



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

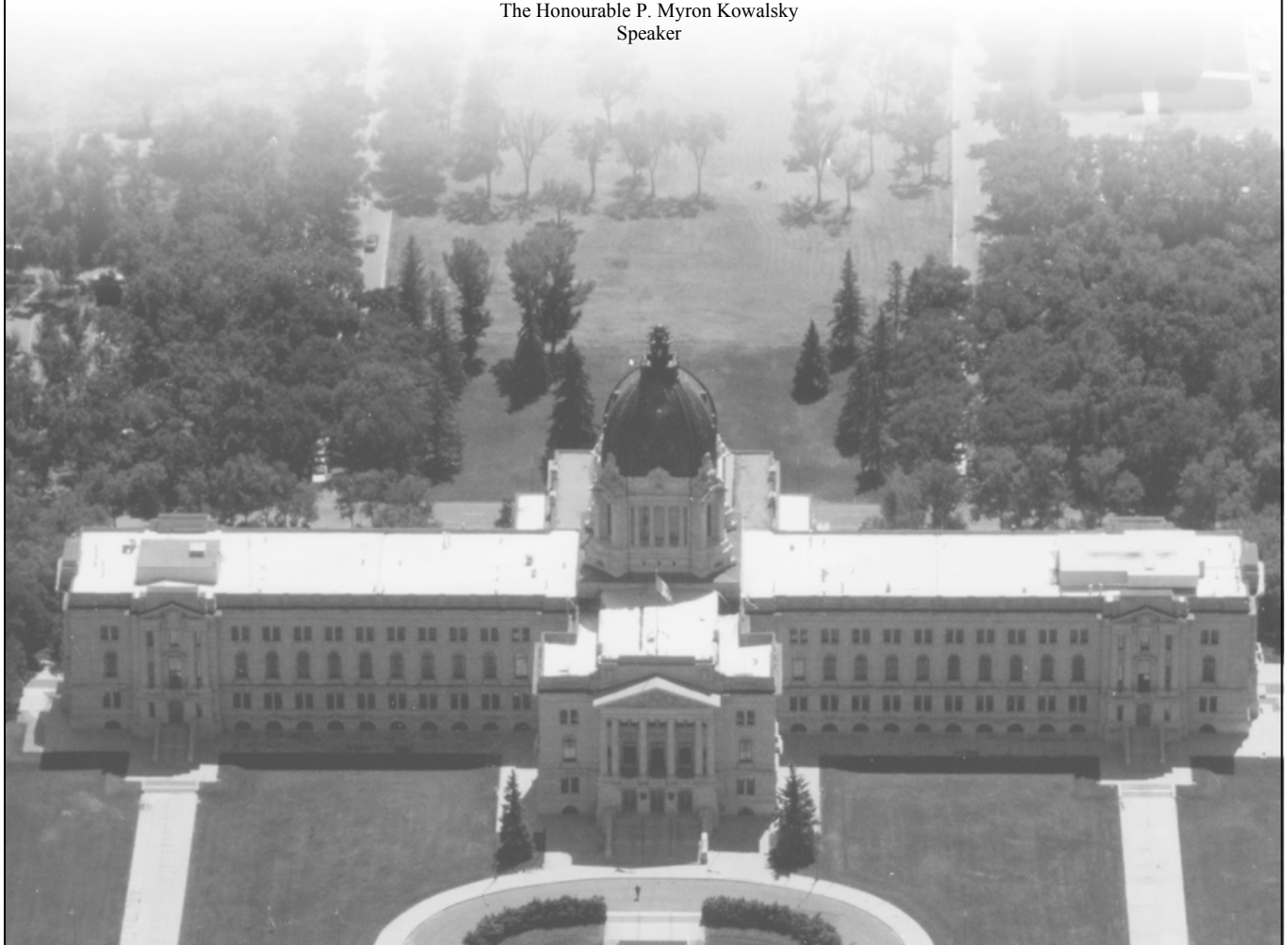
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky
 Premier — Hon. Lorne Calvert
 Leader of the Opposition — Brad Wall

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Addley, Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Bakken, Brenda	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Borgerson, Lon	NDP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Cline, Hon. Eric	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Crofford, Hon. Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Ben	SP	Martensville
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kerpan, Allan	SP	Carrot River Valley
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Kowalsky, Hon. P. Myron	NDP	Prince Albert Carlton
Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lautermilch, Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Ted	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Morgan, Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, Hon. John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Prebble, Hon. Peter	NDP	Saskatoon Greystone
Quennell, Hon. Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Serby, Hon. Clay	NDP	Yorkton
Sonntag, Hon. Maynard	NDP	Meadow Lake
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Hon. Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

The Assembly met at 10:00.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I have a petition to present which talks about potential increases to the provincial sales tax. And I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education's recommendations to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

And as duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Grenfell, Broadview, Whitewood, Cowessess, Regina, Kipling, Grayson, Wapella, and Gainsborough.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In view of the ongoing uncertainty regarding Crown grazing leases, I wish to present the following petition. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by constituents from Gull Lake, Shaunavon, and Eastend.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education recommendations to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from Carlyle, Manor, Redvers, Kennedy, Fogo, Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker, from

across the province, Mr. Speaker, and outside.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Swift Current.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of residents of southwest Saskatchewan who are concerned about the price of food in the province. And the prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education recommendations to expand the PST (provincial sales tax) to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from the great communities of Herbert, Stewart Valley, and Swift Current, Canada.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I do have a petition that has been sent to the legislature from citizens of the province of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the proposed new 7 per cent tax on restaurant meals. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education's recommendation to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these signatures include communities in Saskatchewan such as Outlook, Glenside, Saskatoon, Estevan, Dinsmore, Conquest, Delisle.

I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to do with the expansion of the PST. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to

Grade 12 Education recommendations to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals.

The signatures are from Melville, Balcarres, Yorkton, Lemberg, Grenfell, Kelliher, and Neudorf, Mr. Speaker.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present regarding the expansion of the PST on restaurant meals. This is one of many that I'll be reading over the next week. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education recommendations to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people in the Fort Qu'Appelle, Melville, Lipton, people from the Star Blanket Reserve and various other communities.

I so present.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too rise today to present a petition dealing with the expansion of the PST and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education recommendations to expand on the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by people in the food service industry and concerned constituents from Estevan, North Portal, Benson, Midale, Bienfait, Torquay, Lampman, Steelman, as well as people from Regina and Moose Jaw.

I so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of citizens of the province concerned about the potential expansion of the provincial sales tax. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon.

Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education's recommendations to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners humbly pray.

Signatures on this petition this morning, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Melfort, Star City, Tisdale, and Brooksby.

I so present on their behalf.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the citizens of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are also concerned about the proposed expansion of the PST and the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education's recommendation to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

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

And the petition I am presenting today, Mr. Speaker, has 149 names on it signed by residents of Weyburn, Lake Alma, Creelman, Trossachs, Lang, Goodwater, Midale, Yellow Grass, Parry, Pangman, McTaggart, Fillmore, Macoun, Estevan, Kendal, Regina, Bengough, Minton, Griffin, and Radville.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you Mr. Speaker. I also rise with a petition from people that are extremely concerned about the proposed expansion of the sales tax and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education's recommendations to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

And as duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's four pages of signatures here that range from Regina to my hometown of Fir Mountain.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

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

in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the proposed 7 per cent tax on food.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education's recommendations to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Do not tax our food.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from Shell Lake, Iroquois, Leask, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Mont Nebo. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition here with the citizens concerned about expanding the PST.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education recommendation to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by citizens from Govan, Nokomis, Regina, Indian Head, and Flin Flon, Manitoba.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition from citizens concerned about the expansion of the PST.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education's recommendation to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

And is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the citizens of Delisle, Rosetown, Saskatoon, Asquith, Harris, Tessier, Outlook, Warman, and Pike Lake.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are concerned with the water level in the Qu'Appelle Valley lake system. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to do everything in its power to work with the First Nations people and the federal government to bring a prompt end to the dispute so that the water level of the Qu'Appelle River system can return to normal and end the economic harm and uncertainty this dispute has caused.

The signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, all come from the city of Regina.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in the Assembly to present a petition on behalf of concerned citizens regarding the implementation of the broadening of the PST to include restaurant meals. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education's recommendation to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by folks from Kindersley, Coleville, Unity, Netherhill, Saskatoon, Tessier, Regina, Luseland, Kerrobert, Brock, Tramping Lake, and many other communities throughout the province.

I so present.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Tuesday next move first reading of The Whistleblower Protection Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and to all the members of the Legislative Assembly a delegation here today to mark Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie. We value the contribution that the francophone citizens make to the social, cultural, and economic development of our province.

They are seated in the gallery, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the delegation to stand as I mention their names. From Assemblée communautaire francosaskoise, Francine Proulx-Kenzle, assistant director; Estelle Bonetto, communications officer. From the University of Regina, Michelle Laviolette; Dominique Sarny,

director, Institut français. From the Francophone School Division, Bernard Roy, superintendent; and Gilles Groleau, education consultant. And from the provincial government offices, René Archambault, director, official minority language office; and Florent Bilodeau, director, Office of French-language Co-ordination.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition and member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, we join with the minister opposite in welcoming those officials.

In addition to that, in your gallery I'd like to introduce to you and through you to colleagues in the Assembly, three residents of Regina. Joining us are Wanda McDonald; her mother, Shirley; and her daughter, Erin Schmidt, are joining us. And I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(10:15)

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Athabasca.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery are two friends that have travelled many, many miles to be here today to join us for this opening of the Assembly. I'd like to welcome Marius Merle Durocher as well as his wife, Theresa, and ask all members to join me in making a very special welcome to the Durochers.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House, David Karwacki, a constituent of mine in Saskatoon; a man who has contributed much to business life in Saskatchewan, and as Leader of the Liberal Party has contributed much and continues to contribute much to political life in Saskatchewan — an energetic and progressive resident of my constituency, Saskatoon Meewasin.

And I trust he's finding his seat as comfortable in this House as I'm finding mine.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize in the gallery above, Jason Rotelick, a member of my constituency; as well as my husband, Jeff Morin, and my daughter, Morgan Morin.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce to all members of the legislature the partner of the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, Cheryl Hand.

Cheryl Hand is a registered nurse in the province of Saskatchewan, as well as she is very involved in community issues, particularly community issues affecting children in the city of Saskatoon.

So I would ask all members of the legislature to welcome Cheryl Hand to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce one of my constituents, Gary Carlson, who is sitting in the west gallery. He is a regular attender here in the legislature.

But it's always important to remember that Gary has done many, many things in his life, but one of the important things that he always likes to remember is that he's in the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame. And we want to congratulate Gary for that.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw North.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize behind the bar, on the government side, a former member of the House, Mr. Andy Renaud, former member for Carrot River Valley — I believe is the constituency called at that time — and I know a great friend of democracy and a friend of many who are here.

And I ask all members to join in, in showing him a welcome back to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Dewdney.

Welcome and Congratulations

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome all my colleagues on both sides of the House back to the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I would also congratulate . . . wish to congratulate you on your election as Speaker. All members are confident that you will be fair and even-handed in your rulings and will provide an environment for co-operation among us.

I would also like to congratulate all members on their election to this Assembly. I know you will agree with me that it is a humbling experience to receive the endorsement of one's neighbours and friends.

And of course it is entirely appropriate to welcome the member for Swift Current as Leader of the Opposition, a position in which we all on this side of the House expect you will have a long and illustrious career.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, since Saskatchewan voters have sent us to this place in fairly equal numbers, it is clear that they expect us to govern ourselves in a spirit of co-operation and respect for the benefit of all the citizens of the province.

Mr. Speaker, the composition of this House represents the choice of our constituents, the people of Saskatchewan. And when they make a decision, Mr. Speaker, they are never wrong. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Shaunavon's Hockey Day in Canada a Success

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I had the good fortune to attend the 2003 Saskatchewan Sport Awards, at which time the significant efforts of volunteers were recognized and so too were the achievements of championship teams and individual athletes, all of whom deserve the added congratulations of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the featured speaker for the evening was Hayley Wickenheiser, formerly of Shaunavon and now known throughout the hockey world as the pre-eminent female player in the game. Her remarks last night did not focus solely on her long list of successes, but more importantly where she started, how she was encouraged, the days of playing in the old Shaunavon arena, and the pride that she still feels when she talks about home.

Hayley's comments tied naturally into the wonderful success of Hockey Day in Canada, which originated from Shaunavon on February 21. It was an event like none other, Mr. Speaker, and one which won't be replicated any time soon.

With tremendous success and support from the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) sports department and the enthusiastic enlistment of hundreds of local volunteers, Shaunavon's Hockey Day in Canada proved more than successful — it showed that the germination of an idea can ignite and mobilize an entire community and region to outstanding results. It's predicted that nearly \$300,000 will have been raised for a new hockey facility in the future as a result of that event.

I ask the Assembly to join us in a salute to Shaunavon, its citizens and volunteers, to Robin Wall, and the Hockey Day committee, the CBC sports, and the successful career of Hayley Wickenheiser, all of which contributed in making a huge success of Hockey Day in Canada from Shaunavon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Regina Coronation Park.

Z99 Radiothon

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. CC, Lori, and Buzz, the Z's zany trio are zeroing in with zippy, zestful, zing on this year's \$100,000 goal in support of the neonatal intensive care unit.

This year it's all about helping babies get the best start possible. Money goes to a neonatal ophthalmology laser, neonatal home apnea monitors, and neonatal transcutaneous blood gas monitors. All of this new equipment is important; all of it is difficult to say. The words are rather large.

