



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

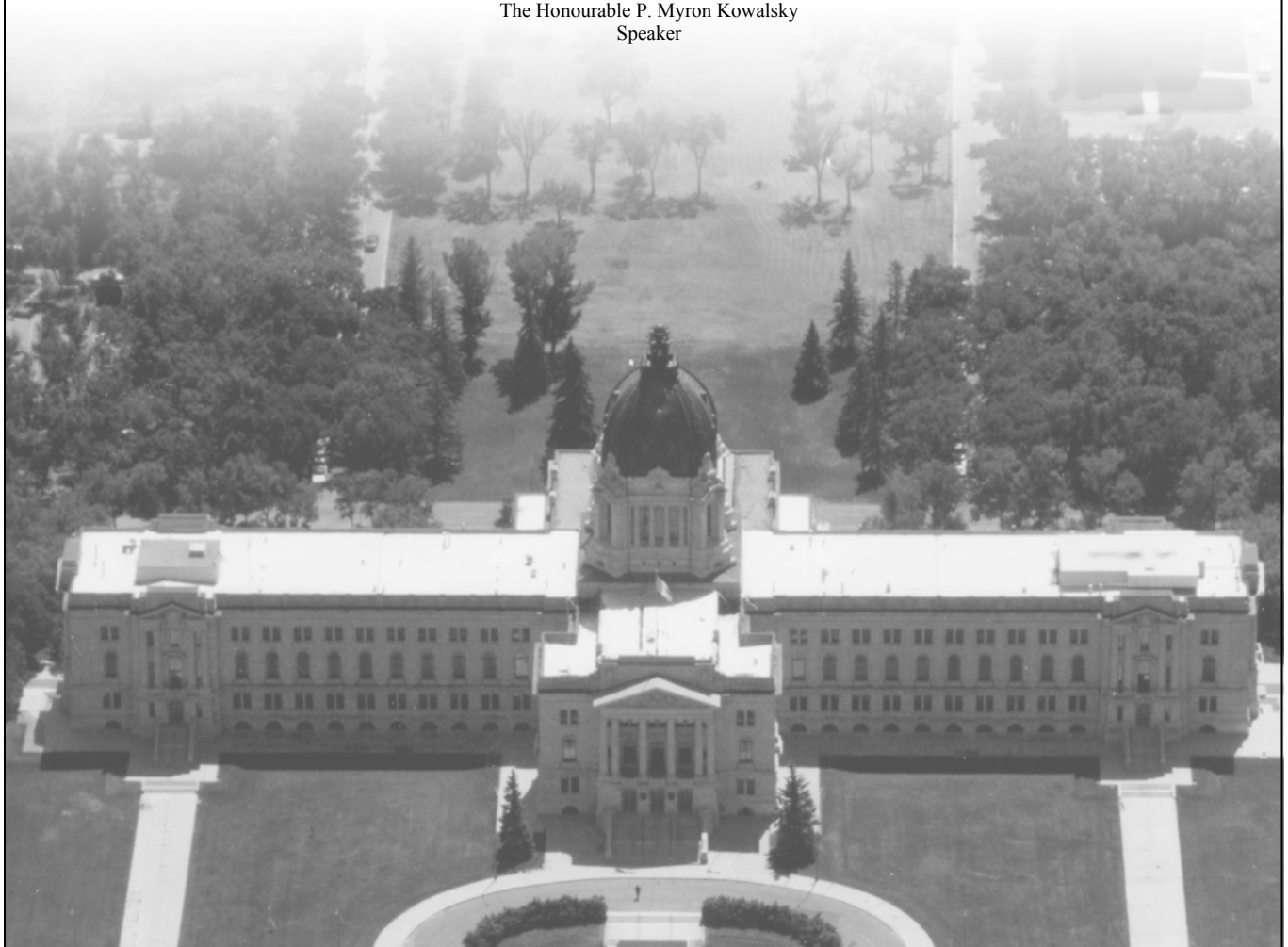
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to again present a petition to this Assembly raising the concerns that have been brought to our attention by owners of restaurants across our province, and I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners will 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 will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the petitions are signed by many people from the communities of Wolseley, Regina, Sinaluta, Montmartre, and Grenfell.

I so present.

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, with the lingering concern that the upcoming budget may impose a tax on meals, I present the following petition:

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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed primarily by constituents from the community of Abbey, but other individuals from the community of Elrose, Love, White City, and Regina.

I so present.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present 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'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.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions come from the communities of Carlyle, Arcola, Weyburn, Kisbey, Manor, White Bear, Lampman, and Regina.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a huge number of petitions have come in from communities in east central Saskatchewan. I read the prayer:

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 in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, signatures on these petitions come from the communities of Rama, Kamsack, Canora, Buchanan, Sturgis, Preeceville, Norquay, Danbury, Mikado, Stenan, St. Gregor, Saskatoon, Carievale, and Esterhazy.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too continue to receive the prayers of literally hundreds of people concerned about the issue of the potential expansion of the PST (provincial sales tax) to food. And their 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 in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is today from the city of Swift Current, the community of Herbert, of Ponteix, of Waldeck, of Gull Lake, Saskatchewan, and the city of Medicine Hat, Alberta.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present today.

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.

The people who have signed this petition are from Bankend, from Wishart, from Kelvington, from Kelliher, and from Regina.

I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With budget day rapidly approaching, I have a petition addressed to the Hon. Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. And the petition indicates that the people are strongly opposed to the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education's recommendation to implement a regressive new 7 per cent tax on restaurant meals. 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, Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from Outlook, Saskatoon, from Macrorie, Dinsmore, and Glenside.

And I'm 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 present. 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 and to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Esterhazy, Atwater, Stockholm, and Yorkton.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the citizens of Saskatoon Southeast and elsewhere who wish to present a petition regarding the proposed tax on restaurant meals. I will read the prayer:

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 duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by people from Saskatoon, Dundurn, and Waldheim. And I might point out to the members opposite, a goodly number of them are from their constituencies as well, and their constituents.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present regarding the expansion of the PST on restaurant meals. I'm getting thousands of petitions every day speaking to this very issue.

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, I bunched a number of these petitions together because there are probably too many to present before budget day, but these signatures come anywhere from Fort Qu'Appelle, Katepwa Beach, all the way up to Yorkton and Kelvington area.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have several petitions here to present on behalf of those citizens very concerned about the possible 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 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 over 400 residents from different areas in Saskatchewan including Estevan, Bienfait, Beaubier, Torquay, North Portal, Midale, Macoun, Forget, Glen Ewen, Frobisher, Alameda, Carlyle, Arcola, Stoughton, Oxbow, Kipling, Regina, Saskatoon, Shaunavon, Moose Jaw, and Battleford.

I so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well on behalf of the citizens concerned about the potential expansion of the provincial sales tax to food. 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.

Signatures on this petition today, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of St. Brieux, Melfort, Star City, Naicam, Spalding, Lake Lenore, and Annaheim.

I so present on their behalf.

The Speaker: — For Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition of citizens concerned about 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 recommendation to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, again come from many, many constituencies. They are from Humboldt, Muenster, Lake Lenore, St. Benedict, Middle Lake, Cudworth, Saskatoon, Bruno, Rosetown, Wilkie, Englefeld, Viscount, Lanigan, LeRoy, Pilger, Regina, Burr, Carmel, Fulda, Jansen, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Macklin, Watson, Yellow Creek, Annaheim, Naicam, and Edmonton, Alberta.

I so present.

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy and others throughout the province of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the expansion of 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 is signed by residents of Trossachs, Lake Alma, Midale, Goodwater, Regina, Kenosee Lake, Tribune, Gainsborough, Oungre, and mostly from the city of Weyburn.

I so present.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you Mr. Speaker. I also rise with a similar petition on people that are extremely concerned about the expansion of the PST to 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 duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens from Willow Bunch, Rockglen, Lisieux, Scout Lake, Swift Current, Fife Lake, Killdeer, and Regina.

I so present.

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise also to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan concerned with the proposed tax on 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 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.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from Leoville, Spiritwood, Shell Lake, Mildred, La Ronge, Prince Albert, and Medstead.

I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here with citizens that are outraged against more tax being put on them:

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.

Signed by good citizens from Hanley, Craik, Luseland, and Dundurn.

I so present.

The Speaker: — 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 to restaurant meals. 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 is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Delisle, Vanscoy, Saskatoon, Grandora, Zealandia, and many other west-central Saskatchewan communities.

I so present.

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess by now it's no surprise that I too am rising to present a petition to this House containing over 500 signatures of people who are strongly opposed to the regressive tax on restaurant meals.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to forgo the prayer, but I want you to know that there are people that have signed this petition . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I just want to bring to members' attention that we ought not to turn presenting of petitions to debate. And what is generally accepted is one sentence of description, reading of the prayer, and where the petitioners are from. I invite the member from Carrot River Valley to continue.

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My apologies. I will read the prayer. It says:

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.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by many people from the communities of Hudson Bay, Red Earth, Shoal Lake, Carrot River, Nipawin, White Fox; and Credible, Utah.

(13:45)

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to present a petition that's strongly opposed to the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education, recommendations to implement a regressive new 7 per cent tax on restaurant meals.

This petition is signed from people from Hepburn, Dalmeny, Saskatoon, North Battleford, Osler, Warman, Martensville, Quill Lake, Langham, and Parkland Beach, and Turtleford.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to present the petition on behalf of the citizens that are very concerned about the water level in the Qu'Appelle Valley lakes. And 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 in the Qu'Appelle River system can return to normal and end the economic harm and uncertainty this dispute has caused.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from various beach communities in the Qu'Appelle Valley, including Fort Qu'Appelle, Pasqua Lake; also from communities such as Edenwold, Regina, Lipton, Markinch, and Katepwa Lake.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in the House to present a petition on behalf of citizens from west central Saskatchewan concerned with the expansion of the GST (goods and services tax). The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to oppose the increase to the provincial sales tax, as it will be devastating to the business sector, food industry, and population of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Smiley, Glidden, and the salt of the earth — from Kindersley.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order a petition concerning the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education's recommendation for an expansion of the provincial sales tax presented on March 22 has been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be received.

According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to the same rule are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions, being sessional paper nos. 47 and 48.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Kindersley

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 9 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization: did the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation use a reinsurance mechanism to protect itself from deficit financing due to the impending drought in the 2001 crop year and further to that: (a) what procedures were implemented to arrive at this decision; (b) what memos, committee meetings, etc., occurred around this decision; and (c) what were the forecasts relative to a deficit in the Crop Insurance Corporation regarding this specific decision?

Mr. Speaker, there is questions similar in nature for subsequent years following this.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I have a second question. I give notice that I shall on day no. 9 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: regarding the \$181 million that will come to Saskatchewan under the farm aid package announced by the federal government on March 22, 2004, will any of this money be used to cover the shortfalls in the provincial funding for the CFIP program?

I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 9 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: do nephrologists in Saskatchewan get paid a fee each time one of their patients gets hooked up to dialysis and, if so, what is that fee paid?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all colleagues in the Assembly, 28 grade 5 students seated in the west gallery. They're from the school of St. Dominic Savio in our constituency.

Mr. Speaker, recently I was able to watch with them a really rocking presentation of *The Trial of the Big, Bad Wolf*. Last fall I was able to be there for the anniversary of the school and many times I manage to be there and do some reading during Education Week. And all those times I've received a very warm welcome, so it's exciting for me to be able to return that welcome to them.

They are accompanied today by their teacher, Mrs. Deb

Bresciani and they have one young woman who knows my constituency office very well. I haven't put her to work answering telephones or greeting constituents yet but she knows how to do that because both her aunt and her mom have worked there. Her aunt, Tammy Watt, is my constituency assistant.

So with the students I welcome them all and ask all members to join me in giving them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to introduce today to you Dustin Duncan, who is seated in your gallery. Dustin is from the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy. Dustin has had a variety of jobs. He's attended university and most recently was . . . served a contract for one year with the Department of Health.

Dustin was very instrumental in a victory being possible in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency; he helped in my campaign. So I would like all members to welcome him today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member from Meadow Lake.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. He will not be expecting this but I would like to introduce him anyway. Seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, is my ministerial assistant, Gerald Okanee, who recently joined my office from the Thunderchild First Nation.

Gerald as well — for those who might be interested they can see me after hours — but Gerald is also the lead drummer for one of the drumming groups and he has a number of CDs (compact disc) that by the way have gone right across North America. He's played in North America as well. So anyone who's interested, come and see me after hours.

I'd like you to, I'd like you to welcome Gerald to the Assembly today, please.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly, Carol Teichrob, sitting behind the bar — a former member from Saskatoon Meewasin, the first member from Saskatoon Meewasin. Probably doesn't need much introduction to the people in this House.

She's provided a great service to the people of Saskatchewan as a member of the government in the 1990s and I hope that everyone will give her a warm welcome today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

Research Parks Generate \$444 Million for Provincial Economy

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to an independent study by Inshatrix, the tenants of Innovation Place contributed \$187 million to the economy of Saskatoon and \$251 million to the provincial economy in 2003 — an increase of over 29 per cent from last year's figures.

