speaker, because this Throne Speech supports that vision, I will stand in my place and support it this day.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting to stand and listen to the Premier talk about vision because, Mr. Speaker, the vision that this government under his leadership has brought to the province of Saskatchewan is increased debt and deficit, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Since the member, Mr. Speaker, has taken over the leadership of the NDP, which propelled him into the premiership without the mandate from the people of Saskatchewan, we have seen this province drop into debt, Mr. Speaker, by a further billion plus dollars, Mr. Speaker.

From the leaked document that his Minister of Finance leaked, Mr. Speaker, we see that is going to grow by a minimum of another \$400 million, Mr. Speaker. Putting this province further into debt, Mr. Speaker, at the expense of the children of the future, Mr. Speaker, is not a vision for the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, just to be average in Saskatchewan means we will grow by 100,000 in the next 10 years — the Saskatchewan plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(16:30)

The Speaker: — I would like the members to come to order. Members, pursuant to rule 14(4), it is my duty at this time to call for the vote.

The motion before the Assembly is the motion for an address to Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor . . . Order. Order, please. Order . . .

That an humble address be presented to Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor.

To Her Honour the Honourable Lynda M. Haverstock, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

The motion was moved by the member for Cumberland, seconded by the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

The division bells rang from 16:31 until 16:39.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 30

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

Nays — 24

Hermanson	Toth	Julé
Krawetz	Draude	Gantefoer
Bjornerud	Elhard	Wakefield
Stewart	Harpauer	Eagles
McMorris	D'Autremont	Wall
Huyghebaert	Dearborn	Brkich
Wiberg	Weekes	Lorenz
Hart	Allchurch	Hillson

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — With leave to move two motions respecting the Throne Speech.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Address be Engrossed and Presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Moose Jaw North:

That the said address be engrossed and presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor by such members of the Assembly as are of the Executive Council.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

Ways and Means

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also move, seconded by the member from Moose Jaw North:

That this Assembly, pursuant to rule 92, hereby appoints the Committee of Finance to consider the supply to be granted to Her Majesty, and to consider the ways and means of raising the supply.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:44.

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