Mr. Speaker, I want to especially thank CC, Lori, and Buzz for building the platform. Thanks to Rawlco Radio and the Hospitals of Regina Foundation for their great partnership. My thanks also goes to every government MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly). All donated to this year's radiothon.

Mr. Speaker, a super special thanks goes to the Z listeners who are on track to outdo all previous generosity. CC, Lori, and Buzz are at this moment ready to take all donations. It's easy. You phone 522-KIDS, you fax 584-2000, or you can e-mail at www.Z99.com. They're open till 6 p.m. today.

Mr. Speaker, babies are always important. It's a great cause; please give now.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Saskatchewan Sport Awards

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too last night had the great pleasure to attend the Sask Sport Awards with some of my colleagues from both sides of the House.

Mr. Speaker, some of the winners last night, the three recipients for Volunteer of the Year were Glenn Kurmey, Leo Lane, and Bev Smith. The Master Athlete of the Year was 90-year-old Howard West from Saskatoon. The Youth Male Athlete of the Year was Justin Warsylewicz of Regina. The female athlete was Jenni Hucul from Saskatoon. The Athlete of the Year in the male category was Simon Bairu from Regina and the female, Nicole Cargill from Regina. And the Team of the Year were the 2003 world junior men's and ladies champions from Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I had a bit of a closer connection with one of the finalists. Our son plays with Saskatoon Hilltops, who was named as the finalist of Team of the Year. I can tell you that all the parents of that team and that organization are very proud of our young men.

I would also like to say, Mr. Speaker, and remind all members here today that this weekend, in Regina, the Saskatchewan High School Athletic Association will be hosting their version of March Madness. The Hoopla events will take place in Regina at high schools throughout the city.

I also want to throw in a bit of a plug for my own home team. I have two daughters that will be playing in that event and my wife will be coaching.

So I would encourage and invite all members if they have the time to try to attend some of the games this weekend in Regina.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

L'importance de la francophonie en Saskatchewan

Mr. McCall: — Merci, Monsieur le président. Les semaines du cinq au vingt-et-un mars ont été proclamées officiellement Les Rendez-vous de la francophonie en Saskatchewan par le ministre des Relations gouvernementales. La francophonie regroupe plus de cinquante pays et gouvernements qui ont le français en partage. C'est un honneur pour moi de souligner cette occasion en français dans notre Assemblée législative provinciale.

La Journée internationale de la francophonie, le vingt mars, marque le point culminant de ces deux semaines de fêtes, qui ont pour but de célébrer la langue et la culture françaises et de mettre en valeur les réalisations des francophones et des communautés francophones de notre pays.

Cette année en Saskatchewan, nous avons choisi de reconnaître et mettre l'accent sur la langue et la culture françaises comme valeur ajoutée pour nous tous. Nous apprécions beaucoup la contribution de nos concitoyens et de nos communautés francophones au développement social, culturel, et économique de notre province durant toute l'année. J'encourage tous mes collègues à soutenir les francophones tout au long de l'année et les fêter dans leur circonscriptions.

(Translation: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The weeks of March 5 to 21 have officially been proclaimed Les Rendez-vous de la francophonie in Saskatchewan by the Minister of Government Relations. La Francophonie brings together over 50 countries and governments who share the French language.

International Francophone Day, March 20, is the focal point for the two weeks of festivities whose goal it is to celebrate French language and culture, and to recognize the achievements of our country's francophones and francophone communities.

This year in Saskatchewan, we have chosen to recognize and stress the value of French language and culture for us all. We very much appreciate the contributions of our fellow citizens and our francophone communities to the social, cultural, and economic development of our province year-round. I would encourage all my colleagues to support francophones during the entire year and celebrate them in their constituencies.)

Quickly in English, Mr. Speaker: vivent les francophones et vivent les Fransaskois. Merci.

(Translation: Mr. Speaker, long live francophones and long live

Fransaskois.)

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

Assiniboia Southern Rebels Mascot

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while many hockey teams have mascots, very few of them are great-grandmothers. At age 85, Marj Erfel is probably the most senior member of Canada's brotherhood of hockey mascots. Every time the Assiniboia Southern Rebels step onto the ice, Marj is cheering them on. She may be a great-grandmother, but when her team is in action she becomes the world's most exuberant mascot.

It all began a few years ago when her son bought her a hockey sweater. Well she surprised them when she went out to the Assiniboia Rebels and acquired a helmet, socks, and pants. And then when they came out on the ice, she went out on the ice with them with a hockey stick. Ever since then she has been known as Grandma Dynamite.

Marj goes to every Rebel game at home or away and encourages players to put the puck in the net. The Rebels . . . And then after the puck is in the net, Marj goes running up and down in the stands and honking a horn. And, remember, she's 85 years of age.

The Rebels have been the Western Canadian champions three times since Grandma Dynamite began, but that isn't always good enough for Grandma Dynamite. She gives the players encouragement, but she gives them heck like one time when she said they played like a ladies' basketball team. And she's not adverse to giving the referee heck neither.

Mr. Speaker, when asked why she does it, she simply answers, I love the excitement; I love the game. I congratulate Marj for her dedication to the Assiniboia Rebels and to hockey. I thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

Canadian Men's Curling Championships

Mr. Addley: — Well, Mr. Speaker, another Brier is in the books. For the second time in four years Saskatoon has hosted the Canadian Men's Curling Championships, and once again the city has done itself and the province proud. Along with the Grey Cup that was held in Regina last November and Hockey Day in Canada that was broadcast out of Shaunavon earlier this year, this is the third national sporting event to take place in this province in the last few months.

This speaks volumes about how seriously we take our sports here in Saskatchewan and says more about our sense of community and our volunteer spirit. And I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the sponsors, volunteers, and everyone else who contributed to the success of this year's Brier. It is their hard work and dedication that enables us to successfully host these large-scale events.

As for the curling itself the Brier title went to a team from Halifax, although it should be noted that the Nova Scotia foursome was skipped by Mark Dacey, formerly of Saskatoon. No doubt that's where he learned to curl. Dacey's last rock, a draw to the four-foot, gave him three and a come-from-behind victory.

Congratulations to all the competitors, and again congratulations on a job well done to the city of Saskatoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(10:30)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Waiting Times for Treatment of Cancer

The Speaker: — Recognize the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Swift Current.

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

Mr. Speaker, last week the Saskatchewan Party raised the case of Dennis Scott who was forced to wait over six months for a biopsy. By that time his prostate cancer had spread to his bones.

Mr. Speaker, prostate cancer is a very treatable form of cancer if detected early, but it's very deadly if it spreads outside the prostate. That means the time you sit on a waiting list is literally the difference between life and death in many cases.

Mr. Speaker, the health system is failing people like Dennis Scott. The question for the Premier: why are people being forced to wait so long to receive treatment for prostate cancer?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I want to, I want to respond to the Leader of the Opposition firstly by saying a welcome to the Leader of the Opposition and congratulations on his assuming that role, with equal appreciation to the former leader of the opposition who served his party and has served this House.

In the matter of those occasions when our health care system does not meet the need of an individual in a timely fashion, this government, this Minister of Health, this Department of Health sees this as a very serious concern.

I think it is fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that there are literally hundreds and thousands of people who, on a daily basis in Saskatchewan, are receiving health care services in a timely fashion — high quality services. But when these, when these significant incidents occur it is the view of this government that we want to know why. We are dedicating very considerable numbers of dollars of public resources to health care. We want to ensure that every one of those dollars is effectively used and is meeting the need as best it can.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, sadly, Dennis Scott's case is not an isolated incident. In March 2003, Mr. Duff McDonald of Indian Head was diagnosed with elevated PSA (prostate specific antigen) levels. His doctors immediately referred him to a specialist, and it took over six months, until September 2003, just to see a specialist. The specialist set up a bone scan for December 3, but Duff McDonald never got that bone scan. That's because he checked himself into the Indian Head Hospital on November 13, went into a coma on the 14th, and died that afternoon.

Duff McDonald was forced to wait over six months to see a specialist and over two more months to get a bone scan, but he didn't have that much time to wait, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Duff McDonald died waiting. Why?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, of course to Mr. McDonald's family, to the Scott family who have been involved with their loved one, to anyone who suffers the loss of a loved one, we all I'm sure extend our deepest condolences or concern.

Mr. Speaker, we are working — as is every other provincial jurisdiction in Canada — we are working to provide the best possible publicly funded and administered health care that we can.

Mr. Speaker there are those occasions when the best of systems will not be perfect, where human lives will be affected. When these incidents occur of course we are concerned. The medical community is concerned. Health regions are concerned. The ministry of Health is concerned, and we seek to pursue answers and solutions. But I do repeat Mr. Speaker, I do repeat that on a daily basis there are hundreds and thousands of people in our province who are receiving health care, quality health care on a timely, timely fashion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we've received an e-mail from Duff McDonald's daughter Terry. She writes, and I quote:

I struggle to get through every day knowing that he trusted the medical system that failed him in . . . (every) way.

How many more families have to go his pain and anguish? . . . This is totally unacceptable . . .

Mr. Speaker, these waiting times for cancer treatment, they are totally unacceptable. And I ask the question of the Premier on above of Terry McDonald. Will he answer her question? How many families have to go through this pain and anguish?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker our commitment, our

commitment to building quality public health care for the citizens of Saskatchewan was expressed again yesterday in Her Honour's reading of the Throne Speech.

We set this as our number one priority in public spending. Members opposite have roundly criticized this government for increasing spending over the last number of years. Fifty per cent fully — fifty per cent — of that new spending has gone directly to the provision of quality health services.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just quote from a little letter that I just received, this from the executive director of the Canadian Nurses Association where she talks about what's happening in health care in Saskatchewan. And she says:

The well-balanced approach to primary health care in operation in Saskatchewan is, I believe, leading the way in our country. Your long-term vision and commitment to action will profoundly influence the health of the people of Saskatchewan and I believe will set the stage for action across Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, we all know that waiting lists are more than just numbers. Waiting lists of course are all about people — families and friends and neighbours.

Duff McDonald was one of those people. He was 65 years old. He was a teacher. He was a golf instructor, and he taught at hockey schools. He has two daughters and two grandchildren. And he counted on the health care system to be there.

Mr. Speaker, not long ago the Cancer Society asked the government to consider an ombudsman to help families with situations precisely like this. The Saskatchewan Party has long called for a health care commissioner — not a quality care council — someone whose job it is to help families through specific issues like waiting lists.

The question to the Premier today, Mr. Speaker, is, will his government consider these moves, those suggested by the Cancer Society and the official opposition?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too, on behalf of all the people involved in the health system, want to express my condolences and concerns for the families that have been mentioned today.

But what I would also like to say, Mr. Speaker, in response to the Leader of the Opposition's question is that in our Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health, one of the new positions that we put into that system included people who are there to talk to families who have concerns about these issues. And these relate to the surgical care coordinators who work with our Surgical Care Network.

We also have people in every regional health authority, whose

specific job is to talk to families, work with families, and fulfill that kind of a role as a spokesperson to deal with family issues. And there are many, many families who get help from that. If some of the people in Saskatchewan don't know about these people who are available, I use this forum to also advise people; make sure that you contact those people who are in the system to respond to these kinds of concerns.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I respectfully submit to this legislature that whatever processes are in place, put in place by this government, aren't working. They're letting people down. They're letting families down.

Mr. Speaker, Dennis Scott waited six months for a biopsy. During that time, his cancer spread to his bones. Duff McDonald waited six months to see a specialist, and six weeks later he passed away. Mr. Speaker, cancer agencies tell us all that the key to treatment is early diagnosis. But what good is early diagnosis if the health care system can't get them the treatment that they need?

Mr. Speaker, the question is simple, to the Premier: why is this NDP (New Democratic Party) health care system failing people like the McDonalds and countless others, and what specifically is he going to do about it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the health system in Saskatchewan is providing good care for many, many people, but we acknowledge that there are some people who, depending on the situation, end up not getting all of the assistance at the appropriate times. But what we have to keep doing is working at that system.

What we've been doing in Saskatchewan — and leading the way in North America — is identifying those kinds of issues that where something goes wrong and make sure you then fix it. That's what you do in any system is you look at quality. That's why we brought in the Quality Council. That's why we have the quality care coordinators in every region is to identify these problems. And we're going to continue to do that and continue to work with these cases that go awry.

But what we need to do is to make sure that our system provides the best care that we can across the country. We have a challenge in Canada — we all know that — because there is not sufficient federal support for a national medicare system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Termination of the Director of the Emergency Ward at Royal University Hospital

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. On January 23 the Premier told the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* that Royal University Hospital is one of the most

important facilities in Saskatchewan. The Premier went on to say this, quote:

When a group of medical doctors are willing to put pen to paper and make observations . . . obviously they feel there is a significant concern.

Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday Dr. Jon Witt was fired from his position as director of emergency medicine at Royal University Hospital for putting pen to paper. Dr. Witt wrote a letter to the Minister of Health expressing serious and legitimate concerns about understaffing and patient safety, and for that the NDP fired him.

Will the Premier explain why Dr. Witt was fired?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, there's been a situation in Saskatoon at the Royal University Hospital emergency ward that was identified in January. The senior administrative people, including the doctors and the medical advisory council and the board, senior management, have looked into this particular issue. And after looking at all of the information, I'm advised by them that there was not a substantiation to the allegations made in that particular situation, and that they had presented many opportunities for that to be dealt with.