Together Innovation Place and the Regina Research Park had an impact of \$444 million on the economy of Saskatchewan in 2000 alone.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon's Innovation Place is showing remarkable growth in terms of the research park's impact on the economy of Saskatchewan. I'm proud to say it is located in my constituency of Saskatoon Sutherland.

In Regina the research park had an impact of \$153 million on the city and \$193 million on the province. This strength will benefit the entire province through both job creation and local expenditure on goods and services.

In addition, over 60 per cent of tenants at both parks said they plan to expand in the near future. These figures show tremendous confidence in the future of Saskatchewan's technology-based economy.

As well, the economic impact study shows that 100 per cent of Regina Research Park CEOs (chief executive officer) and 99 per cent of Innovation Place CEOs that responded would recommend the research parks to potential clients.

Mr. Speaker, we're very proud of the performance of both Innovation Place and the Regina Research Park this year. I'm sure all members will join me in commending Saskatchewan's research parks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Learning Disabilities Month

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, March is Learning Disabilities Month in Canada and it is estimated that one out of six of us has a learning disability — a disorder that affects our ability to either interpret what we see and hear, or to link information from different parts of our brain.

Learning disabilities are lifelong, Mr. Speaker, although in the way that they are expressed can vary over a person's lifetime. According to the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, learning disabilities are a result of genetic or neurobiological factors or injuries that alter brain's function in a manner that affects one or more processes related to learning.

As elected officials, we must be aware that there are serious

consequences if this critical issue is not identified early and treated in a person's early stages. Thirty-five per cent of students identified with learning disabilities drop out of high school and almost 50 per cent of adolescent suicides have previously been diagnosed with learning disabilities.

Research has shown that as many 70 per cent of young offenders have experienced learning disabilities. Success is possible for adults with learning disabilities, Mr. Speaker. That is why this year's theme is Transition Points for Adults with Learning Disabilities.

Certainly while early intervention and treatment is critical for ensuring a learning disabled child's success, learning disabled adults must also be aware of the resources available to help them in their communities. I ask all members to recognize Learning Disabilities Month across Canada and here in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Elphinstone-Centre.

Grand Opening of the Aboriginal Head Start Program Facility

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Monday morning the minister for Community Resources and Employment and I had the pleasure of participating in the grand opening ceremonies for the new facility of the Come and Learn Aboriginal head start program administered by Aboriginal Family Services.

The new centre is located in North Central Regina and has spaces for up to 110 children. The centre represents a great step forward in the good work that Aboriginal Family Services does with inner-city families.

The Head Start program works with children ages three to five and their parents, and is organized around six components: cultural and language, education, health promotion, nutrition, social support, and parental involvement.

This fits well with the broader goals of the provincial Kids First initiative which works with vulnerable children and their families — prenatal to age five — to ensure the best possible early childhood development, development that is so critical in determining what happens with the person later on in life.

A highlight of the opening ceremony was the release of 100 balloons in which the children of the centre had placed messages about what they wanted to be when they grow up — doctor, lawyer, nurse, firefighter, spider man, the incredible hulk, and so on.

The flight of the balloons was an apt symbol for the work of the Aboriginal Family Services because they give children wings so that one day they might soar as eagles up with their dreams.

Congratulations to all of the partners that have made the dream of the new Come and Learn centre a reality and special congratulations to executive director, Delora Parisian, and the

board, staff, and volunteers of Aboriginal Family Services. Keep helping us go forward together in a good way.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Update on Cancer Patient

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update the members of this Assembly on a story we have been following very closely over the past two weeks.

On March 8 the Saskatchewan Party raised the case of Mr. Dennis Scott, the 57-year-old Regina man who had to wait six months for a biopsy to confirm prostate cancer. Once confirmed, Mr. Scott was told the cancer had spread to his bones and that it was inoperable. His specialist recommended surgery to relieve the pain associated with his condition.

Earlier this month, Mr. Scott was prepped for surgery at a Regina hospital, one year after his initial diagnosis. That surgery was cancelled an hour before it was to begin. Mr. Scott was rescheduled for today, March 23. I am pleased to say that our office was contacted by the Scott family this morning to advise us that Mr. Scott has finally had that surgery.

On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to extend our best wishes to Dennis and Donna Scott, as well as Dennis's daughter Tracy Grube and her family. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Wind Power Expanded

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government made a commitment to the people of this province to build a green and prosperous economy. Saskatchewan has become a world leader in implementing alternate energy development. We're expanding wind power.

I am pleased to report to the House that in December 2003, seven more wind turbines began supplying zero-emission electricity to the Saskatchewan GreenPower customers, thanks to a \$10.2 million expansion of SaskPower's Cypress wind power facility.

The decision to add approximately 5 megawatts of wind generation at the Cypress wind power facility is the result of the tremendous support that residential, farm, and small-business customers across the province have shown for green power. As well, Mr. Speaker, SaskPower is kick-starting environmentally friendly biomass and small-scale power generation projects across Saskatchewan to help meet our future energy needs, while reducing carbon dioxide emissions. These small-scale projects hold tremendous promise for clean green energy.

Mr. Speaker, we're building a green and prosperous economy

for Saskatchewan. It's part of our plan to keep our economy growing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Natural Valley Farms Inc.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the privilege of joining some 300-plus Wolseley and area residents to witness the official announcement of the purchase of the former Abbott Lab in Wolseley by Natural Valley Farms. Natural Valley Farms Inc. is a group of 50 farmers and investors from across Saskatchewan.

Currently Natural Valley Farms Inc. is constructing a new plant to slaughter cattle and market beef. The plant is expected to start killing late in 2004 and early in 2005 at a rate of 600 animals per week, and it will have a designed capacity of 1,200 head per week. The plant will be located between Neudorf and Wolseley in the east central Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the purchase of the Abbott facility will allow Natural Valley Farms to not only kill but to process and package their product ready to meet consumer demands.

Mr. Speaker, this is certainly good news. These two facilities add approximately 70 new jobs in the area, creating employment and economic activity. The construction of the kill facility and the refurbishing of the Abbott Lab add value to our beef. These announcements are certainly good news in light of the negative impact BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) has had on the livestock sector.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Natural Valley Farms and their shareholders for their vision and belief in the beef industry manifest through these two worthwhile projects.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Family Farm Award

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to take this opportunity to extend congratulations to Ken and Lorna McDonald of Richard, Saskatchewan, who were recently selected as the recipients of the Battlefords Agricultural Society's 2003 Family Farm Award.

This award is presented annually to recognize farm families who excel in agricultural production and community involvement. Mr. Speaker, the McDonalds, who farm 25 miles east of the Battlefords, are excellent candidates on both accounts.

Ken was one of the first producers in the area to take up the practice of zero-tillage crop rotation management. He was also one of the first in the district to become a member of the Farmers Union and he was an active member — even going to

Ottawa to speak about the Crow rate.

Lorna was the first president of the United Church women's group. She has acted as representative of the presbytery, sung in the choir, served as lay minister, and even written a book used by the United Church.

The McDonalds, Mr. Speaker, are representative of the farm families across this province that have led and continue to lead in building this great province. I ask everyone to join me in congratulating Ken and Lorna and in thanking them for their hard work and dedication.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Emergency Room Issues at Royal University Hospital

The Speaker: — Recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health. Yesterday the Saskatchewan Party tabled information on emergency room waiting times at Royal University Hospital. Twenty-four minutes to see a doctor, suffering a heart attack. Forty-five minutes to see a doctor for patients presenting with angina. And 60 minutes — a full hour — for patients presenting with chest pain.

Mr. Speaker, patients going to the emergency room at Royal University Hospital with symptoms of life-threatening heart problems are waiting for as much as an hour to see a doctor. Why?

The Speaker: — Recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the emergency room doctors at the Royal University Hospital and the other hospitals in Saskatoon, and I think other hospitals across the province, work together the best they can to provide good service for patients.

At the Royal University Hospital they've obviously been trying to keep track of what kinds of response times they have as it relates to the doctors. And they will continue to do that to make sure that they get the right balance of care for the patients.

We need to continue to make sure that people are working together to sort out these problems — to make sure that they use the resources to the best possible use for all of the Saskatchewan patients.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, these times are virtually double what the standards are for emergency room procedures across Canada. Mr. Speaker, the minister had this information yesterday. He also had the information that patients coming in to the emergency room at Royal University Hospital suffering a stroke can expect to wait between 51 and 76 minutes to see a doctor.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister think that it's acceptable for stroke victims to wait for more than an hour to see a doctor?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the staff at the emergency rooms across this province operate on a triage basis so that patients are seen very quickly to assess their condition. Those who need to be seen immediately are dealt with immediately, and they're also dealt with then in appropriate times. What this measures is not their initial contact when they come in to see the office, but it's when they get the treatment. But if somebody is in a need of immediate help when they show up in the emergency room, then they will get that.

But what we all have to do is make sure that people are watching and measuring and taking a good . . . keeping good track of how the treatment is provided so that we can do things better. And I'm very appreciative when people actually sit down and take all of this information and prepare reports to do the things that are necessary.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — The minister must be mistaken. What these statistics say is it's taking 24 minutes for a patient presenting with a heart attack to be seen by a doctor in the emergency room. Mr. Speaker, is that acceptable to this Minister of Health?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as is quite often the case the members opposite tread into areas where they don't have complete information. They have a research department that seems to be based on headlines and other places.

And what I would suggest is that we let the professionals who are working in this area . . . Both the professionals who head the emergency room and who are working in Regina, or the Royal University Hospital, and in the Regina hospitals and other hospitals across the province, they have assured me, they've assured the media, they've assured many other places that the care being provided to Saskatchewan people is very good, in fact some of the best in the country. And there are always those situations where you keep monitoring, measuring, seeing how you're doing things so you can do it better.

But I would rely on the media and I would . . . or I would rely on the professionals who are doing this and not on media and other places to get the information we need to solve these problems.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister wasn't even aware of this which is why he asked for us to table these documents yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, a medical professional by the name of Dr. Jon

Witt wrote to the Minister of Health raising these serious issues about, related to understaffing and patient safety at Royal University Hospital — issues such as one-hour patient waits for people suffering strokes; issues like patients suffering . . . waiting almost half an hour to see a doctor after suffering a heart attack.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Witt accurately stated that ER (emergency room) patients have suffered health consequences as a result of these unacceptable waiting times. And every doctor and nurse in the Royal University Hospital supports Dr. Witt.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has presented the minister with substantial evidence that Dr. Witt's concerns are legitimate and they are urgent. Will the minister do the right thing today by reinstating Dr. Witt and calling and launching for an independent investigation into the concerns that accurately and appropriately have been raised by a medical professional — Dr. Jon Witt?

The Speaker: — Recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said in this House and previously in the last couple of months, there are some challenges around the issues related to the Royal University Hospital emergency ward and related to Dr. Witt.

He had plenty of opportunity to provide information that would substantiate his claims in the appropriate procedures with the medical doctors who are the professionals involved in this particular system. He was not able to do that.

In fact, in the last 24 hours we've had a number of doctors in Saskatoon who say that the steps that were taken by the senior management in the Saskatoon Health Authority were the appropriate ones to resolve the issues around emergency care in Saskatoon.

We think that we need to support the work that all of the doctors are doing there. There are some challenges that need to be met. Let's let the professionals there deal with them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister raises the point that other emergency room doctors in Saskatoon are taking exception to Dr. Witt's procedures. Mr. Speaker, that's even a more valid reason for launching an independent investigation into this matter, led by an out-of-province medical profession with experience in emergency rooms.

Mr. Speaker, this whole mishandling of this issue has poisoned the atmosphere in the health care delivery system in Saskatoon and all of the doctors in all of the institutions need to have faith and confidence that this is being dealt with in a very appropriate way.

Will the minister launch an independent investigation led by an out-of-province person with a high reputation in emergency room procedures so that we can change the atmosphere in the Royal University Hospital and the other institutions in

Saskatoon?

The Speaker: — Recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as an old basketball player and coach, I spent a lot of time over the winter watching basketball games. And when you have no defence, you go hard on offence.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite is somewhat embarrassed by the research that they've done in this particular case to show that they did not have all of the facts when they were dealing with this issue over the last couple of days. I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we let the professionals who are involved deal with the issues because they have all of the perspective.

This is a long-standing challenge within the Saskatoon Health Authority that many people have been working at to develop emergency care system. But we do know that even with some of the challenges that they have there, Saskatoon has been recognized as one of the fourth or fifth best health care systems in the country, and that includes the emergency services that are provided to patients.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Academic Health Sciences Centre at University of Saskatchewan

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Two weeks shy of last fall's election, the NDP (New Democratic Party) made a significant commitment to build an academic health sciences centre at the University of Saskatchewan. Might I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that this idea was borrowed from the Saskatchewan Party.

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't help but notice that any . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I just want to make sure I can hear the question. Carry on please, member.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Any mention of this major initiative was noticeably absent from last week's Speech from the Throne. The lack of a mention of a major project was surprising, especially given the fanfare that this centre was announced with.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier: on what day will construction begin on the academic health sciences centre at the University of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to welcome the new member to the House. He's clearly not terribly familiar with some of the process we use here. We don't enumerate every initiative of ours in the Throne Speech, but I'm very happy that he's asked this question today.