There are clearly some challenges in running the emergency ward there, and the senior administration in the Saskatoon Health Authority have made some decisions around how to correct that. My prime concern as Minister of Health is that patients will get safe care and treatment when they go to that emergency ward, and I have been assured that they will.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, the medical director put pen to paper, as the Premier describes it, and he wrote the letter to the Minister of Health. Dr. Witt wrote the minister on behalf of his fellow ER (emergency room) doctors expressing their collective concerns about understaffing and patient safety in the emergency room of the Royal University Hospital. But according to the Minister of Health, Dr. Witt was fired for not going through proper channels.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier explain what proper channels are? If Dr. Witt was putting pen to paper and making the Minister of Health know that there were legitimate concerns, why was Dr. Witt fired?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, these issues were raised with me. I raised them with the appropriate officials in the senior administration of the Saskatoon Health Authority. They used the procedures that they have in their system, which includes obviously the management system, and they ended up coming back and saying these particular issues could not be substantiated, and therefore they dealt with the issue the way that they did.

My concern is patient safety, when they go to the Royal University Hospital emergency ward. And I've been assured by the doctors there that they are getting very good care in that emergency ward, and that's the prime concern that I have.

I know that what we need to do is encourage people to raise concerns when they're there, but they need to be substantiated if they're going to be concerns.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister tries to imply that Dr. Witt was on his own in this matter. We have received a letter signed by all seven doctors in the Royal University Hospital emergency physician group, and they were sent to the Saskatoon Health Region. And I quote:

This is a letter of support for our medical director, Dr. . . . (Jon) Witt. . . strong leadership is essential to chart the future of emergency medicine in this city. We have such leadership at the . . . (Royal University Hospital) in Dr. Witt.

Mr. Speaker, the doctors who work along Dr. Witt every day in the ER say that he was a strong leader and he had their full support. Yet when he puts pen to paper, as the Premier quotes, and informs the concern of the collective emergency room department, not just himself, and makes that knowledge available to the minister, the NDP fire him. Why was Dr. Witt fired?

(10:45)

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, our health system in Saskatchewan operates in an orderly fashion with regional health administrations that take care of the management issues that are involved in a particular area.

My concern as the Minister of Health and our concern as a government is that patients get safe care in emergency wards. That's the issue that was raised to me in the letter that was sent to me. I asked that question be investigated and dealt with by the regional health authority. They investigated that and took some steps which they believe will correct the issues that are a problem in Saskatoon. I'm going to rely on the senior management who are there on the ground taking care of these issues, because that's the best place to get these kinds of things solved.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seven emergency room physicians who work with Dr. Witt wrote to the chief of staff of the Saskatoon Health Region and here's what they said, and I quote:

We are especially concerned regarding rumours of a

persecutory agenda directed at Dr. Witt by administration . . . Dr. Witt has accurately represented our concerns to administration based on our direction and input.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Witt wrote to the Minister of Health with the full support of his colleagues. He expressed serious concerns about patients' safety that accurately reflected the positions of his fellow doctors, and he wrote at the direction of and with the input of all seven doctors in the Royal University physician group.

Mr. Speaker, why would the NDP approve of the firing of Dr. Witt when his only offence was to raise serious health care concerns on behalf and at the direction of his colleagues?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the issue here relates to patients' safety as they attend the Royal University Hospital emergency department. Some issues were raised with me which I referred to the senior administration. They have looked at these and investigated these through the appropriate procedures involving the doctors and the senior administration in the Saskatoon Health Authority. They have come to some conclusions about how they can deal with some of these particular issues, and I have to respect what they are doing because I have faith in my senior administrative people across the system to provide the services that we need for Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's the way an orderly health system works and that's how it's going to work here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, we have also received another letter of support for Dr. Witt. This one says and I quote:

Dear Dr. Witt . . .

On behalf of the staffs of Wards 6300 (Neurosciences) and 6000 (Cardiology . . .) we would like to thank you for addressing the staffing and working conditions in Emergency . . .

We need to educate the public . . . that delay in administering care due to staff shortages in ER, constitutes negligence in care, sometimes (bordering on) gross negligence possibly resulting in harm to patients.

Unsafe staffing = unsafe care.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Witt wrote a letter to the Minister of Health expressing serious concerns about understaffing and patient safety. He wrote with the full support of the doctors and nurses who work with him on the front lines of this emergency measure in Saskatchewan. And for that he was fired.

Will the Premier explain why his Minister of Health is ducking behind the administration of the Royal University Hospital administration instead of taking responsibility for addressing

the concerns addressed directly to the minister?

The Speaker: — Recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I think we can see why the people of Saskatchewan did not want the members on that side of the House running the government and running the health system. You end up having to get the senior professional people, including doctors and senior administrators, to run the system. If I get involved in these various kinds of things that becomes a challenge.

Mr. Speaker, after this particular situation there were concerns about the numbers of positions in that facility. The next week they ended up with some more staff in that facility, and so that has been done. Last summer I was in — I think it was in June — I was in Saskatoon and announced the fact that we have put forward money around planning to reorganize and redevelop the emergency ward there so the people can have better space to work.

These are issues of concern in a broader base but we need to work and get them solved in a way that will make sure we have good patient care at the Royal University Hospital emergency ward.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, the question for the minister is, if he operates his health care system in such a hands-off attitude, why did the Premier have to direct him to take action after this letter was made public?

The Speaker: — Recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, issues around the Royal University Hospital emergency ward have been raised with me before. We were working on those as they related to the physical side. We're also working on those as they related to the staffing. The kinds of issues that were involved with Dr. Witt's letter were also ones that were in ongoing discussion.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to respond to individuals throughout the system who have concerns, but I will respond using the appropriate management and medical advice and other professional advice to make sure we get long-term solutions that preserve good health care for Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, this government's mismanagement of the health care system concerns so many people. Here is a letter from the emergency room manager of nursing at Royal University Hospital, and I quote:

. . . I feel compelled to explain . . . the difference Dr. Witt has made to the Emergency department at . . . (Royal University Hospital). From a nursing prospective he is our

recruitment and retention package. The support he provides to the nurses, specialists, and residents is far above exceptional and he is frequently quoted as the main reason why nurses stay.

And what do the NDP do? What does the minister do to the main reason for emergency room nurses staying in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? They see to it that he's fired.

Will the Premier do the right thing today, Mr. Speaker, and reinstate Dr. Witt as the director of emergency measures at Royal University Hospital?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that Dr. Witt will continue to work as an emergency doctor in the Royal University Hospital emergency ward and that he will continue to provide good care to patients.

I also understand that the senior administration at the Saskatoon Health Authority are working on some other ways of administering the emergency ward and doing some of the administrative tasks. And I will support them in that work because they've assured me that their goal is to provide the best patient care possible at the Royal University Hospital. And I assume that's the goal of Dr. Witt and all the other doctors and nurses and other staff in that particular ward. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, Dr. Jon Witt blew the whistle on the NDP and that's why the government fired him. But he didn't take out an ad in a newspaper or talk to an opposition politician. He didn't send to the media, or a letter to the editor, his concerns. No, Dr. Witt's offence was sending a letter to Minister of Health expressing serious concerns about patient safety on behalf of the doctors and nurses who work everyday on the front lines of Saskatchewan's health care system.

Mr. Speaker, within the next few days the official opposition will be introducing strong, new whistle-blower legislation. Will the Premier do the right thing today? Will he order the Minister of Health to reinstate Dr. Witt as the director of emergency medicine at the Royal University Hospital? And will he commit to support the Saskatchewan Party's whistle-blower legislation so that no other doctors and nurses in Saskatchewan will be fired by the NDP government for expressing their legitimate concerns?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I've been advised by the senior administration at the Saskatoon Health Authority that they investigated the allegations and they were not substantiated, and that Dr. Witt was given plenty of opportunity to provide that information.

My understanding of a whistle-blower is that it relates to things that are actually there. And so what we will continue to do is work with people within the system to identify problems and

challenges because we know that they're there. We have processes — whether they're critical incident reports, whether it's the quality care coordinators that's working with our Quality Council on a broad basis — because we want to make sure that we provide the best patient care for our Saskatchewan residents.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, members, and pursuant to rule 31, it is your duty at this time to elect a member to serve as Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committee of the Whole.

The procedures to be used in this election are the same as those used to elect the Speaker. I now ask the Clerk to initiate proceedings.

Clerk: — Members of the Legislative Assembly, it is my duty to inform you that I have received no nominations pursuant to the rules.

The Speaker: — Why is the member for Saskatoon Sutherland on his feet?

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of the Assembly to waive the notice requirements under rules 30(4) and 29(1) and now submit my name to stand for the election of the position of Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committee of the Whole.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Sutherland has requested leave to waive notice requirements under rules 30(4) and 29(1) so he may submit his name for the election of the position of Deputy Speaker. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The member will submit his name. And there being no other names, then it is my duty as Speaker that, and there being no other candidates, I am pleased to announce that the member for Saskatoon Sutherland, Mr. Graham Addley has been declared your Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, with leave to express my gratitude.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Sutherland has requested leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed. I recognize the Deputy Chair of Committees.

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got a 20-minute

acceptance speech.

Thank you for the trust and honour placed in me by the members here today, and I endeavour to fulfill my duties with the fairness and impartiality as expected by the position. And if I can assist any members in carrying out my duties, I ask them to please let me know.

So thank you very much for this honour.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I would ask for leave of the Assembly to move two motions with respect to committees of the House.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave of the Assembly to move two motions with respect to committees. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

Standing Committee on House Services

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Good. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move:

That the Speaker and members: Draude, Gantfoer, Hagel, McMorris, Thomson, and Van Mulligen, having been designated pursuant to rule 24(1), be confirmed as the membership of the Standing Committee on House Services.

I move, seconded by the member for Melfort.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Douglas Park, the Government House Leader, and seconded by the member for Melfort, the Opposition House Leader:

That the Speaker and members: Draude, Gantfoer, Hagel, McMorris, Thomson, and Van Mulligen, having been designated pursuant to rule 24(1), be confirmed as the membership of the Standing Committee on House Services.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

(11:00)

Appointment of Deputy Chair of Committees

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Mr. Andy Iwanchuk, member for the constituency of Saskatoon Fairview, be appointed to preside as Deputy Chair of Committees of this Assembly.

I so move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Douglas Park, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Nutana:

That Mr. Andy Iwanchuk, member for the constituency of Saskatoon Fairview, be appointed to preside as Deputy Chair of Committees of this Assembly.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your re-election to the Speaker's Chair. I look forward to working with you and to your guidance in the coming weeks. I am pleased and honoured to move the Speech from the Throne, and I thank the Premier for giving me this wonderful opportunity.

I want to thank my family, in particular my husband Jeff and daughter Morgan, for their support throughout the process that brought me here. As I'm sure all of you know, it isn't always easy to find the balance between work and family, and without their co-operation and — daresay — patience, this would be impossible. I thank my friends and colleagues in the labour movement, and I particularly thank the people from my constituency of Walsh Acres, who have put their faith and trust in me to represent them in this Assembly. I indeed do that to the best of my . . . I intend to do that to the best of my ability.

I was born and raised here in Saskatchewan. And my understanding of place, of geography, of sky, of landscape, of distance, of climate, even quality of light is shaped by the fact that I'm a child of this province. In the same way, so has the province shaped my values, opinion, and ideas. Because I come from a place that puts a high value on justice and fair play, on co-operation, on honesty, on hard work, on facing adversity not turning from it, on doing a thing because it's the right thing to do not just because it's easy or popular or expedient. Because I

come from a place that puts a high value on those things, I too put a high value on them and I'm thankful for that.

And so I feel doubly blessed to have this opportunity to move the Speech from the Throne, to play what I feel is a special role at a time, special time in history of this province.

We're on the eve of Saskatchewan's 100th birthday celebration. During the course of those celebrations, we will be acknowledging and paying tribute to all those who came before us, all those who contributed to the building of Saskatchewan, and to the spirit of this great province. And I just want to take this opportunity to say a few words about those people: men and women of all colours and all creeds who built this province.

When we talk in general terms about our parents and our great-grandparents, we usually talk about them in terms of the hardships they endured, the long hours, the hard work, the harsh, unforgiving climate, and the sacrifices they had to make and so on. And all of that is true and part of the fabric and spirit of this province.

But it seems to me what we don't talk about often enough, when we talk about our foremothers and forefathers, is the optimism with which they viewed this land. Whether they were newcomers or whether they had been here for thousands of years, they were people of courage, tenacity, and vision. They believed in their dreams, and they had the ability to dream big. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — When we talk in general terms about our parents and our great-grand . . . sorry . . . they believed that what they were building was worth all their hard work and sacrifice. And most of all they were unwavering in their belief that, despite all adversity, they would prevail. All of those things are also true and part of the fabric and spirit of Saskatchewan.

One hundred years ago, the people of this province stood on the threshold of what would be its first century, and they were facing significant challenges. One hundred years ago, Aboriginal people were face to face with the harsh fact that their traditional way of life might be gone forever.

Many of us here have seen dramatic changes, but can any of us really imagine a cataclysm like that? A fundamental shift in the way you've always lived and everything you've ever known, everything you've ever valued — your family, your language, your religion, your culture, your traditions — put at risk. How do you preserve your culture, your very life, in the face of change you can't control, and is threatening to engulf you? That was the challenge for First Nations people and Métis people 100 hundred years ago.

One hundred years ago, the prospect of free land was bringing homesteaders here in unprecedented numbers. I remember seeing a photograph of one of those hardy souls. The photo was one of those old-style, wide shots and showed a huge expanse of flat, treeless plain. There was no snow in the picture, so it was later in the year than it is now, late spring or early summer. In the middle of that huge expanse of prairie, there was a

seemingly disordered collection of household goods. They looked like they'd been sprinkled on the landscape, scattered there by some giant hand. But in the middle of the picture, in the middle of the prairie, in the middle of what must have been all his worldly possessions, was a man. He had a beard. He was wearing a big hat. He had his arms and legs crossed, and he looked positively jaunty.