Undoubtedly, as the Minister of Finance announces his budget next week, there'll be more news and a further announcement on the progress of the new academic health sciences facility.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Bursary Program and Employment Opportunities for Nurses

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — My question is for the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, there's been a lot of talk lately about the pressing need to recruit and retain young health care professionals in Saskatchewan. Over the last few weeks, the Saskatchewan Party has been contacted by nursing students who have been told they will not receive their final payments of their nursing bursaries because of funding cuts. These bursaries are an important tool to keeping young health care professionals working in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will nurses continue to receive support from the bursary program in the coming year?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the nursing bursary programs continue along with the other bursaries that we have for other professions. Each year they change a little bit, based on the information that we get from all of the regional health authorities and other employers within the province to reflect what will be anticipated, the areas where we will need more people.

(14:15)

But we're continuing to support the nursing bursary programs. And if there are any problems involved with any individual people, those kinds of issues can be raised and we will respond to them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, nurses have seen your changes before — that's what they're worried about. Nurses have also contacted our office and are concerned about the feasibility of the bursary program.

Nursing students who have graduated recently, or are about to graduate, are telling us they cannot find full-time work in Saskatchewan. There is a serious problem here, Mr. Speaker. Nursing graduates who are . . . who desperately need to stay in Saskatchewan, who we need to stay in Saskatchewan, and who want to stay cannot find full-time employment.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why is the NDP unable to provide recent nursing graduates will full-time employment in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask that member to give me the names of all of these people who are not able to find jobs and I will pass them on to the health authorities.

What happens in Saskatchewan, and many of them are trained in Saskatoon, sometimes they're not always able to find jobs specifically in the areas that they want in Saskatoon, but there are many other parts of the province that require nurses. But we will work with anybody who puts their name forward because there are needs right across the province. We'll continue to do that.

Now part of the challenge always is that some . . . that people have individual circumstances that they need to work with. We'll work with that as well. But clearly the goal is to get our nurses in Saskatchewan working in Saskatchewan jobs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Young nursing graduates are also concerned about recent closures of units at hospitals in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and the effect those closures have on their ability to remain employed in Saskatchewan full time.

One young nurse who graduated last year expressed these concerns to the Saskatchewan Party in an e-mail, and I quote:

. . . at the General (and) Pasqua . . . (hospitals) bumping and layoffs will be happening . . . due to closures of two-plus units and not having positions for these people who are getting bumped . . .

The nurse, who does not want to be identified for fear of losing his or her job, goes on:

That puts the future of RN's in a situation where staff with higher seniority will be able to push us out of our positions. This includes mine.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why does the NDP government continue to say one thing when their actions say otherwise? Why are young nursing graduates unable to find full-time employment in Saskatchewan if keeping our young people here is such a priority?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the nurses in Saskatchewan — I think almost 100 per cent, if not 100 per cent of them — have found work within Saskatchewan, as it relates within the first year. They don't find it right away, but they get those jobs right away.

In Regina, with the reorganization using the labour contracts that are in place with SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses), the bumping processes go on. There are 41 nursing positions in Regina that have been affected, but there are 41 jobs for those people once all of the readjustment takes place.

What happens though according to the collective agreement is that some people with seniority may bump somebody who's

junior from a job that they're accustomed to or used to, and that's really a challenge. But I know that management tries to work with the employees and with all of the staff to make sure everybody has a place to work.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that the minister may have spent much too much time on the basketball court because his math leaves lots to be desired.

Mr. Speaker, nursing graduates are saying that while the bursary idea is a good idea, the fact that they cannot find full-time work in the province means that they will be bidding their time in casual positions, having difficulty making ends meet.

The nurse I mentioned in my previous question also writes, and I quote:

I have just bought a car and a house in Regina and was going to make Saskatchewan my home . . . I will have to sell my house, car and most likely end up in Alberta or head south to where the jobs . . . are stable and where you do not have to worry about your future.

I fear . . .

Her words, not mine.

I fear . . . (the) province will be worse off with all young staff leaving . . .

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: if retaining young health care professionals is such a priority to this NDP government, why are young nursing graduates being forced to look outside the province for stable employment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, all of the health authorities in the province are interested in getting our new young grads working in their system.

There are sometimes challenges, as there have been in Regina, related to the bumping and the agreement. But I think that the people who are training to be nurses understand that these are some of the ways that their jobs have been protected and developed and enhanced over the years, and they need to work with that.

We are also working . . . the regional health authorities together with the union to try to sort out many of these challenges that arise. But I think that each individual who has a concern should raise those issues with the regional health authority.

I ask, I urge the member opposite to provide me with all the names of people that he has that are going out-of-province, so

that we can make sure we give them special attention. Our goal is to provide work for these people in the province, and we're going to do that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Employment of Former Member of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, The Labour Standards Act guarantees that any Saskatchewan person who wishes to seek public office is entitled to a leave of absence from their employer, and it guarantees their job back after their term of office ends. Every employer in Saskatchewan is required to follow this law, yet the Department of Justice, the department that is supposed to uphold the laws of our province, appears to be breaking this law.

Mr. Speaker, and to you to the Minister of Justice: why is the NDP government refusing to give Jack Hillson back his job at the Legal Aid Commission.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that Jack Hillson has commenced an action against the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission, as a result of his termination of employment. As the member from Saskatoon Southeast knows, having been a Chair of the Legal Aid Commission from 1988 to 1992, the commission acts at arm's-length from the government, is independent of the government.

The Government of Saskatchewan, the Department of Justice was not consulted about this personnel decision by the commission. It was not directed to make this personnel decision by the commission. And I'm sure the member from Saskatoon Southeast, when he was Chair of the Legal Aid Commission, would have brooked no political interference when he was carrying out his duties in that position.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm well aware of the position that the Legal Aid Commission is entitled to take as being arm's-length from government. But Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order. Order. Could the member start over please.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm well aware of the position that the Legal Aid Commission is entitled to take. But Mr. Speaker, the Legal Aid Commission is appointed by this hon. government, and is entitled to be bound by and is required to be bound by the laws of this province, and it is funded fully by this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Morgan:— And, Mr. Speaker, section 80 of The Labour Standards Act is very clear. It says at the end of the term of office an employee is entitled to continue his employment without any loss of privilege. Yet the NDP government is refusing to give Mr. Hillson his job back, a direct violation of The Labour Standards Act.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, that the Department of Justice obtained a legal opinion indicating that Mr. Hillson was entitled to his job back. Will the minister table that opinion today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I don't believe I have a legal opinion that states that he's entitled to his job back. I again remind, Mr. Speaker, through you to the House, to the people of Saskatchewan, and to the member of Saskatoon Southeast, who I can't believe has forgotten, that the commission is independent, that it acts at arm's-length from the government, that if the member is asking that we take over independent commissions whenever they do . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order. We were able to hear the question. I would now like to hear the complete answer. The Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — If the member is asking that we interfere with every commission, as independent of the government, when it does something that somebody doesn't like, then that's a precedent that this government is not willing to set. I'll remind the member from Saskatoon Southeast, through you, Mr. Speaker, that this matter is now before the courts, that the interpretation of the legislation is now before the courts, and the parties and the Government of Saskatchewan will respect the decision of the courts in this matter.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Saskatchewan Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Justice is, what kind of message does this send to other members of the civil service that may wish to be seeking public office, and what kind of message does this send to current members of this House that may well have to go back to their jobs in the private sector, or elsewhere in the public sector? What kind of message and what kind of responsibility is this government going to take for those individuals who wish to serve the public in that manner? What kind of responsibility is there on this government, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Look, let's have the members of this House understand a few things that have been identified in this question period. First of all, we have a former head of the Legal

Aid Commission standing in this House today, now saying that the government of the day should overrule or interfere in the functions of the Legal Aid Commission.

Is that a position, is that a position taken by the new Leader of the Official Opposition? And the gall, the gall, Mr. Speaker, of this opposition now standing talking about the protection of public servants in this province when it was this opposition, Mr. Speaker, this opposition that had compiled a list of public servants. Had they arrived on this side of the House, thousands of people's lives would have been affected.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is this — we will respect the independence of those bodies which function independently of government, and this government will respect the due process of the law.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I point out to the Premier, through you, that it is an offence to violate The Labour Standards Act. Will this government do the right thing and ensure that commissions that are under their direct control comply with their own law and ensure that they do not commit an offence, and that the people that they appoint to that commission assume responsibility for the acts and that they remain in compliance with the Labour Standards Act, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the . . . Order, order. Recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the current Chair of the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission is a former president to the Law Society of Saskatchewan. I think he is aware of his legal and ethical obligations. If The Labour Standards Act or any other legislation's been violated, the matter is now before the courts and the courts will determine whether that is or not the case.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. Morin, seconded by Mr. Borgerson.

(14:30)

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chisholm: — Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to be addressing this Legislative Assembly of this great province for the first time. I am, however, not a man of many words. The constituents of the new riding of Cut Knife-Turtleford, my community, and my family know that. And I thank them for understanding that and accepting that I might serve them in a better way.

So in preparing this address — an address I find myself both honoured and humbled in delivering — I found myself taking part in the age-old tradition of making my way to the Legislative Library to read transcripts and see how other members have approached this daunting task. I received tremendous support from the librarians there whom, I must say, acted as if they had seen someone in my position before.

Mr. Speaker, I was inspired in reading through the addresses delivered by hon. members as they entered the twenty-fourth Legislative Assembly. Many of the addresses that interested me most were written by those members who have gone on to be this Chamber's and this province's most genuine leaders.

In all of the addresses, I sensed that I was not only reading words but experiencing an insight into the individual men and women who have served this House — individuals who through their own convictions and beliefs, and through voicing the concerns and ideas of their constituents, have shaped this province.

I found myself hearing their voices, voices soaked into the history of this legislature since 1905. I found insight reading the speech of the hon. member of Saskatoon Greystone in 1991, our Lieutenant Governor. She said:

There must be no more ducking the numbers . . . The people want the financial mess (of) this province cleared up . . . They want the books opened.

Mr. Speaker, in 2002 we saw a \$483 million deficit. In 2003 we saw this deficit grow to \$654 million. The Provincial Auditor estimates another \$477 million for 2004. And, Mr. Speaker, we've been told that these are in fact balanced budgets.

Now some people find the study of accounting to be a difficult task. That may be, but the basic concepts are quite easy to grasp. We know this because these are the same concepts that we must grasp if we are to survive in the business world, the operation of our family farms, and the sustainability of our household affairs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chisholm: — Mr. Speaker, if you spend more than you take in you create a shortfall. This shortfall must be addressed if you are going to be able to continue to operate and to survive.

I quote in part:

You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.
You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.
You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the

wage payer. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you earn. And you cannot help people permanently by doing for them what they could and should be doing themselves.

Mr. Speaker, these were the words of a different time and place. These were the words of Abraham Lincoln.

I was honoured by reading the address of the hon. member from Swift Current in 1999. I was not only convinced by what was written, but found myself encouraged to know that these convictions were those of a 30-something-year-old man graced with the Saskatchewan work ethic that so many of our young people possess.

Mr. Speaker, I share the vision of the member from Swift Current, our Leader of the Official Opposition. And I quote:

That vision includes lower taxes and better health care, improved highways, and a long term safety net for our farmers. It is a vision that calls for us to place a higher priority on providing a place to work and live for our young people when they graduate.

I was very interested in, and indeed impressed by an address made in 1986 by the hon. member, then from Moose Jaw South and now representing Saskatoon Riversdale.

It was obvious from the transcript that our Premier is an experienced orator and a man of considerable skill. I was intrigued when the hon. minister referred to himself in this address as a preacher by trade, and asked this House permission to conclude his address in what he called a sermon. May I say to that hon. member and this House that this sermon had a profound effect on me.

I was struck by the mastery of the words, Mr. Speaker, and how he wove his thoughts and beliefs together to connect with everyone in the congregation in front of him. He spoke about the happiness that he has found in service. Happiness from service. In a day and age when politicians are being questioned about their values and motives I was heartened to read that. He spoke about how he believed that we would not be judged by how well we served the privileged, but rather judged by how well we have served the very least among us.

And it was then, quietly at first but louder and louder, that I began to hear another voice — my own. Because I am privileged — I am privileged to live in Saskatchewan. But I do not believe we serve those least among us by keeping them least among us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chisholm: — I believe we serve those least among us by giving them the responsibility, right, and reason to put their feet on the floor every morning. We serve those least among us by giving them the chance to serve their community, even on the days, perhaps especially on the days, when that doesn't bring them happiness.

In the challenges that face this 25th Legislative Assembly,

challenges that will make or break us as the people of Saskatchewan, it unfortunately will not be our happiness that sustain us, but our collective purpose and willingness to work hard and sacrifice.

We serve those least among us by not making just laws . . . by making just laws, fair laws, firm laws that protect us and our families. We serve those least among us by eliciting opportunity for . . . from our province, driving progress and retaining the kinds of industrious people who craft worthwhile endeavours and who invite others to take full part in the success and lessons learned in those worthwhile endeavours.

This government must begin to serve those least among us by acting in a way that earns and deserves their trust. We serve those least among us by educating and enhancing the wellness of all our children, better than any other place in the world, and constructing systems that will guarantee that their grandchildren and great-grandchildren and my grandchildren and great-grandchildren will receive a world-class calibre of service and complete accountability from the leaders who serve this House.

And with that voice I started to hear others — the voices of my constituents, my parents, my sons, and the voices of those hon. members before us. The voices were asking some tough questions. Is it our collective happiness as MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) that is going to restore this province's population, its communities, and its balance sheet? Can we create the kind of province that people want to be part of? Who and where are the people who will run the best education, health care, and public service in our province?

Mr. Speaker, I ask myself indeed who, who will be left to occupy these seats and share in this Assembly if we keep losing Saskatchewan's people — the very same people that we represent?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chisholm: — I would like to ask this House to consider the reputation of this 25th Legislative Assembly. We would be far more worthy of the trust that others have placed in us if we said less to impress and did more to look at the real facts and craft real solutions to the reality that is looking at us down the barrel of economic disaster.

Mr. Speaker, the constituency of Cut Knife-Turtleford, in the Northwest of our province, is blessed with rich agricultural land and hard-working and dedicated constituents. Agriculture continues to be the backbone of our communities. It has been a trying time these past few years, with drought, low commodity prices, high input costs, and the problems in the livestock industry.

We are also blessed with generous oil and natural gas reserves. In fact, it is the oil and gas industry that has largely provided our area the ability to survive the downturn in the agriculture industry.

In the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* on March 9, 2004 our Premier was quoted regarding equalization payments as saying:

As ludicrous as this may sound, what it means is that our province in the fiscal year 2000-2001 would have been fiscally better off under the current formula if we had closed in every oil and gas well and sent the industry away.

I can assure this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that those remarks were indeed ludicrous. In my constituency, for those who derive their tax-paying jobs from this industry, for the agriculture community that benefits from its presence, for those involved in the spinoff services that are required and provided, and for this government itself, which collects millions and millions of dollars in income tax, sales tax, fuel tax, etc., this statement, and those in this vein, are indeed ludicrous.

Our constituency is not and does not want to be a part of the have-not philosophy, whereby we rely or depend on the successes of other regions of this great country.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people from Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency for giving me the opportunity to represent them. I would like to thank my wife, Heather, my mom and dad, my three sons, and my friends for their support and encouragement. I would like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues on both sides of the House for welcoming me to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the Throne Speech. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Cumberland, the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tansi. I will like to offer you my congratulations on your election as Speaker. Your election to the office of Speaker by your colleagues in the House shows our respect both for you and for the high office you hold. I am a new elected member to this House and I know you will guide me well and hopefully with some degree of patience as I learn the ways and the rules of the House.

I also want to congratulate the hon. member for Swift Current on his election as Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Finally I also want to formally congratulate all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on their election. I know we will represent with interest . . . the interests of our constituents well and with passion.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of my background and my roots. As a mark of respect to the elders of my community, and with your indulgence and those of my colleagues in the House, I will say a few words in my own language during the course of my remarks.

I want to begin by recognizing some very important and very special people in my life and in my community. I want to make

tribute to my parents Oscar and Jean Beatty and to my late grandmother Angelique Ballantyne for being such great role models and inspirations.

My dad is 80 years old this month and my mother is 75. Both continue to commercial fish and trap. My parents continue to be respected elders and leaders in our community and for the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. It was through their example and guidance that I decided to run for office. I am so thankful that they are still alive today and I do wish my grandmother was still around, but I know she too is watching.

I also want to thank my eight brothers and four sisters and thirty-three nieces and nephews for always being there for me.

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

(14:45)

I thank the people in my constituency who gave me so much support during the nomination and again during the election campaign. I was touched by so many people: a family of five who walked 12 miles from their trapline to come and vote, the trappers in La Ronge who bought memberships at the urging of Elder Bob Keighley, Philip Eninew and his partner who hitchhiked and walked 75 miles to come out and vote.

I now want to tell you a little bit about myself. I am a member of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation in Deschambault Lake. It's a beautiful, small community, about 1,000 people, surrounded by lakes and water. Because there was no school in Deschambault Lake, I didn't start school until I was just about 10 years old. I attended a mission school in Timber Bay. I was away from home for about 10 months of the year. That was very hard and very lonely. I also didn't know how to speak English.

For the most part, the two years I spent there were good for me. I still had to do my chores and I still had to learn about God and my devotions, just like I had to do at home. The only thing that was bad about my experience in Timber Bay was just about losing my Cree language and awfully . . . and missing my family awfully, a lot. And this is . . . and like so many others that have experienced the residential schools, most of the impact they are starting . . . they're continuing to feel today.

It was during this time that my father and others worked to have local governments and services established in the North. Things started to change in the North because of this hard work. These were the DNS days, Department of Northern Saskatchewan. Until the late 1970s our community was without a school, no phones, and no road. We had no health services.

Today we have a high school in my community. We have a road and we have health services. And later on this year, we're going to be opening an indoor arena. Also today we have a voice in government. I also saw the establishment of a strong co-op commercial fishery and a co-op store established in my community. My dad formed this co-operative about 57 years ago and he's still the president today.

We also have a strong co-management committee in our community that decides how our natural resources and fishery are managed. The values of working together and sharing are

based on our way of life in the North and as Aboriginal people. I was raised on the same values.

Mr. Speaker, let me make a few comments about my home and my constituency. The Cumberland constituency is one of the largest constituencies in Saskatchewan. The Cumberland constituency has a population of nearly 19,000, mostly Cree people, about 45 per cent of whom are under the age of 24 living in a number of communities scattered across the northeast quarter of Saskatchewan including Wollaston, La Ronge, Creighton, Cumberland House, and Deschambault Lake just to name a few.

The two largest First Nations in Saskatchewan are found in my constituency — the La Ronge Cree Nation and the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. The Montreal Lake First Nation, the Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation, and the Cumberland House Cree Nation are also in my riding.

Our major industries are tourism, mineral resource development, forestry, commercial fishing, and trapping. The Rabbit Lake, Key Lake, McClean Lake uranium mines are also located in the constituency. The Contact Lake gold mine is also located in the area.

The smallest community is Kinoosao, past Reindeer Lake. I visited this lovely community two weeks ago, and I want to thank the community for a wonderful meal of caribou meat and bannock. I especially want to thank the students for the beautiful welcome sign they made for me.

It's events like these that are truly one of the most rewarding experiences of my political life so far — being with children, youth, and elders out in the communities. By the way, in Kinoosao the local health worker, Shirley Clarke, tells me there is no fetal alcohol syndrome disorder in their community and that is something they can be very proud of.

I want to recognize the work of my predecessor, Mr. Keith Goulet. Keith Goulet represented the people of Cumberland constituency and the people of Saskatchewan in this House for over 15 years. Mr. Goulet worked tirelessly to serve the interests of his constituents, particularly in the area of education. I continue to draw on his wisdom and advice, as this is the way of our people.

I truly appreciate the work of others who came before me as representatives of the Cumberland constituency, like Norman MacAuley and the late Lawrence Yew. They were great leaders for the people of the North and for this province. And it is indeed an honour to be here as the first Aboriginal woman, as the first First Nations person in the legislature and in cabinet.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — I say this in humility and to honour those elders who said to me, this is what you must do for the future of our young people who want so much to be full participating citizens of this province.

I also want to say a few things about my ministerial duties — my duties as Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation and as Provincial Secretary.

I want to start by making some remarks about Culture, Youth and Recreation. I'm especially pleased that the Premier and my caucus colleagues have given such a high profile to youth, and issues facing youth.

Mr. Speaker, as mentioned in the Throne Speech, our goal is to make Saskatchewan the first choice of opportunity for our young people. We are making Saskatchewan ready for the next generation through education and opportunity. For example, the Career Start program will prepare youth for career opportunities in Saskatchewan and connect youth to jobs.

The School^{PLUS} model will be expanded to more schools. We will enhance the post-secondary graduate tax credit for our students. We all agree that the young people of today and tomorrow, particularly our Aboriginal youth, are the bridge to building a green and prosperous future together.

We want to access the knowledge, skills, and commitment that youth have for the environment with the establishment of the green team program for youth. To further grow our prosperous and environmentally friendly economy, the government is expanding the immigrant nominee program, further enhancing green power, and establishing the youth entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan program, just to name a few.

Enhancing the quality of life in Saskatchewan is another way this government is making Saskatchewan ready for the future and the next generation. Some ways of doing this are to ensure health dollars are used most effectively for the benefit of Saskatchewan people and reducing waiting times for surgery and diagnostic imaging.

Our government will also be introducing a new housing strategy for low-income families; strengthening Saskatchewan's volunteers, communities, and families; and building a stronger Saskatchewan by tackling fair equalization, health care, and fiscal imbalance.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be minister of a department that is playing a key role in leadership development for youth. The department will work with our partners in the sport, culture, and recreation systems in helping our young people develop the skills needed to be our leaders of tomorrow. We will reach out to youth leaders in meaningful dialogue with government and assist young people and connect them to the workforce and real jobs.

Our centennial student employment program has placed over 3,600 students in 100 communities in good jobs related to their field of study or chosen career path. As we work to involve youth in government decision making, we have established the Provincial Youth Advisory Committee which includes Aboriginal and rural representation. Our SaskYouth.net Web site makes it easier for youth to find government services and many other services they need on-line.

Saskatchewan is a great place to live and work and the department works to support our quality of life through the diversity of our sports, culture, and recreation activities. These sectors are key to sustaining Saskatchewan's quality of life, for making people call Saskatchewan home, and for building the next generation.

The department is ensuring that Saskatchewan is the pride of culture for all people. Our province has long recognized the importance of access to sports, culture, and recreation in our communities. Visionary public policy in the 1970s ensured long-term funding through lottery profits to support these activities.

Today a network of more than 12,000 community organizations receive funding from Saskatchewan lottery systems. In turn these non-profit groups assume responsibility for a wide range of community development initiatives, as well as identify, develop, and deliver a comprehensive array of sport, culture, and recreation programming.

I am proud that our department is the steward of such an important asset for all Saskatchewan people. Our department is dedicated to ensuring Saskatchewan citizens receive the greatest benefit from the 60-million-plus annual investment in sports, culture, and recreation. This investment leverages hundreds of millions of dollars in economic opportunities to the province.

Sports, culture, and recreation ensure that people have significant opportunities to develop relationships in their communities, to build commitment to their communities and to their social networks. Our government has many initiatives to help ensure that people in the North, particularly Aboriginal young people, can participate freely in a variety of sport, culture, and recreation activities.

I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work and dedication of our three primary sport, culture, and recreation delivery organizations in northern Saskatchewan, which are the Northern Recreation Coordinating Committee, community and recreation, and the regional recreation associations.

One of the department's priorities is to encourage increased access and opportunities for First Nations, Métis, and northerners. We provide support to many northern initiatives, including the northern leadership program, the Aboriginal participation initiative, and the Northern Diabetes Prevention Coalition.

Through these efforts, Culture, Youth and Recreation is working to improve accessibility to sport, recreation, and culture programs in the North, developing capacity and expertise for northerners to deliver programs for northerners, and increasing opportunities for the children and youth of northern Saskatchewan.

Research clearly shows the importance sport, culture, and recreation play in the development of key life skills associated with successful social participation. This is important for all young people of Saskatchewan, whose participation in these activities will build the skills needed later in their careers. We know that the skills obtained by participating in culture, recreation, and sport build character, build pride, and build future leaders.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — It's critical that we provide opportunities that encourage youth to further their education and to facilitate opportunities now so they are well prepared to assume strong,

successful roles in the work force.

Funding is available through the Community Initiatives Fund and Saskatchewan lottery proceeds to increase leadership and participation opportunities for Aboriginal people. We are committed to making sport, culture, and recreation accessible to all Saskatchewan people. In Saskatchewan the participation of Aboriginal people in business and in all levels of the economy is essential for the prosperity of this province. This is what the First Nations and Métis people want. This is also key to the well-being of the province, since there can be no social progress without economic progress.

The department also has responsibility for heritage programs, including the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Saskatchewan centennial in 2005, the Saskatchewan Archives Board, and reporting responsibility for the Saskatchewan Communications Network. As we face the challenges of today and prepare for tomorrow, the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation will be refocusing many of its efforts to providing more of a role of policy leadership and stewardship and accountability in the sport, culture, and recreation system.

(15:00)

Our department will work closely with its partners in the system including Sask Sport, SaskCulture, Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation, the Saskatchewan Arts Board, and SaskFILM to ensure the priorities I have been mentioning are reflected in their program development and delivery throughout their member organizations.

We will work to enhance the opportunities and contributions of these sectors to help grow the economy and employment for our people. We are dedicated, especially to ensuring that our young people can reach their fullest potential with meaningful roles and careers that stay in Saskatchewan.

Culture, Youth and Recreation is a small department in government, but coupled with the efforts of an expansive sport, culture, and recreation system we touch the lives of most of our province's people in a positive way. I know, as does our department and its key partners, that sport, culture, and recreation are some of the keys to the future success of this province.

While the hon. member from Moose Jaw North, the Legislative Secretary responsible for the centennial, will make more detailed remarks about the centennial, I want to take the opportunity today to say a few words about Saskatchewan's centennial.