Put yourself in that man's place for a moment. You're miles from nowhere. You're on your own, and in the next few months you've got land that has to be broken. You've got a home or at least a shelter to build. You're faced with this incredible amount of work that needs doing, and there's only you and what you can accomplish with your own two hands between yourself and the coming winter. Who among us can imagine looking jaunty at the prospect of that, but he did.

A hundred years ago dryland farming was in its infancy. With the short growing season and the limited moisture — not to mention the hail, the heat, the grasshoppers — farming the prairies was like farming few other places on the earth. New techniques, new machinery, new crop varieties were needed to meet the prairie growing conditions. The challenge to find efficient, productive and sustainable ways to farm the prairie was, and continues to be, constant and ongoing.

Added to that, a hundred years ago producers were also battling what was then referred to as the big interests. Farmers were in an ongoing struggle with the railroad, the grain companies, the elevator companies, and — dare I say — the federal government. What the farmers wanted were fair rules and regulations in the grain trade and transportation, so they could get a fair return from their time, labour, and investment.

At the beginning of our first century those were some of the challenges facing farmers.

Here's one of my favourite Saskatchewan stories from those days. A hundred years ago there was a little town called Kenlis located on a fertile plain north of Indian Head and the Qu'Appelle Valley. The area had been settled 20 years before in the 1880s, and the farmsteads surrounding the town were for the most part large and well established.

All that was required for Kenlis to really thrive and prosper was for the rail line, the Kirkella branch line that was then being built north of the valley, to go through the town. When it didn't, when the rail line was built some 6 miles north of them, what did the people of Kenlis do? They thought about it, and their solution was that if the railroad won't come to us, we'll have to go to it. They were practical people, our grandparents. They moved the whole town. That was the stuff that our forebears were made of.

At the beginning of our second century, we too are facing significant challenges in education, in health care, in agriculture, in the environment, in the relationship between First Nations and those of us descended from those who came later. Like our grandmothers and grandfathers, we are facing significant challenges, and to deal with them effectively is going to take all the courage, ingenuity, caring, and pragmatism that are our inheritance in this great province.

In the Throne Speech we heard yesterday, so eloquently read by the Lieutenant Governor, we heard a broad overview of how this government is going to make positive changes and take on some of the financial and social challenges that confront us.

But before I speak specifically about the Throne Speech and the real challenges it addresses, I want to say a few words about some of the mythological challenges currently facing Saskatchewan. By mythological challenges, I mean challenges that don't really exist or only exist because it is politically expedient that they do so. Actually some of these mythological challenges, some of them are just myths. In any case, there's a bunch of them, and the Saskatchewan Party is trying to make political mileage on all of them. Today I just want to talk about two of them.

The first — that the NDP somehow stole the last provincial election, that it's not the Saskatchewan Party's fault they didn't form government, they would have, if it wasn't for the NDP fear-and-smear campaign. To hear the Saskatchewan Party tell it, they lost the last election because they were too nice. And as their leader was quoted in the *Leader-Post* March 1, 2004 because, quote:

NDP managed to “enslave the minds of . . . people” when it came time to vote.

Well the NDP didn't steal the last election; we won it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — Here's an accurate summation of what happened last November 5. This is a direct quote from Regina *Leader-Post* from November 12 last year, quote:

Much has already been said and written about why and how the Saskatchewan Party blew it. Certainly, the big factor was that the voters simply didn't trust either Hermanson or the Saskatchewan Party's policies.

While Hermanson and others in the Opposition profusely complained about the “smear and fear” campaign of the NDP, there was a rather easy way to offset it. All Hermanson had to do was say that the four major Crown utilities would not be sold. Full-stop. Period.

That he wouldn't — or couldn't — only serves to make us believe that the NDP was right and that the Saskatchewan Party did have a privatization agenda that it wanted to keep secret until after the vote.

Or how about this from the November 6 *Leader-Post*, the day after the election, quote:

The Saskatchewan Party's \$360 million in tax cuts and spending increases was predicated on the fairy-tale notion that reducing taxes results in government collecting more taxes. Just how it was that the Saskatchewan Party would grow this province by 100,000 in 10 years will forever remain a mystery. Certainly they never had the courtesy of providing voters with an answer to that.

And here's where it gets really interesting:

Nor at any time during this campaign did the opposition appear the least bit interested in extending an olive branch to unions or civil servants . . . who did have legitimate concerns that the Opposition plan was a formula for the destruction of the civil service and perhaps the entire provincial economy.

End quote. End game. End match.

But the single most overriding, all encompassing, problematic myth, the one that is Saskatchewan's largest obstacle to squarely facing and effectively dealing with the very real challenges confronting us — and it's a line that the Saskatchewan Party spouts loudly at every opportunity — that the province of Saskatchewan is a complete mess, for all intents and purposes a disaster, and that 60 years of socialist rule is responsible for it.

And it's simply not true. Anyone with a modicum of understanding of history, geology, and economics will tell you it's not true.

By the way, speaking of 60 years of so-called socialist rule, not only is next year the province's 100th birthday, but this year, 2004, marks the 60th anniversary of what many consider to be the best thing that ever happened to Saskatchewan — the election of Tommy Douglas as premier of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — But to get back to my point about Saskatchewan's economy, according to the Saskatchewan Party, if the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) and the NDP hadn't insisted on a co-operative approach to common problems or working toward a vision of common public stewardship or a people-first agenda — why we could be as rich as Alberta, maybe richer.

Well aside from the fact that it's precisely things like our spirit of co-operation and our people-first agenda that make us rich, there is also this. A few weeks ago, a professor of economics from the University of Calgary was in Regina to give a lecture that, among other things, looked at the relative merits of Saskatchewan and Alberta's economies. He had slides and charts and graphs, and his conclusion was this: the Saskatchewan economy has been performing just fine, thank you very much.

And the professor made it very clear. In terms of the economy, the difference between Saskatchewan and Alberta is uncomplicated, straightforward, simple — quality and quantity of oil, that's it. Bottom line — Alberta has way more oil than Saskatchewan, and it's time the Saskatchewan Party got over it.

(11:15)

Personally I don't think it's a sin that Saskatchewan is the second-highest oil-producing province and third-highest natural gas-producing province in Canada. And I think we should be proud of the fact that Saskatchewan is a world leader in many areas of information and communications technologies, that we are world leaders in the ag-biotech sector, that we produce a wide range of goods and export over 70 per cent of what we

manufacture.

And on the subject of exports and successful provincial economies, this was brought up once before today, but it bears repeating. According to a piece in the *Leader-Post* just last Saturday, March 13, 2004 in this era of increased globalization and international trade, Saskatchewan is the most successful trader in the world. According to the feature:

... we didn't get this way by accident, we are very good at what we do.

Saskatchewan entrepreneurs, workers, people in service industries and government services are essential to a healthy and growing economy — we've created a standard of living that's unequalled . . .

What's that quote saying? That it's a combination of business, workers, and government that make this province successful — a combination of business, workers, and government — that's what this government has been saying all along. So with all the evidence to the contrary, why does the Saskatchewan Party insist on perpetrating the myth that Saskatchewan economy is a disaster and that the NDP is responsible for it.

Well for one thing, the members of the opposition are right-wing ideologues of the highest order and there is nothing so blinding as ideology. To make that point perfectly clear, I'd like to quote a couple of statements made over the last couple of years by some of the members opposite.

Here's one that's short, nasty, and wrong. From the Saskatchewan Party member from Kindersley who had the temerity to share it with the Assembly:

Tommy the commie set our province back . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. The member be seated please.

Members of the Assembly, we have dealt with this on an earlier basis and I've asked members to refrain from quoting or making accusations or any statements of the type which would involve the use of words such as commie or communist no matter in what context it is. And I would ask the members even in their quotations respect that ruling. The member will continue.

Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order. I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — With apologies to the Speaker, this is my maiden speech so I have not yet known, apprised of all the rules. But anyways to me, Mr. Speaker, a comment like that not only indicates a lack of respect for a man deserving of respect, no matter what your political stripe, but it also indicates a fundamental lack of understanding of the history of this province.

On March 26, 2001 the Saskatchewan Party representative for Wood River stood up in this Assembly and had this to say,

quote:

I was part of a defensive structure in the free world to defend against the spread of communism. Now isn't it ironic . . . (Mr. Speaker)? (That) . . . Here we spend millions of dollars — billions worldwide — put lives on the line to stop and arrest the spread . . . and lo and behold, here in Saskatchewan we vote in (the) party that has the same ideologies. It just doesn't make sense to me.

Of course it doesn't make sense to him, because the Saskatchewan Party ideology acts as a blindfold to reality and that's bad enough. But worse, the right-wing ideology doesn't offer any useful solutions to the challenges facing us either. And in the absence of solutions, the opposition is reduced to making specious attacks based on mythological problems.

Now I understand that the new Leader of the Saskatchewan Party is going to attempt to change the tone and tenor of their opposition. I can't tell you how pleased I am to hear that and I want to wish him well in that endeavour.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's time that the Saskatchewan Party understood that the opposition needs to play a real and responsible role in this province, that it's not just about grandstanding for the folks back home, as one reporter put it. And yes, a large part of that role is to criticize government approaches in policies. But those criticisms need to be grounded in facts, and those criticisms need to be based on what's best for the people of this province, not what seems best for the Saskatchewan Party and their quest for power.

A responsible opposition not only offers criticism but also, at least occasionally, will offer useful solutions to the very real challenges facing all of us. Anything less does a disservice to the democratic process and to the people of Saskatchewan.

One last word on disasters. As far as I can tell, there have been just two in the history of Saskatchewan. The first was the ecological and financial disaster of the 1930s when the markets crashed and the rain stopped and the hot, dry winds came and devastated the province.

The second was the financial and political disaster of the 1980s and the early '90s when the Devine Tories, the direct antecedents of the Saskatchewan Party, brought the same simplistic, right-wing ideologies to the table and left the province so deep in debt we're still climbing out of that hole. Speaking of which, it's no secret we're coming up to a pretty tough budget. Does anyone for a moment believe that that would be the case if we hadn't been paying for their mistakes for the last 12 years?

I know it was quite a while ago, Mr. Speaker, but this is my first chance to speak about it publicly, so I'm going to take the opportunity. And I think I'm entitled. I've been helping to pay off the debt for most of my adult life and so far, so far the total that Saskatchewan taxpayers have had to pay on that debt in interest payments alone is something like \$9 billion, \$9 billion. So yes, I know that debt was accumulated a while ago, but \$9 billion is a lot of tax dollars, taxpayer dollars, my dollars. So I don't care how long ago it was; we're still paying and I'm still angry about it. And if anyone thinks they are going to inflict

those same backward looking, simplistic solutions on the people of this province, well not if I can help it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, this government takes pride in the accomplishments and achievements of the people of Saskatchewan over our first 100 years. And our plan here, at the threshold of our second century, is to build on those achievements, to squarely face the challenges confronting us, to initiate positive change, and to make Saskatchewan ready for the future.

And that means working today to make Saskatchewan even more youth friendly. It means building a green and prosperous economy, including a new role for our Crown utilities and investments. And it means building a quality of life in health care for all generations in support of healthy families, neighbourhoods, and communities.

Now I have been a proud and active member in the labour movement throughout my career and it's clear to me that a basic necessity for creating and sustaining healthy families and healthy communities is creating and sustaining healthy workplaces and ensuring a fair return for labour.

Saskatchewan has often led the way in terms of labour legislation. For example, in 1972 Saskatchewan introduced the first comprehensive occupational health and safety legislation of its kind in North America. This legislation created a new model for occupational health and safety, a model that has been emulated by other jurisdictions in Canada as well as other parts around the world. I'm pleased to say that in this session we will be following our tradition of paying attention to and meeting the needs of working men and women of this province.

Our government will continue to implement an action plan on workplace health and safety. And we are introducing amendments to Labour Standards Act that will allow people to take advantage of compassionate care benefits when caring for gravely ill family members.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — As well, Saskatchewan is one of the two western provinces that does not have a two-tiered minimum wage, essentially a means of paying people less than they are entitled to by creating a so-called training wage. This government will be conducting regular reviews of minimum wage, but will not be looking for ways to roll it back.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — This government understands that building healthy families and communities requires supporting our neighbours in need. And with that in mind, in this session we will be enhancing two key areas in the: Building Independence program — the Saskatchewan employment supplement and family health benefits — to ensure these programs continue to support low-income working families.

And in this term, we will release a comprehensive strategy that supports people with disabilities to aid in their inclusion in the

social and economic life of our communities and province.

These are programs that reflect our long-standing provincial qualities of compassion, care, and co-operation. They are qualities that served us well throughout the last century and they will serve us well into the century to come.

I've already said a few words regarding the Saskatchewan economy and I just have a couple of new things to add. Now I am not an economist or market analyst or anything like that, and I haven't been schooled in the intricacies of arcane economic theory, but you don't need to be an expert to understand that the needs of modern economies can be in direct conflict with the needs of the environment. And you don't need to be an expert to know that in the future the economies that are going to be successful are going to be the ones that understand and guard against that.

That is why it is our government's plan to build an economy that is both prosperous and sustainable, to recognize that we are simply the stewards of the abundant natural resources with which we have been blessed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — At this moment, one of our primary economic priorities is to work with the livestock industry and other governments to open the borders to the export of Saskatchewan livestock. In the long term we will seek to create an integrated value-added, research-based agriculture economy, one that will expand opportunities and ensure that farming is a realistic and viable career choice for young people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — Over the course of this term and beginning this fall, we will begin to host annual summits of Saskatchewan people that will focus on achieving economic, environmental, and social progress.

We will pursue an aggressive immigration strategy to help us meet the needs of our expanding economy and help grow the population.