Next year in 2005, our province will celebrate its centennial — 100 years since joining the Confederation of Canada in 1905. Saskatchewan is an extraordinary place where our creativity built a province and contributed to building a nation. The centennial of our province gives us the opportunity to look in two directions at once — backwards to acknowledge and celebrate our past accomplishments and forward with optimism based on pride in our past and hope in our future.

Saskatchewan's centennial provides many positive opportunities for our province in the areas of legacies for our

communities, a renewed sense of pride in our province, and economic growth.

The ideas and involvement of Saskatchewan's First Nations and Métis people are an important part of our centennial for they have contributed significantly to the growth and prosperity of this province, not just these past 100 years, but for the First Nations people for thousands of years.

In the coming months I encourage all Saskatchewan people to become involved in our province's centennial. I encourage everyone to work together to make 2005 a significant milestone in the history of our province. We want 2005 to showcase the province's same unique spirit that built this province and that will lead us into a green and prosperous future.

I now want to take a few moments to make some comments about the role of the Provincial Secretary and her office. As Provincial Secretary I am committed to honouring and promoting Saskatchewan's identity, heritage, and the achievements and contributions of our people. The Provincial Secretary includes the Government House heritage property and the department's protocol and honours function.

Government House heritage property combines a museum, hospitality facility, and the offices of the Lieutenant Governor in one of Saskatchewan's premier historic sites, and is preparing a major development project to mark the provincial centennial in 2005.

The office of protocol and honours is responsible for managing a comprehensive honours and awards program, including official honours of the provincial Crown and employee recognition and for organizing a wide range of official visits from diplomats, foreign delegations, and members of the royal family.

Government House and the office of protocol and honours work with members of the public and with organizations sharing an interest in Saskatchewan's heritage, culture, and the promotion of the accomplishments of Saskatchewan people.

Saskatchewan will once again be welcoming a member of the royal family. The Princess Royal will visit the province from June 4 to 7 of this year to help celebrate the significant 60th anniversary of the D-Day landings and take part in a number of special events. It is a great honour for Saskatchewan and a wonderful tribute to our war veterans that we are the only province to have a member of the royal family present for this historic anniversary. In addition to the D-Day anniversary, the Princess Royal will visit a hospital, receive an honorary degree from the University of Regina, attend a major Aboriginal event, and celebrate the centennial of the town of Battleford.

As Provincial Secretary it is my privilege to administer our province's honours and awards program. Our honours and awards allow all of us in Saskatchewan to celebrate the best our province has to offer. The recipients of Saskatchewan's honours and awards are individuals who have shown us what can be done when we persevere in using our talents in following our ideals and in serving others.

The province's centennial in 2005 affords countless

opportunities for Saskatchewan people to express their pride in the province. Many events are being initiated throughout the province to mark this historic milestone. I know the people of Saskatchewan will use their creativity to showcase the wonderful history and spirit of our province.

Work continues on the expansion of Government House to ensure that the province's historical property plays a central role in the centennial celebrations. The provincial government has committed 2.2 million over four years from the Centenary Fund towards this project. This historic property is a symbol and a testament to the people who governed this province and dreamed of seeing Saskatchewan become the great place to live, work in, and raise a family that it is today.

We also recently announced that in 2005, we will unveil the statue of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II riding her favourite horse, Burmese. By unveiling this unique sculpture in 2005, we will celebrate the dedicated service to Canada of our Queen and also commemorate our province's centennial.

As First Nations people, I want to mention that the treaties symbolize the unique relationship we have with the Queen. And I just want to add how important the treaties are to this province. We're all signatories to that treaty and they're over 100 years old.

And I want to add that in my own community, for over 100 years, we were not on reserve land, and that's what we were allotted under Treaty Six. It wasn't until about seven years ago our community was able to get that land back through the treaty land entitlement initiative. So treaties are very important to us; not only in terms of on issues of land, but also in terms of treaty rights. I am thankful for the work that has been done by the NDP government in northern Saskatchewan for all citizens of this province. And I know that we still have much to do.

And in closing, I want to say that I am confident that we will continue moving forward under this NDP government. And as we begin this, the twenty-fifth session of the legislature, I want to say a phrase from my Cree language. And it goes something like this: be positive and focus on working together.

(The member spoke for a time in Cree.)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: —Recognize the member for Lloydminster.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a real privilege to be able to stand and to make some comments on the Throne Speech for this new session of our legislature.

First off, I think it's very appropriate to congratulate all the new members for their election and for the exceptional quality of their addresses to this legislature. I think they're setting a standard and a level that the rest of us are going to have a challenge to keep up to, but I'll try and maintain that. And so, Mr. Speaker, if you see the quality of the debate diminishing, just bring it to my attention, and we'll see if we can lift the bar a little bit.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I think you really have

to make sure then when we're talking about a Throne Speech is to put forward a vision of optimism. That is the role of the Throne Speech — a vision of the direction that we want to go and what we should be building on in terms of the achievements that have already been accomplished in this province.

And I guess one idea . . . I heard the Throne Speech, and I have read through it since that time. I'm wondering in my mind what was really achieved by this Throne speech. Where was the roadmap, the roadmap so to speak, that we need to believe in in this province so that we can get to where we feel that we need to be?

And I'm sure . . . And I think in this Throne Speech I really feel that there was an opportunity lost in trying to bring a prospective into this province based on where we want to go. After all this is a centennial year, and I want to comment on that a little bit further on. But I was very pleased that the member from Cumberland was able to talk a little bit about her vision on the centennial year because I didn't see much of it in the Throne Speech, and I think it's an essential item that should have been there.

When I looked in the conclusion of the Throne Speech, I see the government's vision. And if I could, Mr. Speaker, I'll quote:

. . . (our vision) making life even better for Saskatchewan families in every region of our province with focus on supporting the future of our young people in (our) . . . province.

And it's a very noble vision I'm sure, but I guess what we need to focus on is how are we going to be able to achieve that. There was some things talked about in the Throne Speech. But ultimately the conditions have to be in place to make sure that we can have an opportunity for all these young people in this province. And that is where the Throne Speech really let me down.

I'm hoping that we will be able to see some of the details come forward and some of the plans come forward when we see the budget speech later on. But on the basis of the province's track record, I'm not sure that we can accomplish what the government is trying to put forward in that vision.

There is almost nothing in the Throne Speech that I could read about the economic development of the province and the continuing need to have that economy drive the tax base so that we can achieve those kinds of things needed for the vision of making our young people . . . allowing the opportunity for our young people, rather.

I have five granddaughters in this province, and I would dearly like to see the opportunities fulfill in this province by the time they get into the workforce so that they are allowed to stay here, choose a life here in Saskatchewan. And I'll be talking a little bit about that.

The only thing I saw in the legislature, in the Throne Speech that talked about a legislative agenda were things like amending The Labour Standards Act, and there was some reasons for that, and that's fine.

They talked about tobacco legislation, and that will be an interesting discussion that comes on. And they also talked about enshrining the Crown corporations as the utility monopoly in this province. Now that has really a lot of concern, and I'm anxious to see what that legislation is all about. It's going to be interesting on one hand to talk about the market principles that needed to be in place in this province, and on the other hand to have a government-directed policy through the Crowns into those utilities.

It may be that Saskatchewan is the only jurisdiction in Canada, maybe in North America, that has a monopoly on totally publicly owned utilities. So my question I guess would be, are we right and everybody else is wrong, or where are we going in this province with the utilities?

When we talked about the centennial year, I really think it has to state what we really want to achieve. Is there an opportunity – and this I think was an opportunity lost – to put that vision forward for the next number of years, since this is our centennial year? It's a vision that I think our pioneer people from the past, our forefathers would require us to put forward this vision to make sure that the people that follow us have an idea of where the province is going to go.

The people in the past, our forefathers, gave us a plan and a strategy to get to where we are, and they've produced . . . the results of their efforts and their vision is what we have today, and it's . . . and Saskatchewan is the result and it's a great place with a great deal of potential. Now we need to look at the next several years as we get into the centennial year and that's really quite an important part.

(15:15)

When I looked at other vision statements and other throne speeches, there was a lot of the kind of vision that I would have anticipated in this Throne Speech, particularly for the centennial year.

I noticed recently when I was attending a function, the Premier of Alberta talked about his vision for the year 2005, and talking about a deficit-free budgeting and putting that in legislation. He talked about debt free within the next couple of years and putting that in legislation. And through that they were able to start visioning about what they can do for safe communities in terms of crime, and infrastructure, and social services, and focusing on health and education. That's the kind of visioning that I think is very important and what we can . . . we need to use that as a benchmark from where we are here.

They talk about a 20-year strategy plan, and they talk about moving into the future with a business plan and things like key pillars that they want to make sure that directs both the business professional and people's lives as they move toward achieving those opportunities that are there.

I looked at the opportunities that were put forward in the Manitoba Throne Speech and the vision there was very clear as well, and much more specific in terms of what the Government of Manitoba wanted from their Throne Speech to be directed to the people so that the people could start feeling comfortable and confident that there was a long-term plan and a future.

They talked about things like debt reduction, paying down the debt. They talked about putting gas and diesel tax toward highways and roads. There's a couple of positive examples of where they wanted the direction to go in terms of the legislature that was before them; wanted to make sure that the federal tax dollars were in fact directed to the road infrastructure. And they talked specifically about the young people, the 15-to-24 age group, which in fact in Manitoba over the . . . since 2003 had increased over a thousand, just that age group, the most important age group. And certainly that's not the record that we have here the . . . in Saskatchewan. And they want to make sure that they have opportunities and expanding opportunities for that age group that are there and hopefully will come back to do that.

They talked about rural education — rural and northern education — and the training and retention in the health care. They even talked about new technologies that were . . . they've been working on in the health section. For instance, something called a Gamma Knife, which I'm not sure what it is, but I think it would be a very interesting technology to pursue. Those are the kinds of visioning that has gone . . . they're putting forward in our province to the east. There's a lot of that kind of visioning that I think is really important.

Now even in . . . When I was doing a bit of a research, I noticed that even in North Dakota — what we have to compete against in terms of our young people and financing and where investments are made — I noticed in North Dakota they used something like . . . Even though they've put their programs together, they've been looking for additional efficiencies and opportunities to save taxpayers' money. Now isn't that a different approach.

And I've also noticed that they too have a six-pillar platform based on education and economic development and agriculture, energy, technology and quality of life. Those are some examples of some of the visioning that I never found in the Throne Speech that was delivered just a few days ago.

I ran across an interesting name. It was called in-sourcing — a word, in-sourcing. That word in-sourcing was applied in the context of a study done in North Carolina. They have found that instead of outsourcing, in other words money and jobs going outside of the state to get the required results, they were attracting money and jobs into the state. They were in-sourcing the kinds of things that they wanted to be developed there. And that was based on their ability to have advanced technology, an attractive location, and a workforce, a well, highly trained workforce based on modern research.

Gee, wouldn't that be nice to be able to have that for us here in this particular province. To achieve these visions that — I've given you examples from other jurisdictions — to achieve these visions, we need confidence. Confidence is the key word. Without that confidence, both in the future, and confidence to invest into our province and invest without the competition of government tax-paying money, and confidence to build.

We need to attract these dollars, both from outside the province; we need to in-source that back into Saskatchewan. We also need to attract, of course, people from the outside; we need to attract businesses and corporations and expertise. And we want

to make sure that we can build the confidence of the people that are here, have had the faith in our province to remain, and make sure the businesses expand and prosper so that those kind of opportunities will be available for our young people, and particularly people like my grandchildren, into the future.

To do that we need to get the fundamentals right. And the fundamentals need to be right because it is a very competitive world. The dollars can be invested anywhere at the stroke of a pen or the touch of a button. People can locate in various places very quickly and easily, and people will migrate to where those jobs are available based on the growing economy. And in regions and economies that are trying to expand the economic pie — not just reallocate the pie . . . the dollars around — and there's a plan . . . They have a plan to make sure that the economic pie is expanding.

Because that, in essence, is what is needed to support all the things that are important from the Throne Speech and from the visioning that needs to go on to give us some idea of where the province is going. If we don't have that visioning, if we don't have that confidence, it's certainly not going to be an easy place to get to or what we need to achieve.

I ran across an article not long ago, Mr. Speaker, that speaks exactly of that kind of visioning and the hope for the future and the optimism. And the headline reads something like this, if I could. It's called . . . The headline goes, "Triple the population in the next five to eight years." And the prospects . . . They're talking about, in fact, Regina. And they talked about the prospects for Regina are tremendous. They talked about it being a manufacturing centre, will attract many services and industries, and it needs to prepare for the influx of all this new population that they were talking about.

They had great visioning and hopes into the future. It says in this article, the people don't realize or understand the significance of such activities that this person was talking about and the tremendous developments that are in store, and I'd like to quote this particular person. His name is Mr. G.H. Aughe. He was a manager, in fact, of a General Motors plant that was coming here and the quote goes like this: There never has been a time in your history when it was so absolutely essential for all interests to awake to the opportunities and to co-operate with the investors and other industries to follow in our train.

That article was written on July 16, 1928. What a vision that this person had and what an optimistic viewpoint he had. He went on to say, there was another part of the quote: more firms are sure to locate here. We chose to locate here because we believe we can best serve Western territories from this particular venue from Fort William to Vancouver.

Now that is the right combination of opportunity, geographical advantage, and confidence in the future — confidence of success. That is a pretty important aspect to what we really need.

We need to . . . Oh, another quote too that I think would be of interest to people in this legislature. There was an exhaustive investigation done by a person by the name of J.C. Best. He did it into government programs for road building — same date, 1928. And he writes: the monetary returns which will result

from the increased influx of tourism and transportation, because of the bad state of roads, the present figures are deplorably low in comparison to the total tourist harvest for Canada and other Western provinces.

Nineteen twenty-eight, does that sound familiar?

What I want to do is . . . I want to close if I could, Mr. Speaker, and make some comments on some of the things that are happening in my particular constituency. I'm very proud of those happening in my constituency, in particular the reasons for them, as you'll see in a moment.

I really want to commend the achievements that have recently been accomplished in the Onion Lake First Nations. It is really through some of the vision that they've demonstrated, through some of the decisive actions, that they've been able to accomplish over the last while. For example, they have expanded in a contiguous manner the reserve, the Onion Lake Reserve and have included now 92,000 acres of contiguous land to their reserve, all of which have the mineral resources attached.

They look at this now as an opportunity. And in developing those particular resources . . . And they have proclaimed that they will — and I want to quote the chief, Wally Fox, and his vision and the vision of the council of Onion Lake — they have made a proclamation and by their action they will have, and this is Chief Fox's quote:

We will have our people no longer on welfare.

What a great example of an attitude for all of us and in particular for this province. This situation that has arisen recently in Onion Lake has really caused a terrific stir of excitement in our community. My battle . . . And I'm quoting Mr. Fox from the local paper on March 21, most recently from Lloydminster. Chief Fox says:

My battle . . . to get (the) people off welfare and (to) get them . . . (on) the workforce, There is . . . (now hope he said).

He goes on to explain that because of the economic activity that they have taken on without government assistance — these are on their own, developing their own resources — they'll be moving into manufacturing that will create about 200 new jobs once completed. And they have plans for cogeneration of electricity for their own community and for this whole Lloydminster area.

In addition to that, this economic development that Onion Lake is triggering, they are now the driver of the economy for the whole Lloydminster area. And as you know that is a pretty vibrant community, particularly driven by oil and gas. And here Onion Lake is showing the way for how to make sure that they can achieve that.

(15:30)

Their strong economic influence on Lloydminster, for instance, is worth about 40 million a year to the city. Now that's pretty significant. So I want to commend Chief Fox and the council at

Onion Lake for taking that initiative and moving ahead and doing exactly the kind of things that needed to be done.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier that I have granddaughters in this province and I want to conclude by trying to picture what I can tell my granddaughters about the future of Saskatchewan, how I can convince them that this is going to be the place, and what I can tell them out of the Throne Speech that would give them that confidence to stay here, remain here, and become . . . Saskatchewan become part of their life.

Is it going to be the good words that were presented in the Throne Speech in a very general way or do I have to remind them of the track record of this government? In other words, what has this province done already and what can we build on? And in fact this is a very disappointing aspect. When I looked at both the debt and liability in this province, which has increased significantly since 1991, something like now at \$21 billion for debt and liability, the Provincial Auditor's report, that is — that, in fact, is placing on my four-year-old granddaughter's shoulders a \$21,000 debt and liability problem already. She has to carry that kind of a debt liability all the way through and try to get Saskatchewan into a better position.

My neighbour who is living four blocks west of me, their four-year-old granddaughter has no debt liability on her shoulders. So there is a significant problem that we're placing on these people. And I can well remember the NDP saying earlier on that they will not mortgage our children's future. Well what is happening is this debt load is already on our young people and it's increasing.

Now we are going to have to prepare them the best we can and we have to prepare them for whatever opportunities that we can create here and we have to get, as I mentioned earlier, those fundamentals turned around. For them we need to revitalize this whole confidence that we can, as a people in this province, attract investment, we can expand the economic pie, we will give them opportunity, and through that kind of an economic driver we will be able to assure them of the future that is here in Saskatchewan — one of the best provinces in Canada and certainly the best province to raise these kind of people.

To do that we have to work together. This Throne Speech was not able to deliver that kind of a guarantee or even a vision to these young people, and I can't support the Throne Speech at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to start by thanking my family for their support during the campaign, following the election, following my appointment to the cabinet as a member of this government.

I would particularly like to thank my wife, Cheryl. We've been married almost 24 years. Our anniversary is on May 10, 2004. That's a Monday. I have the consolation, Mr. Speaker, of knowing that I'll be spending time here with my friends in this Assembly on both sides of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Cheryl was introduced by the member from Saskatoon Nutana on Friday, I believe, as a active member of the community in Saskatoon, a campaigner for the rights and interests of people living in poverty. She has long been that, Mr. Speaker.

She is an acknowledged leader in the community in Saskatoon and as well as her support, I rely on her inspiration. If I could live up to her example, Mr. Speaker, in community service, I would be a credit to this House and a credit to this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Further, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge my children. Even for someone involved in politics for much of his life, the political reality following the election and the appointment to the government is a bit of a shock. And my family has enjoyed a profile and a level of public scrutiny that I do not think they could be prepared for. And my teenage children have handled this with a grace and dignity that I could not possibly have expected from teenagers, and I wish to acknowledge them now in this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate you on your election. I remember the age-old ritual that you enacted with the Premier and the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, resisting taking a Chair for which you had sought election to. And many of us were amused but, as you said, it's an important reminder. It's a reminder that the democracy that we enjoy is not a gift that was given to us, but was won by struggle and sacrifice. And it was a reminder that the progress of democracy was halting and was built, and is being built, step by step.

Many of us, Mr. Speaker, will be familiar with the photographs that are exhibited in this building, that show the Legislative Building being built on bald prairie in the middle of nowhere. And those are evocative of the vision of the pioneers who saw that building built.

But at that time, less than 100 years ago, neither women, no members of First Nations could vote for the representatives who would sit here. Now both women and members of First Nations sit in this Assembly and provide leadership in this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — The old ritual you enacted reminds us that each generation of leaders has a responsibility, not only to treasure and preserve democracy but to extend and deepen it when the opportunity arises.

Among the strengths of our Canadian democracies are the diversity of our peoples. One of the great accomplishments of our democracy is such diversity of people live in peace and make political decisions in a civic manner. And one only need to listen to the radio this morning or any morning to hear how people less fortunate have political decisions made for them.

Saskatchewan in its diversity may be the most Canadian of provinces, the only province where people of British origin and French origin combined are not a majority. As you know, Saskatchewan's motto is, "From Many Peoples Strength." In this legislature alone are represented many people.

Some of us individually represent a few different peoples. The Quennells came to Canada from England in the 19th century, and I begin there for the comfort of the members opposite. I know that they're more comfortable in that century than they are in this one.

My great-grandfather, Wesley Quennell . . . My great-great-grandfather, Wesley Quennell — a Methodist you might guess, Mr. Speaker — and my great-grandfather, Lorne Quennell, settled and farmed near Shaunavon, Saskatchewan.

My grandfather, Gordon Quennell, married there Anna Knoblauch, a child of German speakers who came to Canada from Poland. My other grandmother's parents were Ukrainians who left Austria for Canada and Saskatchewan. My great-grandfather, William Ukranski, had his name spelled in this country, O'Kranczy, on his payroll cheque from the CPR (Canada Pacific Railway). I assume the payroll clerk was Irish.

In this country, and in our great neighbour to the south, many families have had their names changed by immigration officials. I understand Senator John Kerry's family picked his family name from a map of Ireland, but only in Western Canada does the CPR change your name.

My grandmother, the Austrian-Ukrainian Canadian with the Irish surname, married my grandfather, Frank Kratzer. My grandfather, an ethnic German, came from Czechoslovakia as a child. And it is said in my family that he was sent to Canada for reasons of his health. And therefore my grandfather was safely and healthily in Canada when the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia in 1938, an invasion my great-grandfather Stephen Kratzer, a member of the Czech Parliament, did not survive.

So what could I, an English-Polish-German-Austrian-Ukrainian-Czechoslovakian Canadian, ever give as his ethnic origin except Canadian? And how can I not but agree with the proud provincial motto: "From Many Peoples Strength."

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — The constituency of Saskatoon-Meewasin, which I am proud to represent in this legislature, is, like many parts of Canada and Saskatchewan, enriched by its diversity of people.

Last fall I had the pleasure of meeting many of them. I met the descendents of the nation's first peoples. I met the descendents of immigrants. And I met people new to our country from every continent on the earth — like the Quennells, the Knoblauchs, the Kratzers, the Ukranskis — who came to Canada to avoid war and oppression or to seek freedom and opportunity.

I recall meeting a woman who came here many years ago from Europe who patiently explained to me how everything was done better in the old country, but advised me that she no longer

wants to go home for visits. It's too crowded; people don't give her room.

I met refugees from that other tragic September 11 — September 11, 1973, when democracy in Chile was brutally repressed.

But I was most affected, I think, by my conversation with a disabled woman — a woman who was disabled from birth, and again injured in an automobile accident; who could not obtain paid employment; who had told me it would be complicated for her to vote on election day because that was a work day. And it was one of the days of the week that she got herself across town to a church basement to pack medical kits for use in developing nations overseas.

People of Saskatoon Meewasin honour many different traditions and histories. They are employed in many different jobs and in professions. They seek and study many courses of study, but they contribute together towards making the city of Saskatoon the unique place that it is.

I am proud to represent the many and diverse people of Saskatoon Meewasin in this legislature. And I am proud to be a member of this New Democratic Party government, a government that recognizes the intrinsic value of all our citizens, a government formed by a party that has a record of respecting treaties and the principles of Aboriginal self-government, a government that welcomes new people to our province and seeks to make newcomers welcome, a government formed by a party with a record of supporting human rights, a government formed by a party that pioneered public health care in this country, and a government committed to defending public health care.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Something has been said in this legislature about the legacy of Tommy Douglas as premier of Saskatchewan. I will not join that debate. The Saskatchewan Bill of Rights, rural electrification, hospitalization, the foundations of medicare, and the hard fact that the people of Saskatchewan chose the party led by Tommy Douglas in five consecutive elections to form the Government of Saskatchewan speak more eloquently than I ever could as to that legacy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — If in this, my first speech in this Assembly, I can be more self-indulgent, I would like to speak of the role Tommy Douglas played in my own political thinking. When I was much younger than I am today, before personal computers and video home recorders and . . . but when men still walked on the moon — 14 — I began thinking about politics. And I came to the view which I hold today, that individual liberty is fundamental to both democracy and human development.

It was 1970, and as you might guess, I was one of the youthful fans of Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Then came the imposition of the War Measures Act, a piece of political grandstanding, as it turns out, and an action wildly popular at the time but which suspended civil liberties across our country.

It was Tommy Douglas, as leader of the federal New Democratic Party, who took the unpopular stand in defence of the principles of citizens' freedoms and opposed the War Measures Act. And so I found my political home in a party of principle and leadership; a party which respects both the democratic will of the people and minority rights; a party which respects both individual liberty and supports our neighbours in need. And a party that in Saskatchewan, people have elected to government — sometimes after giving a fair chance to the types of alternatives proposed by the members opposite whether under the Thatcher Liberals, the Devine Conservatives — the party that's been elected to make the tough decisions and tough choices governed by compassion and inspired by creativity.

(15:45)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — The member from Saskatoon Southeast yesterday joked about his office. In that spirit, if the hon. member wants a better view of the parking lot behind this building, I invite him to drop by my office for a visit. Joking aside, the member from Saskatoon Southeast and I both know that that's not what the election campaign that brought us both here was about.

That election campaign was about who could best be trusted to defend, maintain, and improve our public health care. That election campaign was about who could be trusted with the management of our public utilities. That election campaign was about who had a plan to grow an economy in which all our citizens have a share, with an emphasis on sustainability and protecting the environment, the green and prosperous economy. That election was about who best addressed the aspirations of our young people.

And the people of Saskatchewan once again chose the New Democratic Party. And their choice, their democratic will, was reflected in the Speech from the Throne. The Speech from the Throne reflects a government committed to a better quality of life for all the citizens of Saskatchewan; a government that honours our elders and pioneers, and will encourage our young people in their aspirations and ambitions; a government that celebrates our partnerships with Aboriginal peoples and welcomes newcomers to our province; a government that recognizes that we are stewards of this earth, that we owe a debt to those who came before us and obligation to those who come after us.

Mr. Speaker, I support the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise and enter into the debate on the Throne Speech. As little as it is and how little content there is in it, I am pleased to rise and talk a bit about it.

Again, Mr. Speaker, like other members of the House, I would like to congratulate you on your election to be Speaker for another term and look forward to your unbiased judgments in

the House during this and future sessions.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to first off thank the members of Wood River, the voters of Wood River, who have had the confidence in electing me for one more session or one more term in the House.

Wood River now is the largest constituency in the province outside of the high North, and this is very much thanks to the NDP policy that has chased people out of this province over the last number of years. So with redistribution, we now, in southwestern Saskatchewan, have the largest constituency.

Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting listening to the member from Meewasin. He made a fleeting remark about us living in the past or something about our side living in the past. And isn't it ironic, Mr. Speaker, the minute after he mentioned this, he starts talking about who? Tommy Douglas. Well I don't think Tommy's around today. So therefore, those folks are living in the past. They're entrenched in the past. And actually that's quite shameful and I'd like to just expand on that a little bit.