Saskatchewan's vast energy potential will be a dominant force in the province's economic growth. In addition to unlocking the potential of our oil and gas resources, it is the vision of this government that we should lead in the development of new energy sources such as wind, ethanol, biofuels, and solar. It's our goal over the next decade to make Saskatchewan the national leader in researching and developing hydrogen as a new source of energy.

During this term, we will unveil a green strategy to ensure the sustainability of our resources, our economy, and our communities, and work with Saskatchewan people . . . and working with Saskatchewan people, we will make this green strategy a reality.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes that economic progress must result in social progress. And as we noted in the Throne Speech yesterday, nowhere is that more true than in the provision of health care.

Guided by the Saskatchewan action plan on health, we will continue to do more for health care, including assessing how health dollars are spent to ensure they are used as effectively as possible to meet the needs of Saskatchewan people. We will also be asking people to take a more assertive role in protecting their own health.

And in keeping with our belief in both fiscal and social responsibility, one of the most significant new programs our government will introduce will be a new housing strategy that will help thousands of low-income families to establish quality and affordable homes.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has one of the youngest populations in the country. These young people are Saskatchewan's greatest resource and I think it's fitting that our primary goal in this term and in the opening years of Saskatchewan's second century is to make Saskatchewan first choice for young people as a place to build their future.

Initiatives like the young entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan program and the career start program will provide our young people more incentive to stay in the province and begin making lives for themselves. To help provide our kids with the best possible education, we will further implement the School^{PLUS} model at elementary and secondary school levels.

We will be establishing green teams, teams of students who will be employed in the summer months, specifically in the area of environmental protection and energy conservation. And I'm particularly pleased that we will be expanding our youth recruitment plan beyond the Crown corporations to include the broader public service and that we will be inviting Métis and First Nations and the private sector to join us.

(11:30)

Mr. Speaker, as I said at the beginning of my remarks, I am who I am today because I grew up in this province. And I can say quite honestly, except for the occasional morning when it's minus 56 with the wind chill and I'm out there in the dark scraping my windows, I've never wanted to live anywhere else.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — Why would I? I remember when I was a little girl and hearing people talk about how flat and boring the prairie is and I never thought, I never knew what they were talking about. I always thought this place was gorgeous. I couldn't understand that people couldn't see it and I have to say I still don't — just as I can't understand how people can sell this province short or portray its people as somehow second rate or naive because we've refused to surrender the values, ethics, and principles that make this province so great.

We've supposedly heard the end of that. I hope it's true. The Saskatchewan people deserve better. I've always known that Saskatchewan is a great place to live, work, and raise a family and I'm proud to have the opportunity as a member of this Assembly and of this government to contribute in whatever way I can to ensure that Saskatchewan remains the great province it always has been.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I'd like now to make the official statements of motion by both myself and seconded by the hon. member from Saskatchewan Rivers:

That a 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 her gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

This motion is to be seconded by the hon. member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has requested leave for introduction of guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to all my colleagues for granting me this leave. These folks travelled a long way and I appreciate the time given so I'll be very brief.

I want to introduce my sister and her family who travelled all the way from Meadow Lake. With my sister Joanne, of course, is my young niece, Lisa Carter. And Lisa's a basketball player; she won an MVP (most valuable player) in Lloydminster for her age class. And also there is Aimee Belanger, who is also another niece who's going to be a future volleyball and basketball star. And we also have Shaylee Belanger, who is my niece as well, and she's here for the Hoopla Basketball Tournament that was mentioned early on, and she's with the Meadow Lake high school team.

And we also have my nephew, Chris Carter. And, Mr. Speaker, Chris is Chris. And I owe him some money for cleaning up my truck and he travelled all the way to Regina to try and collect. But I hear now his dad done the job so I'm not sure who I have to pay. But you both have to wait because I'm quite broke, Mr. Speaker.

Finally we have my sister, Joanne Carter, and Joanne is the power forward of the basketball family. And I want take this minute to introduce my family and ask all members to give a very special welcome to the Carter and Belanger families.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADDRESS IN REPLY (continued)

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Walsh Acres, and seconded by the member for Saskatchewan Rivers:

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 Speaker: — Recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank you for your service to this House, past and present, and look forward to your advice and guidance in the months and years to come.

I thank the member from Regina Walsh Acres for her friendship as a fellow rookie and am proud to second the motion that she has presented. I believe Walsh Acres will take on a whole new meaning in this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — I thank the Premier. I thank the Premier for this honour. And as the last candidate past the post on election night, I think I can legitimately claim to be the newest MLA in this House, and at the age of 53 it's very nice to be considered as new.

Mr. Speaker, let me take you on a journey through some of the place names of Saskatchewan Rivers: Ladder Valley, Park Valley, Stump Lake, Blue Heron, Sturgeon River, Deer Ridge, Wild Rose, White Star, Tweedsmuir, Honeymoon, Garden River, Cherry Ridge, Torch River, Green Acres.

Our constituency stretches from Big River to White Fox and from the North Saskatchewan River to Waskesiu. I like to think of Saskatchewan Rivers as reflecting the richness and diversity of this province, kind of a microcosm of the province as a whole.

The landscape varies from lake and forest to grassland and prairie, with a wide variety of economic activities: grain, mixed and organic farming, ranching, logging, forestry, arts, tourism, along with numerous businesses and service providers.

Many residents live in the subdivisions just north of Prince Albert and are employed in the city. Our lakes, rivers, and wilderness areas provide wonderful recreation areas for all those who visit the regional, provincial, and national parks every summer. We have a rich cultural diversity as well, with numerous ethnic groups, Métis settlements, and four First Nations: Big River, Little Red, Sturgeon Lake, and Wahpeton.

All share a belief in the common ground of community and co-operation that I so deeply believe in. This is my political home and I am proud and honoured to represent Saskatchewan Rivers in this Assembly and in this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Rivers may have distinguished itself for this significant role it has played in the forming of this government. But what many do not know is that the campaign itself was a truly collective effort that went beyond my candidacy, beyond my election, to the very heart of why we are here in this Assembly.

It is summed up in a Hopi saying that goes something like this: we are the people we've been waiting for. This became the theme of our campaign in Saskatchewan Rivers. And so, Mr. Speaker, I take my place in this Assembly awed not so much by this place, but by the collective spirit of those who have sent me here, who stand by me every minute of the way.

I especially want to acknowledge those who I have sadly and recently lost, who mentored me and played such an important role in my election: my father of course, Leonard Borgerson of Rockglen, and people like Walter Hayden of Candle Lake, Noel Turner of Sturgeon Lake First Nation, Paige Finney of Garden River. The greatest pleasure in politics lies in the people we meet along the way that we otherwise might never have known. The greatest sadness is when we lose those same people.

I once asked a friend from Weldon for his political advice and he quickly responded, to thine own self be true. And then he stopped and said, better yet, don't listen to old geezers like me; listen to women, listen to young women, listen to your daughters. And I do.

And so I wish to acknowledge my closest advisers, the people I love most in the world: my partner in life, Val Drummond, and my two daughters, Kirstin and Erika. This political journey is a family journey for all of us.

We are the people we've been waiting for.
Hope is all around.
We are the people we've been waiting for.
Standing on common ground.

This was the chorus of our campaign song in Saskatchewan Rivers. Common ground, working together — this is what this province is all about.

And the more adversity we face, the more we pull together. Our grandparents knew this. If times were tough, they pulled together. When the elevators cheated them, they created wheat pools. When the banks foreclosed, they created credit unions. When prices were high, they formed co-ops. When the Conservative and Liberal old-line parties failed the people, they formed a new political party, the CCF. They worked together. They found common ground. This is the heartbeat of Saskatchewan.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this past fall we could not have been given a better election issue than the fate of our Crown corporations. As a friend of mine once said, before anything else you've got to have a philosophy and then be true to that philosophy. Last fall with one party rooted in a philosophy of co-operation and common ground, and the other party rooted in a philosophy of self-aggrandizement and privatization, the people of this province had a clear ideological choice.

Our Crowns give us reliable service. They employ over 9,000 citizens. They provide as a package the lowest utility rates anywhere in Canada. But most importantly, they are ours.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — They are public utilities. In this province they are part of our heritage, our common ground, a part of our way of thinking, and I'm pleased to see their future as public utilities enshrined in this Speech from the Throne.

I'm mindful of the backtracking that we hear from the opposition — especially from its new leader — with respect to the Crowns. It signifies some resignation and acceptance that people in this province will not give up their ownership of the Crowns. But this new position, if it is a position, is one of convenience and contradiction.

The Saskatchewan Party is rooted in a philosophy of privatization and the people of Saskatchewan know it and they also know, as the old adage goes, a leopard never changes its spots.

Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder that many people are frustrated with politics and politicians, with double talk and flip-flops, with rhetoric and grandstanding, and in some cases with greed and egotism. Hardly a day has gone by these past few weeks without news of another scandal, another scam somewhere in our federal government, and it reflects on all of us.

And we wonder why people disengage from the political process, why voter turnout has dropped substantially from what it once was, why so many people have become cynical and distrustful. It begs the question, why would anyone go into politics these days and how much of a difference can any person really make?

I'm sure that all members of this Assembly have asked themselves this question at one time or another.

Well a past premier of this province, Tommy Douglas, once responded to this question and this is what he said:

You can't do everything, but you can do 'something'.

We cannot individually solve the world's ills, but we can create the kind of social climate where people will choose good rather than evil, justice rather than injustice and the way of peace rather than human destruction. This is the heaven that can work in human society so that steadily and effectively we can build a cooperative commonwealth . . . and all the forces of reaction shall not prevail against it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — At a time of great economic challenges in this province I believe the 2004 Speech from the Throne presents us with a plan that will continue to develop the social climate that Tommy Douglas spoke of, and that he and his generation pioneered in this province.

But as another premier of this province has said:

The true test of any government lies not in how it governs in times of plenty, but how it governs in times of need.

And that Premier is sitting here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(11:45)

Mr. Borgerson: — And so, Mr. Speaker, this government will carry this province through BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) and drought, and grain and softwood lumber duties, and one-way free trade and unequalization payments. And we will do this confidently, compassionately, and courageously.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — We will deal with rising health care costs without giving in to the scaremongering that we have heard too much of in the past few weeks. When there are problems in our health care system we will address them, yes, but we will not allow them to be used as a platform to discredit public health care. The privatization agenda of the Fraser Institute and its political puppets will not find a home in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Speaker, our parents, grandparents, elders, remind us to value what we have and to always keep our perspective. Over and over again as the media and opposition focuses on the problems faced by our health care system, I hear story after story of quality health care. The young woman in Shell River Heights who's just come home with a newborn baby, the senior in Christopher Lake who had a successful heart operation, or this letter here in the March 5 issue of the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* titled, "Rave reviews for all those who cared for surgery patient." The author, Eric Nelson from Prince Albert, writes on behalf of a friend who has just had hip surgery. He says, and I quote:

During and after the operation he had non-stop attention, great food for a bachelor, and six days of good bed rest. The result is a new hip joint with almost 20-year guaranteed parts. He finds it hard to understand how

people can complain about the Saskatchewan health care system.

He goes on to say:

He wrote down the names of all those who attended him before, during, and after the operation: the registered nurses, the licensed practical nurse, the operating room nurses, night nurses, porters, kitchen people, housekeeping personnel and physio and occupational therapy personnel. The total comes to 25 or 30, too many to thank by name even though most stand out and all are worth special mention.

I read this letter not to gloss over the needs of our health care but to appeal for balance, for perspective, and for a little celebration now and then. We live in a good place.

As we move into our centennial, let us celebrate the natural resources of this province. Whether I am driving across the prairie or canoeing a northern river, I am constantly amazed at our natural wealth and the responsibility that comes with it.

This is our commons, our public legacy — huge tracts of boreal forest and unrivalled wilderness areas, 90,000 fresh water lakes and numerous rivers, 43 million acres of arable land and, as my father-in-law used to say, they're not making any more of it. Below the ground, oil, gas, potash, minerals, diamonds. Above the ground, wind, sunlight, the very air we breathe. Our challenge will be to protect and preserve this legacy for the long-term benefit of the many, not the short-term gain of a few.

Our Speech from the Throne outlines our plan for an economy that is green and prosperous — CO₂ injection in the oil fields, coal gasification, biofuels, ethanol, wind and solar energy, hydrogen, and more. If we are creative and conscientious, we will create an environmental model that is innovative and sustainable for generations to come. This is our plan, Mr. Speaker.

And I will pause at this moment, Mr. Speaker, to attempt a strategy that worked once in a while in the classroom and perhaps may work here. I'll pause so that I can hear well enough to be able to think.

Mr. Speaker, as we move into our second century we need to celebrate our young people by creating a future for them here in this province. I hear this in towns and villages, I hear this on family farms, and I hear this as I visit home to home on the four First Nations of my constituency.

As an educator, the future of young people is a personal priority. And I am pleased that it figures prominently in our Speech from the Throne — School^{PLUS}, CareerStart, green teams, post-secondary tax credits, youth recruitment for our Crowns and public service.

There is a great challenge here for all of us but with exciting possibilities. In partnership with rural, urban, and Aboriginal communities we will accomplish more if we are creative and if we work together, if we stand on common ground.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, a word about common ground. We

must never forget that the whole concept of common ground means that we build a social foundation across cultures on the values we have in common — family, community, generosity, respect — while at the same time recognizing and celebrating our diversity.

We do this for the arts. We share our stories through drama, dance, art, and music and we learn from each other. We must never take for granted the work of our writers, such as Guy Vanderhaeghe, who is being discussed today on CBC Radio, his book declared as the book that every Canadian should read.

Our writers, actors, dancers, artists, musicians, singers, our arts councils, and collectives, our school choirs, and musical groups, our dance and theatre troupes, and our own Saskatchewan Arts Board — the first of its kind on this continent, established over 50 years ago by the CCF government of Tommy Douglas.

This government values our artists because they tell us who we are, and we never celebrate without calling on them as we did yesterday following the Speech from the Throne.

And that, Mr. Speaker, reminds me of a story. I'm told that long before settlements, the Cree people of the North and the Cree people of the South used to gather on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River at the south end of my constituency where Prince Albert now stands. There they would exchange goods — buffalo hides and pemmican from the South, I would think; moose hide, furs, and dried fish from the North. And they would visit and socialize before returning home again. This was literally their common ground.

And they named this place Kestapinanik, the meeting place. To this day, Mr. Speaker, the elders of communities as far apart as Southend, Shoal Lake, and Whitefish still call Prince Albert, Kestapinanik.

I had the great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, for two years, of participating in a local history project at Westview Community School in Prince Albert along with my students from Prince Albert's SUNTEP (Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program) centre. There with a grade 3-4 class we wrote a song that went like this — and I won't suffer the Assembly by singing it but I will read it.

Kayas, a long, long time ago
Where the North Saskatchewan River flows
The Cree came here with strength and grace
And named this land the meeting place
Kestapinanik, the meeting place

From north and south and east and west
They came to trade their very best
Hides and leather, fur and lace
And then they'd leave without a trace
Kestapinanik, the meeting place

And then came the Métis, by cart and ox
Who settled on their river lots
They broke the land and cleared a space
And met the government face to face
Kestapinanik, the meeting place

Now one of the verses was written by the SUNTEP students, one by the Westview students, two by all of the students together, including the last verse which is my favourite.

People still come from near and far
They come by bus and truck and car
So hurry up, get up and wash your face
And meet us at the meeting place
Kestapinanik, the meeting place

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — The chorus went something like this:

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

And for the first time this afternoon, or this morning, I have the attention of the full caucus obviously.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Speaker, we too have come from the north and south and east and west. Mr. Speaker, we have come from north and south and east and west, all of us. We have come by truck and bus and car to this, our own Kestapinanik. We too meet here, face to face, to trade and share our very best, our thoughts, ideas, perspectives, stories.

This Assembly is our common ground, a place for building on the values and ideas we share and showing respect and tolerance when our philosophies collide. As much as the media seems to feed on confrontation and conflict, let us find common ground here as we respond to the Speech from the Throne and to our legislation in the days and weeks ahead. Let us debate and dialogue with the common, unspoken language of all cultures, and that common, unspoken language is respect.

I remember hearing that, hearing of an elder who once said we are given one mouth and two ears for a reason, so that we listen twice as hard as we speak. I truly believe that this is the will of the people to exercise respect in this place. Let's live up, not down, to their expectations.

With respect and with pride I second the Speech from the Throne as moved by the member from Regina Walsh Acres. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Swift Current.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to enter this debate over the Throne Speech today.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to begin with some congratulations to you again on your election as our Speaker, to the member from Saskatoon Sutherland on his designation as our Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, to all of the new MLAs on both sides of the

House, including the last speaker from Saskatchewan Rivers, a welcome on behalf of all of us, and especially to our five new members, Mr. Speaker, representing and constituting the only party caucus that is actually bigger in this Legislative Assembly than it was before the November 5 election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — I would point out that one has actually completely disappeared which will probably be a permanent development on Saskatchewan's political scene, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I also, on behalf of the opposition, want to wish the member for Yorkton well. I hope, frankly, he's not watching proceedings because we want him to be recovering and I'm not sure how watching all of this would help in that process. But we're hopeful that he gets back soon and that his recovery is complete, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say thank you to my constituents who have given me another opportunity to represent them in this legislature. And in the last election we were able to increase our popular vote a little bit in Swift Current and it's gratified to be rehired. Twenty eight days is a very long job interview to go through, as members will know, and I was grateful that . . . I was grateful for the opportunity to represent Swift Current again. It is a source of great pride for me.

(12:00)

Mr. Speaker, the last speaker was singing for a while in his speech. And I'm not going to sing. I don't want to . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — But I will reference a song. I'll reference a song by a singer that I admire. Not long ago – strangely enough, years after he was dead – Elvis Presley had another hit. A couple of years ago he had a number one hit, I think, in Europe, and it was a top-10 hit here in Canada. And the title of that song frankly spoke volumes, not only about this Throne Speech from the NDP, but the throne speeches that have come prior to that.

Mr. Speaker, you remember that song, "A Little Less Conversation" and a lot more action. Mr. Speaker, what we have seen from the NDP for the last three or four throne speeches, especially since the new member for Saskatoon Riversdale has taken over leadership of the party, what we have seen from them are platitudes. What we have seen from them is Throne Speech after Throne Speech that's full of words.

They talk about health care, Mr. Speaker, in their Throne Speech; they do nothing to make health care better. They talk about the economy, Mr. Speaker; they do nothing to help get this economy going in the province of Saskatchewan. They talk about family issues, even in the Throne Speech, and they do nothing for Saskatchewan families in terms of the quality of life we enjoy in the province.

And the point of this, the point is that it is time in Saskatchewan for a government that is committed to action and not only words.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, if you look at the actual quotes from different throne speeches in these different areas — health care and agriculture and the economy — if you look at the actual quotes, the words are almost identical. The words are almost identical of this new Premier's, maybe not so new any more, of this Premier's Throne Speech. The words are the same. Sadly, sadly the actions are the same, which is to say they're non-existent. They are non-existent on these important issues.

As we listened to the Throne Speech yesterday, and Her Honour delivered . . . and I would also point out to you that there was a passing comment about rural Saskatchewan, only a passing comment about agriculture at a time, Mr. Speaker, when rural Saskatchewan faces perhaps its greatest crisis with respect to successive years of drought for many regions, continuing downward pressure on commodity prices, and worst of all the closure of the border to live cattle since last May.

At that period of time in this province's history, a province that has depended to such a great extent on the strength and vitality of its agriculture sector, there is hardly a word in this Throne Speech about rural Saskatchewan and about agriculture. How many years, how many elections have to go by for that party to be decimated in rural Saskatchewan before they understand that rural Saskatchewan counts too?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Right now, Mr. Speaker, we continue to send out a message. We continue to send out a message, and we will do it day after day in this Assembly, and we'll do it when we get a chance to in the next election. And that is that there is a political party in the province of Saskatchewan that has not and will not ever forget rural Saskatchewan. And that's the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — There's even a reference in the Throne Speech, the brief reference to rural Saskatchewan there. It includes some reference to the BSE crisis and a commitment on behalf of the government opposite that they're going to do whatever they can. They will do whatever they can to get those borders open.

Word even this very day, Mr. Speaker, that there is an opening, an opportunity for the Premier, for this government to join with a trade mission, if you will, with the Alberta government, with Premier Ralph Klein and the beef industry who have been, who are going to have some meetings in Washington, DC (District of Columbia).

I would assume, Mr. Speaker, I would assume, Mr. Speaker, that the Agriculture minister would want to pay attention to this. I would assume, I would assume that the beef industry has done their homework. I'd assume that the beef industry has set up some pretty important meetings and that Premier Klein has likely done the same thing. I don't know if there's been an invitation to the Premier or not, but I'm pretty sure there'd be a willingness for him to join them.

Not long ago the Premier said he needed some help from the

opposition to manage his thin majority. He said, would we be interested in pairing up and buddying. Well offhand we probably wouldn't be interested that in a blanket sort of way, Mr. Speaker. The voters of this province gave them 30 seats. They gave the Premier a very thin majority. His job is to manage it.

But what I have said and what I say today is that on a case-by-case basis we'll look at any request. And if there is a compelling need for a member of this government, for the Premier, for the leader of this province to be somewhere making the case — in this, in this particular case making the case for cattle producers, making the case for rural Saskatchewan, making a case for the economy of this province dependent on the beef industry — if there's a compelling need for him to be somewhere, we'll work with him on that, and I make that offer today.

And I ask him to set aside whatever differences he's got with Premier Klein. As soon as I mentioned his name, the Minister of Agriculture was chirping from his seat. They don't like him; it's all they can do to say anything positive about the work he may have done and may be trying to do on behalf of his producers. And we may or may not agree with everything that he does in his province. But I'll tell you what. If he is interested in fighting for cattle producers in Alberta, the Premier should join him and fight for the cattle producers in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I could not help but notice the tone of the Throne Speech yesterday. I imagine you did as well. I couldn't help but notice that there was a distinct back-to-the-70s tone in that Throne Speech, as if the hand of Allan Blakeney himself may have written that Throne Speech from an era 30 years ago and an economic approach by the way that has been rejected, not just by centre or what they would characterize as right parties, but an approach to the economy that's been rejected by the left, by labour parties all over the world.

I think Allan Blakeney might have had a hand in writing that Throne Speech — or maybe not, maybe that's just where this Premier is at — because it continued, Mr. Speaker, it continued this government's unhealthy reliance on government.

If you look through that Throne Speech, all that was there in terms of a plan for the future was a reliance on government to create jobs to try to get an economy growing. I would submit this, Mr. Speaker, the immediate predecessor of this government . . . Mr. Romanow, Ms. MacKinnon, Mr. Lingenfelter, they have been departed. They were at least beginning to understand that that wasn't the case. We had to get our fiscal house in order and that we needed a private sector in this province. They were beginning to understand that.

Unfortunately that group of NDPs have ceded to this new, back-to-the-70s, shag-rug group of NDPs, Mr. Speaker. And the surplus that was handed this government by the Romanow government, they promptly turned into huge deficits and skyrocketing debt in the province. And to make matters worse, they are returning to this unhealthy reliance on government to create jobs, to create wealth, to create hope in the province of

Saskatchewan.

Now there is a role for government to play in that, Mr. Speaker, to be sure. And over the coming weeks, you'll see the Saskatchewan Party outline in a general way the vision for the role that the government has to do that. The government needs to be there in terms of infrastructure. There is a role for government to play in utilities. There is a role for government to play — not just in old economy infrastructure like highways and water and sewer, but in new economy infrastructure issues like bandwidth and connectivity, and maybe there's a role for SaskTel to play in that.

But, but, Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech put almost all of the government's eggs in the government . . . in the basket of government again. That Throne Speech, that Throne Speech was all about relying on this failed, this tired and failed notion that government creates jobs. It does not, Mr. Speaker. It surely does not.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech yesterday didn't . . . I guess there was passing references in it to it if you looked between the lines at what transpired in the last provincial election. There was even some reference to some legislation that might come forward in this Assembly enshrining the concept of public ownership with respect to Crowns. And we'll have a . . . We'll keep an open mind. We'll certainly have a look at that when it comes.

But you know what's interesting? I think even this NDP government understands that nobody believes what they say anymore. I think the people of this province . . . I think the government understands that the people of this province don't believe a single word they say.

So much so, that basic commitments they made in the campaign . . . you remember those, Mr. Speaker. The commitment in the campaign was, we're not selling the utilities. The NDP won't sell the utility Crown corporations. They said it. They made it a commitment.

And they must have sat around — some sort of a committee perhaps that wrote the Throne Speech — and thought, you know what? Because we have systematically indicated that we are going to break every other election promise we made, we'd better take the promise of keeping utilities in government control and legislate it; it's the only way the people of the province will believe us on that count, Mr. Speaker.

So they're taking a commitment that we should be able to take at face value, that we should be able to take for the words that they say, they're taking a commitment, and they say they're going to bring in legislation because nobody believes their words any more, Mr. Speaker.

When they make a commitment to students and indicate weeks after the election that they're going to break that commitment to students, Mr. Speaker; when they make a commitment to municipalities about \$20 million more additional infrastructure funding and within weeks after the election they break that commitment, Mr. Speaker; when the newly minted Finance minister, the newly minted Finance minister, shortly after the last election has a press conference and says . . . Incredibly, Mr.

Speaker, this is the government that got re-elected now, the government that knew the answers before the election. The Minister of Finance basically intimates that — boy — we didn't know how bad the previous government had done. We didn't know how bad the financial situation of the province was that was left by the previous government which was, by the way, them. We didn't realize what a terrible government it was. And now because of the financial state of the government — that the same government left the current government — because of that financial state, all bets are off.

Here's the truth of the matter, Mr. Speaker. The truth of the matter is that they campaigned throughout this province. They misrepresented the positions of their opponents.

But more importantly, they looked people dead in the eye in this campaign and on their doorsteps. And I'm sure at meetings, they looked them dead in the eye. The Premier of this province, who need, who better have some trust with the people of the province, whose currency in this trade, in this business must be trust — the Premier of the province and his colleagues and candidates opposite looked people dead in the eye and made promises.

They made pretty clear commitments and promises, not about . . . and, Mr. Speaker, not promises that should be phased in over a number of years which is what they suggest today, which they suggested in the Throne Speech. Well there's four years to keep these promises. I think they know and we know that the people of this province, when they heard those promises, they understood it to mean those promises would be implemented immediately.

So they looked people dead in the eye. They made these promises, Mr. Speaker. And ever since the election, they've been backing off. More than backing off, Mr. Speaker, they've been indicating that on almost every single count, on almost every commitment they made to Saskatchewan families, they're prepared to break their word, Mr. Speaker.

And we'll put the government on notice today that this opposition, throughout this session, will be inventorying the commitments they made to the people of the province, to Saskatchewan families. And every single opportunity that we get, we are going to hold them to an account for the promises they made to Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, the only conclusion you can come to when you consider this — and you consider now even the Throne Speech equivocating on these promises, saying they can be phased in — the only conclusion that is available is this. Since they knew the financial state of the province — they were the government, after all, going into the election — and since they still made those commitments anyway, letting people believe that those commitments would be implemented right away, there is only one conclusion. They made them knowing they had no intention of keeping them.