We had the member from Walsh Acres that got up the other day in her speech — and I don't know who her speech writer was and I don't know the point that was trying to be made by the member from Walsh Acres — but she did quote me from my maiden speech in this House. And the reason I'm not sure why her speech writer put it in is because it's factual. What she quoted me saying is actually factual.

And maybe members opposite are not used to dealing with facts, so I'd like to re-address those facts for the member.

Yes. I was a member of a defensive structure and I'm very proud of that. We were at the door to the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), to the Soviet Union, to protect from the expansion of their ideology. And yes, I was there. And I've been at the wall. And I would invite members that have never been there to at least read about it — can't be there any more, I guess. Because the wall was built not to keep people out, Mr. Speaker; the wall was built to keep people in. People were escaping the oppression of an ideology. And that is essentially what's happening in Saskatchewan.

Then she went on to quote, to use the quote that I had stated, that they elect a government in this province with the same ideology. That is fact. That is fact. And I would like to, I would like to, for the record, for the members opposite, some of them who don't wish to be called socialists, I would like to read in right out of the dictionary what it states.

Now the ideology from places like Cuba, Cambodia, Vietnam, Cuba, and I will read the dictionary quotation:

A political, social, and economic system in which a state, governed by an elite party, controls production, labour, distribution, and largely the social and cultural life and thought of the people.

That's the ideology that's perpetuated by the countries such as Cuba.

Now let me read out of the dictionary what it says about socialism. Socialism:

The theory or system of social organization by which the means of production and distribution are owned, managed, or controlled by the government or by associations of workers.

Tell me what the difference is. Tell me. Even the member from Moose Jaw North is laughing because he knows there is no difference. He knows.

And I will go further, Mr. Speaker. This is again, this is a quote, this is a quote from the dictionary. And it states:

The two ideologies (the two ideologies) are systems of social organization under which the means of production and distribution of goods are transferred from private hands to the government.

Now is that not where this Throne Speech is going — more and more into the hands of government, away from the private sector? In the Throne Speech how many times did it say, our government will be partners with; our governments will do this.

Mr. Speaker, there is, there is a difference between the two ideologies. The one ideology: how is it controlled? It is controlled by force. And you look at the countries that have that ideology, such as Cuba. They have a very, very strong military that forces people into their beliefs — forces.

So how does socialism work, Mr. Speaker? Socialism is fear. You get into the heads of people. You do not put a gun to their head; you get into the heads of the individuals.

And, Mr. Speaker, some members over there have actually said to me — some members over there have actually said to me — we're not really socialists. Well just for their own edification, Mr. Speaker, I want to bring something to their attention. For those that think they are not socialists, they're not following their own manifesto. Because right in their own manifesto that was, that was re-dated in the year 2001 by the current Premier, and it states, no socialist government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism and put into operation the full program of socialized planning.

Now if that isn't socialism, what is? And that is what those people on that side of the house perpetuate. It is pure unadulterated socialism.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Walsh Acres also talked about taxes — lowering taxes you lose money. Well I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that that is totally a socialist mentality — if you reduce taxes, you're taking money out of the coffers. Well a socialist would think that way.

However, Mr. Speaker, we look, we look even in the province of Saskatchewan here. I asked the member to look at the budgetary figures from the last couple of years. Where we have lowered taxes we have actually increased revenues.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I believe all members will have an opportunity to have their say. And right now I

invite the member from Wood River to continue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Huyghebaert: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's just a simple fact that the truth hurts some of them on that side of the House. The truth is something that a lot of them on that side of the House are not really familiar with.

But on the tax issue, if you lower taxes, again suggesting that it's a total loss to the coffers is totally wrong. And we've proven that in this province in the last couple or three years when the NDP government actually used our plan from the '99 election to lower taxes, and they found out that actually revenues could increase.

You look at the Irish experience. How did Ireland actually become the prosperous country that it is today? And what they had done, one of the key items was lower taxes. And they make money. No socialist will ever, ever believe that, but in fact it's true.

Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech we talk about the NDP and how they are achieving their goals. Let's just take a look at how they're achieving their goals. And the previous speaker really made a strong point and said the voters had said to themselves, who best can we trust; who best can deal the province the best deal. Let's take a look, Mr. Speaker. Let's just take a look.

The NDP said the budget was balanced. Actually they've been running a huge deficit. Is that being truthful with the voters? How about they said they wouldn't raise taxes and now guess what's coming? It's going to be a tax increase. Is that being truthful with the voters? How about they said they would provide the lowest utility rates in Canada? And now they're saying, well we will in four years, or maybe we won't, or maybe we might, or aw sorry, we didn't tell you the truth. Mr. Speaker, they said they'd lower property taxes and guess what? Now who should the voters be trusting?

Mr. Speaker, they said they'd provide post-secondary graduates with a \$1,000 tax credit, and guess what? They said they had improved the health system, Mr. Speaker, and guess what? Come on, let's hear it for the other side now and applaud to that.

An Hon. Member: — Very quiet now.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Very quiet. Mr. Speaker, they said they would protect government jobs, and guess what? They're cutting government jobs. So I would reiterate the question that the previous speaker mentioned is: who can the voters trust? And I think the voters of this province know.

Mr. Speaker, we go on and we talk about education and youth. There was an awful lot in the budget speech about youth. Well, Mr. Speaker, youth is an important part of the growth of this province. Growth is a bad word for the NDP. The socialists don't like to see growth for some reason. In fact the former minister, who's now a backbencher sitting in the front row said, if these people leave, we have more money for the rest of us; we have more resources for the rest of us. That is the way that the socialist mentality is — people should leave; we have more for

those of us that are left.

But, Mr. Speaker, in this Throne Speech it talked about youth, and let's keep youth in the province. I would like to read something to you, and it says:

We plan a bright future for our children and ourselves.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, that was the 2001 Throne Speech. How did we make out? What happened? What happened? What happened? There was nobody at the switch.

Mr. Speaker, another comment:

Connecting to young people means connecting to the future . . . young people are the future of this province.

Very true.

An Hon. Member: — Empty words.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Empty words. Because that was in the 2001 Throne Speech. What has this NDP government done to live up to any of those promises from 2001? Absolutely nothing.

Now here's another:

It is a vision where all children will have the opportunity . . . to build successful families and careers here at home.

That was the 2003 Throne Speech. How are we making out? How are we making out right now? We are still losing people by the hundreds from this province. And now we go into this Throne Speech and it says:

Saskatchewan will become more youth friendly and the first choice in opportunity for all . . . our youth.

(16:00)

Mr. Speaker, how can anybody in this province believe this tired, arrogant NDP government when all they do is brush off the dust and say the same thing and do absolutely nothing. It is absolutely incredible that they even have the gall to be talking about these things.

Mr. Speaker, also on the youth, I'd like to just make a comment. And here's how the NDP mentality is. This is not my words; this is the NDP words. We're going to lose 30,000 students by the end of the decade — 30,000. Now I can see they're all applauding over there because this is their words. Now here we are trying to grow the province. We're trying to create jobs for people. We're trying to create industry. We would like to see anything done in this province to grow. And what are these people doing? Planning 30,000 less students — 30,000 less students. Now if 30,000 students are going to be gone, guess how many adults are going to be gone with them?

Mr. Speaker, I just want to touch a couple on some of the issues that come up in the Throne Speech, building a green and

prosperous economy. We applaud, we applaud the idea of building a green and prosperous economy. We believe in green energy but I'm wondering if it's rhetoric or if members opposite really do believe in green energy.

It was very interesting the other day. I was driving by Gull Lake, which we hear it on a regular basis about Gull Lake and the Southwest with the wind generation, and I was quite amazed. Out of approximately — I didn't have to count them — but 30 wind generators there and I think we all in this room applaud it. But there was only one running and it was a windy day. And I would like somebody to explain why, if we're such strong proponents of wind energy, that we turn off our turbines. And if one was off, I could understand it was down for maintenance, or two or three. But all of them except one? I think that needs some explanation.

Now I'm wondering if it's SaskPower saying hey, we're not making enough money here if we keep that up and so we have to turn it off. I don't know but I'm going to get a question to the minister and see what the response is.

But another topic on green energy is there's nothing in this Throne Speech about nuclear, about nuclear energy. And nuclear energy is very much energy . . . or environmentally friendly.

And here's maybe one reason that there's nothing mentioned about nuclear energy within the Throne Speech. We have a member, the current Minister of Corrections and Public Safety, and this is a quote from *Hansard* and it says:

The Government of Saskatchewan should phase out uranium mining in the province of Saskatchewan.

Well that's really, that is really good for our mining industry, our uranium industry, and it is not very good for business in this province. And yet we have a minister of the government that's stating that.

And I do have another one that, that I would like to just comment on. And this was just, just sent to me so the exact wording is how I received it. And this is from the current . . . about the current Minister of the Environment. And it says that, the minister has made a comment that: as long as I will be minister there will not be another nuclear reactor plant in Saskatchewan.

Well that says two things to me. One, is there one here already? And the other, is the minister putting a kibosh on any further development? I mean, I mean here, here we're open for business in this province — open for NDP business. Get out of the province, we don't want you. That's how much we're open for business.

Mr. Speaker, there is extremely little in the budget speech on agriculture — very, very little. Noticeably absent is agriculture. But there's a couple of words in the Throne Speech and I would like to comment on it.

Agriculture being a high priority, now we go back over the years and we hear the same thing. We get words like rural revitalization is a top priority for this government. What did

they do? Nothing, absolutely nothing. Put an office in Regina, put a few people in it, and maybe go to the outskirts and peer out over the wilderness. That's about the rural revitalization program.

But this year again there are a few words about agriculture. And I'd like to just comment about a couple of things that to me are fairly pertinent.

We get a government here that wants to talk agriculture and how they're going to help agriculture and how they're going to do everything that's so great for the rural people. They're trying to squeak a vote or two out of there. But here is what the Ag minister announced the other day, crop insurance would be hiked an average of 13 per cent and coverage is again being reduced. This is really going to help people in my area, Mr. Speaker. We'll just go into your pockets a little bit more.

Now guess what this follows on, Mr. Speaker. This followed on the third straight year of premium hikes and decreasing coverage — 2002 premiums were up between 40 and 60 per cent, 2003 premiums were up again by 52 per cent. Is this helping agriculture?

Now the member from Prince Albert Northcote is yipping from his seat. He thinks this is good. He thinks this is growth for this province. If we can stymie the farmers, maybe they'll move out and he'll have more resources left for himself again — his way of thinking this province should go down to one person and that it'd be him as part of a Crown organization.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we in this province export 750,000 head of cattle every year to Alberta to be fed — every year. I don't hear anybody laughing on the other side at that, and rightfully so. But we ship 750,000 head of cattle to Alberta to be fed. We ship grain to Alberta to be fed to Saskatchewan cattle and guess where our young men and women go. They go behind to feed Saskatchewan grain to Saskatchewan cattle in Alberta. Now I wish somebody over there would yip this time and tell me how that is good for our province. How can that possibly be good for our province? And yet this is exactly what's happening.

Is there anything in this Throne Speech that's going to change that? Not a thing. It's embarrassing. It's shameful. We're doing absolutely nothing to stop that flow and it's going to continue, Mr. Speaker, unless there's a whole attitude change in the socialist structure of the NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, how this government deals with agricultural issues . . . I met with a farm group called the Notukeu Farm Flood Group that a couple of members over there may be familiar with. They were flooded out in the year 2002 and have been stymied by this government. And I wrote a letter to the then minister of Highways and he would not even meet with this group. He would not even meet with them.

Now this is a government that says we're here to promote agriculture, we're here to help rural revitalization, we're here to help out the farmers, and yet the minister sits back in his office and will not even meet with a group that is in financial trouble. This is what this government is doing.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about in the Throne Speech an ethanol strategy. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is a laugh, coming from that side of the House. I don't think we have to really expand on the ethanol strategy fiasco that they put forward, perpetuated, and then went south with.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about young entrepreneurs in this province also. We talk about, in the Throne Speech, young entrepreneurs. How are we going to establish a young entrepreneur program in this province when their chances are they're going to be competing against government?

People were yipping on the other side when I was talking about socialism and the expansion of government control in this province. And that's exactly what the Throne Speech indicated, is that there's going to be an expansion of government control and government involvement in business. So a young entrepreneur, what would a young entrepreneur be doing in Saskatchewan other than competing with government? It's absolutely a sad state of affairs, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, now we come to what they talked about is the quality of life. Health care is a real quality-of-life issue, and this is sad. This is sad what we've heard in the last few days about health care. And we don't have many people over there that are really yipping it up about it because it is very serious. We get members get up in their speeches and their rhetoric and they say, we are the founders of health care and we are the best people to look after health care. But we also have the worst health care in the country — the longest waiting lists in the country.

And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read another couple of quips. And here it says:

This province introduced medicare and will continue to provide health care that is a model for the rest of Canada.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is from the 2001 Throne Speech. Has anything changed since 2001 except get worse?

Also, in the 2002 Throne Speech, other words about medicare:

One of my government's highest priorities in its action plan for Saskatchewan is the provision and renewal of (a) sustainable, publicly administered health care that is accessible to all.