And I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker, the people in Swift Current and the people in Invermay and the people in Regina and Saskatoon, they deserve a government that keeps their promises.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — They deserve a government, Mr. Speaker, they deserve a government that when it makes a commitment, it intends to keep that commitment, Mr. Speaker. And we may be a ways away from an election. Maybe not, maybe there will be one closer. But I offer that commitment today to the people of this province on behalf of my colleagues in opposition. What we say, we will do. And if we're unable to do it, we'll not say it. The government ought to try it.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, one particular promise was interesting — the promise of the lowest bundle of utility rates in all of the country. And it was a promise that the Premier made in September at a bit of video dance party he had up in Saskatoon there on the Crowns. And since then the minister that's been asked to do this, the member for Saskatoon Nutana, has taken over this file and the people of the province will now look to her. The people of the province will now look to her to try to keep the Premier's promise.

(12:15)

Mr. Speaker, here is what the Throne Speech said about that promise. This is amazing. Now when the Throne Speech references a promise, it might sort of say something like, oh I don't know, we and my government intends to say keep it. It might say something like that.

But here's what it says. And maybe the member, the minister, had her hand in drafting of this part of the Throne Speech. Remember they could have said we're going to keep this promise, keep this commitment. Here's what they said: to this end, to this end, our government will develop the means to achieve our commitment.

Will develop the means to achieve our commitment. How about, Mr. Speaker, to the government, to the minister who will be listening through you, how about keep it, Mr. Speaker? How about highlight exactly to the people of the province that you're going to keep this commitment; that the Premier just didn't write it on the back of a napkin at his event in Saskatoon and say I think we could win the election with this because this is good. With no idea as to where the province is now, by the way, in terms of this issue. So well, as a matter of fact, the former Crowns' critic, the member for Melfort, did a little work on it, wanted to find out where are we at with this NDP promise.

Well here's the truth of it. The truth of the matter is that our Crowns are doing a pretty good job. We're in the top five as a bundle, top three, top four; they've done a good job for the people of the province.

But that wasn't the promise that their political masters made of these Crowns. The NDP said what, Mr. Speaker — the lowest. Not among the lowest, not pretty darn low — the lowest. That's what the NDP said.

Oh and now, now we hear the minister herself chirp from her seat. She says, well as low as. And, Mr. Speaker, the backflips just continue from members opposite on promises that they've made, that they may have no intention of keeping.

Mr. Speaker, to the point. The member from Melfort did a bit of an investigation. We found out that we are not the lowest in Canada. We're doing pretty good; our Crowns do a pretty good job, but we're not the lowest.

And so what did the minister say when the media then went to the minister and said well, you know the opposition's done this analysis and you're not . . . our utility rate, our bundle's not the lowest but among the lowest. What are you going to do about that because that wasn't your promise.

And what did the minister say? Well we're going to sort of phase in that . . . You know we have four years to keep that promise.

An Hon. Member: — Maybe.

Mr. Wall: — Maybe, maybe. And now the promise is well it's going to be as low as, or sort of really good. That's what we're going to be; those are our policies.

Mr. Speaker, imagine this. Imagine if in our daily lives — with our families or at our workplaces or in our businesses — imagine, Mr. Speaker, if we made promises that we only intend to maybe sort of keep over time. How far would that get us in our relationships? How far would that get us in our workplace, in our service clubs, or in our churches we might be involved in? To say, yes I made a promise but I didn't really mean I was going to keep it; I kind of meant I would be keeping it but it depended on some stuff and, you know, it might take three or four years.

Mr. Speaker, I can think of nothing more disrespectful to Saskatchewan families, to voters — to voters who were very, very concerned about the future of their Crowns in the election. I'll grant the government members that. The voters of this province in the last election were very concerned about the future of their Crowns. And the government . . . What did the government do? They tread on that fear, Mr. Speaker, that's what they did.

They made a promise that they had no intention of keeping. Mr. Speaker, they made a promise that now they're saying, well we'll maybe sort of keep it over the four-year period of time but maybe not. I can think of nothing more disrespectful to Saskatchewan families, to voters who in many cases made their decision in this election on the issue of the core Crowns and on that commitment that the government made.

And now they just simply throw up their hands and say . . . Instead of saying we're going to keep that promise, they say we're going to develop the means to achieve our commitment. I wonder how long it took to come up with that phrase, with that bureaucratic way of saying we're not doing it. Sorry, we just talked about it; it sounded good in the campaign but we really didn't mean it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would also offer this in terms of what is not in this Throne Speech. I think people were looking to this Throne Speech to see some sort of long-term plan for the province of Saskatchewan, some sort of long-term economic vision. A road map, if you will. The North Star, if you will, for some future path that will take us to prosperity — the prosperity that we so

richly deserve and should have, given the natural endowment of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully submit to you and to the Premier today, through you, that it's not here; that that long-term vision is not here. This isn't the North Star. It's barely a flashlight in terms of a light to the future, Mr. Speaker.

What we need in this province is a government that realizes and would indicate in its Throne Speech it realizes that, you know what, we have been doing the same thing in Saskatchewan for six decades. We have been relying on government to create wealth and create jobs.

Three different political parties, not just the one opposite; the one I worked for relied on government. They relied on direct intervention, on megaprojects, on program spending. Some relied on fiscal policy greater than others. This one seems to be in terms of the deficits that it's racking up. What we're saying in the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, is that I think that it's time to ask the Dr. Phil question: how's that working for us so far? It hasn't worked for us.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, if members didn't know about this province that we love and didn't know about the equalization formula, and were hearing about it for the first time; that there was this formula amongst the provinces that provinces would help each other out, the federal government would be involved, those . . . Some provinces are have provinces and wouldn't get help and they'd contribute, and some are have-not provinces and they'd need the help.

Imagine if you were told, Mr. Speaker, about one province in particular that is that country's second largest producer of oil, that is that country's third largest producer of natural gas, that is the world's supply of high-grade uranium and of high-grade potash, that had timber, and the most arable acres in all of the Dominion of Canada, and then imagine, Mr. Speaker, if I told you that that same province that I've just described, has been in a perennial have-not province in that country.

You wouldn't believe it. You'd say that's just wrong. There's something about that that's just wrong and anybody who would say that would be right in assuming that. And that's what the Saskatchewan Party is saying. In addition to that, the Saskatchewan Party is saying, well is there some common denominator? Is there something that we've been doing for 60 years — say back to the mid-1940s, for example — is there something that we've been doing that's basically the same that would have let this province down, that would have betrayed that promise and that potential? The answer is yes. The answer is yes.

We've been basically pursuing the same economic approach to our economy for six decades under three different governments. It's time to change that, Mr. Speaker. It's time for a government whose Throne Speech would recognize that fact. And this isn't it, this Throne Speech that I hold in my hands today, because there's nothing in there that seems to recognize that fact.

You know, and on the issue of equalization, Mr. Speaker, and the members have been talking about it in their speeches, we're pretty clear on that issue. We have been since Monday. We

wonder a little bit about why the government's only really talking about it right now. But we understand it's a problem and it's a Saskatchewan problem. And Saskatchewan is on the raw end of an equalization deal and so we've offered to help. We'll help the government in any way we can on that particular file, but here's the difference.

Here's the difference between the Saskatchewan Party and the NDP. And here's the difference between this Throne Speech and the Throne Speech that people might have expected had the 5th of November turned out a little different. The difference is this. We are not satisfied just negotiating more assistance, more equalization assistance for Saskatchewan as a have-not province. We are not satisfied with that and we will move heaven and earth to make this province a have province, where it should be.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — That is the key difference, Mr. Speaker, between this side and that side. They seem to want to manage the decline. You know I've heard — third hand, granted — but I've heard of NDP candidates in the last election quietly saying things like you know what, maybe we should only be 900,000 people. Maybe our population should actually be smaller so we could . . . this was. . . And I hope this is wrong. And if it is I hope speakers will stand up and maybe even . . . I'd welcome the heckling even, Mr. Speaker, for them to say you know what, that isn't what we think. Because they need to set the record straight on this.

Does the NDP believe that, you know, if we were even a little bit smaller we could share more? Do you remember what the previous minister of Economic Development said when he was confronted with the fact that people continue to leave Saskatchewan? Do you remember that, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the colleagues? He said, well as more people leave the province there will be more for the rest of us.

The Premier's taking notes, Mr. Speaker, and I hope he's writing that down thinking, boy, that was a dumb thing to say — I hope he's writing that — because it was. Because it's wrong, Mr. Speaker, there is not more for the rest of us; there is much less. There are fewer families here, Mr. Speaker. There are fewer people to pay property tax to lessen the burden on everyone else here. There are fewer people to get involved in some of the arts and some of the sports programs that we have in this province that the previous members spoke about.

There isn't more when people leave; there is less. And we need a plan to keep them and attract more to the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — But I hope the NDP will stand up throughout this Throne Speech debate and set the record straight that they don't believe we should have fewer people. Because if that's what they think, Mr. Speaker, and if that's what this Throne Speech is about — and maybe that's why they're focusing only on government — we'll sort of just keep taking in our own laundry for the next 60 years and see how that works.

That's what this Throne Speech seems to say and we need them to stand up and say no, we believe too. We agree with the Sask Party. We've got to get more people in this province, more taxpayers in this province, so that there are resources in place so we have at least a little better chance of preventing things like happened to the McDonald family and those two sisters who raised the plight of their father, Duff, who passed away on November 14, Mr. Speaker.

That's why we want a growing province. It isn't for the statistics. It's not for GDP (gross domestic product) or ratios or some figures; it's for those families that depend on health care. It's so that we can afford to do something about FASD (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder). And I congratulate at least the government for referencing that in the Throne Speech.

We need resources in this province. The government, whoever it is, needs those resources to deal with these issues — when BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) strikes or something like it, heaven forbid. We need resources on the government's side to be able to be there for people.

And there are no money trees, Mr. Speaker, contrary to what some of them might think over there. We need taxpayers; we need some activity; we need some investment. Mr. Speaker, that is the difference today between this side of the House and that side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, there isn't a lot of reference in the Throne Speech, either, to management issues, and I don't blame them. Because if they were talking about managing the public resources and tax dollars for the people of the province in this Throne Speech, or trying to do a better job of that, they'd have to answer a lot of questions.

If the NDP stood up and ever started talking about effective management, do you know what people would think of? People wouldn't be thinking about all the examples there must be of the NDP's solid management record, because maybe those days are over after Roy Romanow and Janice MacKinnon left, and the new sheriff came to town.

You know what they'd think of when it came to issues of management. They'd think of SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company), Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — They'd think of \$28 million of taxpayers' money lost and six years of covering it up.

And they'd think of Channel Lake, Mr. Speaker, when this government talked about managing their resources and being stewards of the public trust. And they would think about the land titles fiasco at \$110 million, originally priced at 20. They'd think of things like Minds Eye, Mr. Speaker. And they would think of things like the SaskTel track record of investing and losing taxpayers' dollars all over the province, and a willingness on the part of the government apparently to invest in rural Australia but not support rural Saskatchewan. That's what they'd think about on the issue of management for the government.

So, Mr. Speaker, you're going to hear several of my colleagues stand up in this Throne Speech today. They're not just going to be standing up and entering the Throne Speech debate. They won't just be standing up and thanking their constituents, although I know many will. Many of the new members will want to talk about their families and their constituencies.

But they're not just standing up to enter a debate. And they're not just standing up to talk a little bit about this government's Throne Speech and where the government's gone right — because there's some positive indications in here — but where they have gone wrong or the dearth of ideas and the dearth of innovation. They won't just be standing up to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Members on this side of the house are going to spend this session, and whatever sessions follow, standing up for Saskatchewan. We're going to be standing up for Saskatchewan families who know that the health care system has let them down. We'll stand up for rural Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, throughout this session, who feel forgotten and ignored by the NDP. And we will be standing up for people like the McDonalds who live right here in the city of Regina and who feel let down by the NDP government's health care system, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(12:30)

Mr. Wall: — My colleagues in this legislature will serve notice in this session that we will be constructive where we can be, that we will be helpful where we need to be, but that we will be aggressive in holding this government to an account.

They won that election on November 5; they have a job to do, Mr. Speaker. They have a trust to honour with Saskatchewan people. And this side of the House, the emptiness in this Throne Speech notwithstanding, intend to hold them to that trust.

I'll be opposing the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Thunder Creek is requesting leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Stewart: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd like to introduce three gentlemen seated in your gallery. One of them is Mr. John MacArthur, visiting us from the state of Colorado. John's a home-building contractor in Greeley, Colorado, and a firearms collector and marksman. And I'm not going to tell this Hon. Assembly everything I know about John MacArthur except to say that he's a friend.

And seated up two people away from John MacArthur is my long-time friend, Jim Wood. Jim and I have been friends for almost a lifetime. Jim farms at Pense, Saskatchewan. Jim will be seeding this spring cereal grains, oilseeds, pulse crops, and specialty crops on about 13,000 acres of Regina clay, and as well operating a very successful aerial application business in the Pense area. Jim is one of the people who creates the production that we run this province on and support our infrastructure.

Between Jim and John is seated Mr. Levi Wood. Levi is a student at the University of Saskatchewan and Levi is one of the really bright young people that we've produced in this province and is hoping to see enough opportunity that he can stay here and build his life.

I'd ask those three gentlemen to stand up and be recognized and I hope that all member of this Hon. Assembly will accord them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADDRESS IN REPLY (continued)

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dearborn: — I'm delighted today to respond to the Speech from the Throne. And I wanted to begin by congratulating Mr. Speaker on his election and on the member from Sutherland, Saskatoon Sutherland, on the election to Deputy Speaker, as well as to the four new members across the aisle in the government. Congratulations. I hope that your time spent here will be meaningful.

I'd like to also congratulate the Premier for having an elected mandate from the people and I wish him well.

On our side of the House, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate our five new members. I've had the pleasure of working with them already and I know that they bring a lot to this Assembly and will serve their constituents well.

And also to our new Leader of the Opposition, the member from Swift Current, I look forward to working with him. And as we've heard, I'm sure he's going to provide strong leadership for us going into the future.

Mr. Speaker, it's with humility that I thank the people from Kindersley for re-electing me on November 5. It's a great honour to serve the best part of Saskatchewan, especially in the positions that so many of those families in the Kindersley area find themselves now. The constituency, when I was first elected in the by-election 13 months earlier, had lost 1,000 members off the voting list, many of them to neighbouring Alberta, and there's a lot of pain out there.

I'd like it to be noted too that 8 out of 10 people from the riding of Kindersley did not vote for the current status quo of this government. Similarly in the by-election, 8 out of 10 people did not think that the path that we're on is the correct one, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the communities of Unity and Macklin in the northern end of the new Kindersley constituency. I'd like to point out that the new town of Macklin which had returns for the Saskatchewan Party in the 83 percentiles at some polls is welcome territory for me and I thank them sincerely.

When I was campaigning, I came across the town council of Macklin and I knew I was in good stead when the mayor sat down with me — and this was in front of the entire council — when he said, Jason, there's one thing that I want you to be made aware of before we start anything. I have spent the last 25 years of my life trying to eliminate socialism in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the town of Macklin is well represented and they feel the pain. They feel the pain more acutely than anywhere else in this province because of the proximity of the Alberta border, because of the proximity of Provost. It's their young people that leave and it's many of them that do not return.

The town of Unity. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy . . . We have opened an office there and beginning in April, two days a week, this is where we're going to be serving the constituency from. I had the opportunity to get up there for Remembrance Day ceremonies. It's a wonderful, wonderful town. It's a great community. I look so forward to serving them to the best of my capacity.

The town of Unity is approximately two hours away from my farm so I haven't had a lot of commercial activity that I've taken, has taken place there. But I'm very, very honoured to see how progressive a town it is. They have the Northwest Terminal. It's a farmer-run group that built a grain terminal, that owns the majority of it, and they've recently started directly shipping specialty crops to unforeseen markets only 10 years ago. We're selling peas directly into the Netherlands. High quality product. It's innovation, it's forward thinking like this that makes our province a great, great place to live.

Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to the Speech from the Throne. And I'm going to start with the title, "Making Saskatchewan Ready for the Next Generation." I heard the movers of this speech — the member from Regina Walsh Acres and the member from Saskatchewan Rivers — both speak in their remarks about a former premier in this province, a former premier named Mr. Tommy Douglas.

It just seems somewhat ironic to me that making Saskatchewan ready for the next generation, that we have to look backwards for someone that hasn't been in government for quite some time, whose policies have hurt this province more than any single individual in this province's history. And let's be absolutely clear about that.

The member from Regina Walsh Acres said the problem in this province, when we compare it to Alberta, is that they have more oil than we have — get over it.

I want to bring to her attention the fact that this province found the largest deposits of rich uranium anywhere in the world — anywhere in the world. Seventeen per cent of the world's electricity is generated from that uranium. And do you know what percentage of the nuclear cycle is returned to the people of this province from that? Less than half of one per cent. And why? This was a complete failure of socialist governments in the past to be afraid of looking forward. They thought they'd leave it in the ground.

So you know what we have now? We have an upgrader in Port Hope, Ontario. Why weren't those jobs here? Tommy Douglas. We have nuclear power stations in Pickering, Ontario. Why weren't they here? Tommy Douglas and possibly the current Premier, who said, quote, "It is the dirtiest form of fuel," in the Moose Jaw newspaper.

This is a backwards looking government that has kept us down, and will continue to keep us down for the future. We don't need to look backwards. When we have a Throne Speech that says, "Making Saskatchewan Ready for the Next Generation," we know exactly where that's come.

And maybe this government will build a Crown corporation to make suitcases so that our young people can pack their bags and when they head to Calgary they'll at least have a little bit of Saskatchewan for them to remember.

There was nothing, Mr. Speaker, but a platitude in this fluff document about agriculture.

Let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker, about . . . last week I was in my local fuel station and a farmer from over in the Marengo-Smiley area came up to me. We exchanged pleasantries.

I'd been to this man's farm in campaigning. He has a nice operation. He is an older gentleman. He's a third-generation farmer. He has beef cattle and he has a beautiful line of John Deere equipment. And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, this man is a good businessman. He worked hard and he's helped his community every time that it's asked him.

And he told me, Jason, I'm not going to be able to make my payments at the bank this spring. And I said, well that's a shame. I hope that the financial institutions will be understanding. We're all in the same boat; I know where my books are at.

And he said, yes, that was troubling, but I called my financial institution and I said I need to come in and talk to you because I won't be able to make my payment. And this was a week ago, mind you, Mr. Speaker. And that financial institution told him, they said, sir, you're going to have to wait until April 10 because we can't put you in before that. That's the pain that's in my area. That's the pain where we haven't been able to grow a crop for four years.

And what has this government done about that? Well they've raised the crop insurance premiums, they've dropped the coverage, and they've failed, Mr. Speaker, they've failed to reinsure crop insurance in the years where we had devastating drought right across the board to create a half a billion dollar

deficit, and then they have the gall to blame the finances of this province on the farmers.

They haven't understood . . . I was in this House, Mr. Speaker, when the minister of Agriculture last year told me that BSE would be over in a week. It's in *Hansard*. They don't understand. And I have zero . . . little faith in the current minister that he knows which end the milk comes out of and which end the hay goes into.

Mr. Speaker, the pain out there is real. And the minister of Education mocks right now. After he came to SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), after he came to SARM and they said, we need a break on our education portion of property tax, and you know what the Premier got up and said, Mr. Speaker? He said — let me read to you from last year — the status quo is not on. It wasn't good enough last year. I said it wasn't good enough last year, I'm going to tell you it's the same thing this year.

But there you go, boys. Do you know why he said that? He said that because he knows he only got about four votes in that whole room of 2,000 delegates. They're not happy with him; they're fed up; they've had enough.

Mr. Speaker, I posit to you that this government has no intent of moving the education portion of property tax off of properties so that our schools can be paid for in a fair manner. I posit that it's absolutely not true.

I posit, Mr. Speaker, the reason it is not true is because they want to hurt this aspect of the economy. They like to blame, Mr. Speaker, the situation of the deficit, the situation of health care, the situation of the financial gong show they've been running for the last three years on the farmer. It's not the farmers' fault. Farmers are net taxpayers when they make money. Farmers built this country.

Mr. Speaker, as the critic for Culture, Youth and Recreation, I find it interesting that a lot of the things said in the Throne Speech were equivalent to the year before and the year before that. And we even have a quote here with our young Rotarians of Saskatchewan. We say our future is wide open and our future is here.

I think unfortunately, because I have a lot of respect for the young Rotarians, it's great when they believe that, but when it comes from this government those words ring empty, Mr. Speaker. This is demonstrated, Mr. Speaker, in the lowest job creation record in the country again. Mr. Speaker, there's been a complete economic failure.

In the past, we have had two forms of economic ideology, Mr. Speaker — the idea of a centrally planned economy and the idea of a free market economy. And the centrally planned economy, a great deal of this was put forth by Keynes of Oxford, the Keynesian economic theory that you could buy your way out, in supply-demand system, through short times; and when good times came, you would pay that back. And by and large, Mr. Speaker, the world over battled this for 50 years, post-Second World War to the falling of the Berlin wall, centrally planned economies versus the free market economies.

(12:45)

The tragedy that we have now, Mr. Speaker, is that these two ideologies . . . It's not just two ideologies for economic theory that this NDP government has, it's three. This Premier, with his last Finance minister bean-counter that predicted 6.8 per cent growth — 6.8 per cent growth, Mr. Speaker, the highest in Canada — and he had the gall at SARM the other day to say we're posed again for one of the highest growth rates in the country. This at the same time and in the same breath he said, agriculture right now only makes up 10 per cent of the GDP. But somehow a good crop is going to project that 10 per cent to raise the entire bar. So agriculture is going to increase from 10 per cent to 35 per cent. Well it's not going to happen. I was in this House last year. I said it wasn't going to happen. It didn't happen.

They misquote the banks time and again. The member from Nutana has got up and said, what does the Bank of Montreal say, and then reads a document, one possibly very outdated. And why do they do this, Mr. Speaker? Because they know they don't have control of the finances, and so their movement is dogmatic. Their movement is to say if the government had more control, we'd all be fine.

Well it doesn't work that way in a global economy. It doesn't. It fails. And this Premier, Mr. Speaker, has moved away from the idea of a centrally planned economy and a free market economy. He's got three types of economists that he believes in, those that can count and those that cannot. Those are his three types, Mr. Speaker. You do the math. And that's why we're in the situation that we are today — structural deficits more than \$1 million a day.

I want to tell you a human story of something completely tragic that occurred in one of the towns while I was door knocking during the campaign. There was a very old man who had been married for over 40 years to his wife and his wife needed extra care now. And they had been members of this community for some time. I'm not going to name the community, Mr. Speaker, for I want to protect these people's privacy.

But what happened, Mr. Speaker, was that she had to leave the home. She had to go into a long-term care facility, but it was a care facility that couldn't be provided locally. It's not because the town isn't a good size. It's because there were no spaces. So she moved.

And the reason that this was fairly bothersome to me was that the day I was door knocking, Mr. Speaker, I came across the individual who found the poor gentleman no longer alive — whatever situation surrounded those events. But the correlation, let me just state, was such that it was the day after his wife had moved out.

And the NDP they'll say, we're the protectors. But that was a real person. Those are real families. That was real pain. That was real tragedy.

The member from Regina Walsh Acres spoke about myths in her response to the Speech from the Throne in the movement. I want to tell you a few of those myths that need to be debunked.

The first myth is that the NDP care about people first and foremost, that their health care first and foremost. The member from Nutana cares about dogma. The member from Regina Centre cares about dogma. And it's a dogma that intellectually has been proven to fail the world over. It doesn't only exist in Sweden any more. The Labour government in Britain does not look at the economic agenda in the same way. This is one of the few, few bastions of a backward socialism which fails and hurts people.

There was a letter read today in this House, Mr. Speaker, about a man expressing his gratitude for the health care he received. He named the nurses. He named the doctors. He named the surgeons. He named it all. We have no doubt that this man was very sincere. Health care workers in Saskatchewan provide an excellent job under trying conditions.

The question that wasn't answered was, how long did he have to wait for that hip? I think it's 22 months is the statistics right now. And that government, that Minister of Health will tell you, well there's a system in place and that's good enough.

Well it's not good enough, Mr. Speaker. It's not good enough. It's not good enough for the lady in my constituency who is on a 22-month waiting list for her hip who could no longer drive the school bus. When you have farm families, Mr. Speaker, that haven't made any money in a few years, that school bus wage is very important. That's real people. That's real people that are cared about, Mr. Speaker, by this side of the House. And we're going to speak up and hold this government accountable.

Mr. Speaker, when I came out of church on Sunday, there was an older lady. She said, I'm worried about my health care and we're depending on you. And it's very difficult, Mr. Speaker, for me to come here and not hold that group accountable.

There's a myth, Mr. Speaker, since the member of Regina Walsh Acres was speaking about myths, that Tommy Douglas invented medicare. It's a myth. Have a look at what Australia had and the timelines — myth. Have a look at what Great Britain did and the timelines — myth. It's this one small bastion of hope for an intellectually dead party, Mr. Speaker.

And if you really want to get into Tommy Douglas's work, have a look at his thesis that he wrote. Have a look at what he thinks about the subnormals. Have a look of how he really felt about people. Look that up. Maybe they should put that on the Web site, aside from some manifesto.

Mr. Speaker, people in this province demand a more compassionate government — not one caught in dogma, caught up in platitudes, caught up in putting forth a document that says, we're in trouble; brace yourself. We need a vision for the future and this is not it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm against this motion. It's clear on that.

Mr. Speaker, this side of the House is going to hold that government accountable. And be forewarned, this government is not going to be there forever. Someone will have to clean up the mess. And, Mr. Speaker, it's going to get worse before it gets better. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have been sitting here for the last couple of hours planning all the magnificent things that I was going to say and the history that I could bring, from my background, to the Chamber and the reply to some of the motions or not motions, some of the debate that has been put forward by the other side of the House.

But I look at the clock, Mr. Speaker, and I recognize that I don't have the ability to communicate all that I need to communicate in the five minutes left of this session.

So I would like, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, recognizing the clock, to adjourn debate and proceed to whatever it is we proceed to next. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for The Battlefords that debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave of the Assembly to move a motion with respect to committee membership.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to move a motion with respect to committee membership. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

Standing Committee on House Services

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the name of Mr. Yates be added to the confirmed membership of the Standing Committee on House Services.

Moved by myself, seconded by the member for Melfort, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Regina Douglas Park, seconded by the member from Melfort:

That the name of Mr. Yates be added to the confirmed

membership of the Standing Committee on House Services.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — This House stands adjourned. The motion is carried. The House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

I wish everyone a pleasant weekend.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:55.

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CABINET MINISTERS

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Premier

Hon. P. Atkinson
Minister of Crown Management Board
Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

Hon. J. Beatty
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation
Provincial Secretary

Hon. B. Belanger
Minister of Northern Affairs

Hon. E. Cline
Minister of Industry and Resources

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