2002 Throne Speech.

Well how long do people have to wait? Are they proud of the waiting lists? Are they proud of the people that have come into this Assembly that have had medical problems and issues? Are they proud of that? I would hope not.

So they talk the talk but don't walk the walk when it comes to health care.

Mr. Speaker, I have letters from constituents of mine who have experienced health care problems and they're quite sad. One recently I received a letter from, she was put on a waiting list for an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). She was basically . . . She became wheelchair bound. She couldn't get an MRI.

It ended up her doctor here in Saskatchewan said, I would recommend you go to Alberta to get an MRI. So she did. And she was in such pain she had to lay in the back seat of the car from home to Calgary because she couldn't sit, the pain was so unbearable. And she went to Calgary to get an MRI, brought the results back to her doctor, and still had to wait three months to get in for an operation.

And these people are proud of our health care system. They are proud. And it's nice to see them quiet because maybe they're not as proud as they really portray themselves to be.

And that's what it is, Mr. Speaker, it is two-tiered, two-tiered health at its best.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at, when we look at what this government hasn't done, we look . . . And I read off a list of items that the government broke faith with the people of the province. They were not upfront. They were not really forthright. So let's really look at what this government can do, and what this government has done.

Twelve-month period ending in February, Saskatchewan created only 1,500 new jobs — the worst job creation record in Canada. The worst job creation record in Canada. Now I'm sure they're pretty proud of that. Let's look at . . . I think we give recognition where it's due. Let's look at what the NDP planners . . . They must sit around and say, hey we can get this rhetoric going; we can talk about anything; we can talk the talk; we don't have to walk the walk; we'll con the people into voting for us one more time. We'll put fear in them, we'll scare the dickens out of them, we will have them vote for us.

(16:15)

So let's give them credit as to what they can do. They forecast that we're going to lose 30,000 students. And they're doing it. So give them credit for it. They're doing something they said they were going to do.

They must sit around and say, hey if we say we're going to create jobs, that might not work, so let's say we're going to get rid of jobs. Well golly, they've got rid of thousands of jobs over the last three or four years. They don't publicly say that, but maybe in the backroom they do. They can live up to their own little internal promises.

Let's create a policy that will shrink the population so there's more left for people like our member from Prince Albert Northcote. If we shrink the population, those that are left will be more wealthy. Let's blow some money. Let's blow some money, Mr. Speaker, on some investments. Let's blow money on investments outside of the province. That's doable. Let's do that. So they did. They went out. And, Mr. Speaker, isn't it ironic, isn't it very ironic, in this last week Navigata, another \$15 million goes into Navigata.

So this company from BC (British Columbia) calls up and says, we need another \$15 million, and they say, yes sir, we're giving it to you. But the health district in Saskatoon asks for \$200,000 and they can't get it. Now I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, to the families of Saskatchewan, what is doing them the best good — more money in the health district in Saskatoon or \$15 million in

Navigata in BC? I leave that question and answer to the people themselves.

They must say, when they're back in the backroom, we're going to have a deficit budget, but let's cover it up with smoke and mirrors. I don't know what they're going to do with the new smoking policy because they'll just have to cover it up with mirrors by next year.

And they must sit back in the room and they say, golly, how can we improve waiting lists? We can't, so let's make them longer. So that's working.

And let's not forget, Mr. Speaker, when they sit in the backroom and they say, let's grow government — and that, Mr. Speaker, by goodness they do; and they grow government.

Mr. Speaker, I was really taken up with the comments at the end of the Throne Speech about risk and hope. Now isn't this ironic where we have a government that talks about hope? It has just spent a whole period of time during the election spreading fear and yet, in a Throne Speech, they talk about hope.

And I would like to go over . . . I think it's worthwhile going over some of the fear that was spread. I even heard one of the members opposite that had said to constituents that the Saskatchewan Party was going to rip up treaties. Is that truthful? We don't . . . Treaties are not even part of . . . Treaties are not even part of provincial jurisdiction. Member from Moose Jaw Wakamow is sneering, but it was one of her members that did it.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've got calls from senior citizens in seniors' homes that were receiving calls that were scaring the bejesus out of them. They were scaring people. They were scaring individuals. And somebody was phoning these individuals late at night and putting fear into them.

People in government housing were also being called and fear was put into them that they would be . . . they would be moved out of their housing if they wouldn't vote for the NDP. That's the kind of fear that was spread and yet you have the audacity to talk hope in this budget speech.

Mr. Speaker, probably the lowest tactic of all . . . Probably the lowest tactic of all that I heard — and I got a phone call about this myself — it was in the Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw. And the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow should be familiar or maybe she was familiar with it. These individuals are the most vulnerable of our society — the most vulnerable.

And there was individuals that went into the Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw and the words that were phoned to me were that people had gone door to door to the patients at this facility and told that they would be out on the street as of Thursday morning, with no place to live and nothing to eat if they did not vote for the NDP.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would call this low. But the best way I could describe this is the individuals that have done this could walk under the belly of a snake with a top hat on and not touch it. Mr. Speaker, that is totally despicable and the mothers of those individuals that were doing that should be very, very

proud of them.

Mr. Speaker, in closing . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . More?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, in closing I would like to just comment on how wonderful the choir was when they sang at the conclusion of the Throne Speech. And I don't know who selected the numbers, the musical numbers, the singing numbers, but I thought it was extremely, extremely appropriate, the two selections that they chose. Because they were sitting in the west gallery looking right at that group of socialist men and women and their first number was . . . open your eyes, and the second number they sang was, we want to be . . . "People Gotta Be Free." And that should be a lesson to everybody on that side. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Saskatoon Greystone, the minister for Public Safety.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to enter the Throne Speech debate. And my first words, Mr. Speaker, are to express appreciation to my constituents, the constituents of Saskatoon Greystone, for the privilege of returning to this House to represent them. It's an honour to be returning, Mr. Speaker. And I've now had the privilege of beginning my fourth term in the Assembly and I'm very grateful to my constituents for that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — I'm also, I also want to express appreciation to members of my family, Mr. Speaker, who have given me a lot of support over the years. My wife, Louise, my mother, Trudy, and my three sons, Mark, James, and Michael and my stepdaughter Monté have all been an enormous support to me throughout my years in public life and I'm very grateful to them.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to express congratulations to all members of the Assembly on their re-election and I want to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your re-election as Speaker of this Assembly. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, how very proud I am to be serving on the government side of the Assembly with my colleagues in the New Democratic Party under the leadership of our Premier. The people of Saskatchewan made a very pivotal decision last November, on November 5, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that the majority of people in this province made a decision about which party they wanted to support on the basis of the values that each of the parties represented.

And in many ways, Mr. Speaker, we saw this debate about values being exhibited with the remarks that the member for Wood River has just made in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, what I would describe as extreme conservatism. And the people of Saskatchewan rejected that view, Mr. Speaker. They rejected that view.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — And they returned this government, Mr. Speaker, with a margin in excess of 44 per cent of the popular vote, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to say that the New Democratic Party in the election, with the support of the people of Saskatchewan, expanded our popular support, Mr. Speaker, and meanwhile the public support for the opposition declined. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the difference in terms of the standings in the Assembly today.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to see that the Throne Speech builds on our government's major election promises. We promised, Mr. Speaker, during the election to provide the best public health care in Canada and to support healthy family life. And the Throne Speech delivers on that commitment.

We promised to build here in this province, Mr. Speaker, a future for our young people and the Throne Speech lays out a plan in that regard.

And, Mr. Speaker, we promised during the election that we would work to build a green and prosperous economy and the Throne Speech offers many specifics in terms of building blocks towards fulfilling that commitment.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, we promised during the election to keep our publicly owned Crown corporations strong and innovative and use them to make Saskatchewan the most affordable place to live in all of Canada. And the Throne Speech again builds on that commitment, Mr. Speaker.

So let me elaborate on how these commitments are going to be fulfilled and what the Throne Speech says about them. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to the question of public health care and the record of this government in terms of building medicare in Canada and in this province, and expanding it dramatically over a period of 40 years. And, Mr. Speaker, what we see in the Throne Speech is an ongoing commitment to publicly funded health care in the province of Saskatchewan.

We also see a commitment, Mr. Speaker, to address the question of waiting lists for elective surgery, specifically through the provision of a coordinated approach to surgical care in Saskatchewan — the first example of a province in Canada that's going to implement that.

We see, Mr. Speaker, in this Throne Speech, a commitment to move forward with one of the most important preventive health measures any government can take, and that is a commitment to ban smoking in all public places in the province of Saskatchewan effective next year, Mr. Speaker. And I'm very proud to be part of a government that's taking that action.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — We see, Mr. Speaker, a concern for our young people and particularly our young people who are suffering with disabilities. And I'm very pleased to see the Throne Speech announce that we will move forward with a plan to support our young people who are suffering with fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect and other serious disabilities, Mr. Speaker. That is a very welcome piece of news and I look forward to the specifics coming forward in the budget in terms of an investment in this very, very important

area.

And, Mr. Speaker, we know that one of the very best ways of ensuring that families will be healthy is to ensure that they will have good quality housing. And the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, continues to build on this government's commitment to fund public housing and to support low-income people in ensuring that they will get good quality housing, Mr. Speaker.

And I recall, Mr. Speaker, just a few years ago, when the federal government withdrew completely from the social housing field. This government, the New Democratic Party government led by our Premier, was one of the only governments in Canada, one of only two, that continued to invest in public housing even though the federal government had withdrawn, Mr. Speaker. And we'll continue that investment in the coming four years with an investment in 2,000 new public housing units in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech talks about building a future for young people in our province. And this is very important to my constituents because I have many, many young people in my constituency. I represent a riding, Mr. Speaker, where a very substantial portion of my constituents attend the University of Saskatchewan. And so post-secondary education is important to my constituents. Career opportunities are important to my constituents.

(16:30)

And I welcome the announcement in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, that we will move forward with the implementation of one of our important promises, which was to enhance the tax credit that is available to students after they graduate from a post-secondary institution, Mr. Speaker. And we'll await more news, specific news in the budget in that regard. But I am pleased to see us moving forward on that front.

We also, Mr. Speaker, promised during the election that we would move forward with a career-start program, and again the Throne Speech signals that that election commitment will be kept.

And Mr. Speaker, we promised during the election that we would support young people who were interested in working on environmental initiatives, energy conservation initiatives, and wanted to make a contribution to environmental sustainability in our province. And the Throne Speech again signals, Mr. Speaker, that that election promise will be kept and that there will be support and funding for green teams in the province of Saskatchewan, teams of young people that will make an important contribution towards building a sustainable environment in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech addresses the third important election promise we made, and that was to build a green and prosperous economy. The Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, specifically focuses on energy and the contribution that green energy can make to our province. And, under our Premier's leadership, Mr. Speaker, we have seen very significant

developments in terms of green energy over the last three years.

And one only need to look at the progress being made on the wind power front to see this being brought to reality, Mr. Speaker. Three years ago, there was no wind power production in this province. And today, Mr. Speaker, we have enough wind power operating at Gull Lake, Saskatchewan to provide the needs of 17,000 homes in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is just the beginning because this government has signed a contract with, a partnership with ATCO, Mr. Speaker, with ATCO Power, to develop . . . SaskPower and ATCO Power working together will develop 150 megawatts of electrical generation in wind in this province over the next three years, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, that will be enough electricity to meet the needs of over 70,000 homeowners in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech also talks about the future of hydrogen and solar energy and the role that energy conservation can play in our economy, and the potential for ongoing investment in carbon dioxide injection in our oil and gas fields as a way of not only developing our oil and gas industry but also reducing greenhouse gas emissions in our province, Mr. Speaker. And all of these developments are very, very exciting indeed.

And in Regina, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that the Saskatchewan Research Council and a private sector partner have now developed the world's first truck fuelled by a combination of diesel and hydrogen. And in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, we have what's called the Solar Hydrogen Energy Corporation, a private company, Mr. Speaker, that has developed a catalyst to dramatically lower the temperatures at which hydrogen production can take place.

Mr. Speaker, all of these examples that I've been mentioning, contrary to what members of the opposition have been saying about so-called state socialism — which is a phony notion, Mr. Speaker — all of these examples that I'm giving speak to the partnership that is being developed between the public sector and the private sector in terms of building a green economy.

This is not just a measure that government is taking, Mr. Speaker; this is a partnership between the private sector and government. And, Mr. Speaker, I think we can bring the best of both worlds to create a very exciting green future in energy for the young people of this province and for all the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to, I want to address the final commitment that this government made during the election campaign, the fourth pillar of our election, Mr. Speaker, and I think what was a very important determining factor in the outcome of the last election. And that was the difference between ourselves in the New Democratic Party and members of the official opposition, the Saskatchewan Party, on the question of the role of Crowns in our economy, Mr. Speaker.

And clearly, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan decided at the end of the day that they like the notion that we use our Crown corporations as one important vehicle for developing our economy, and they rejected the privatization plans of members opposite, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, one of the important announcements in the Throne Speech is that our government will continue to use the Crowns as an important vehicle for economic development. And that we will protect the Crowns by enshrining in legislation the public nature of SaskEnergy and SaskPower and SaskTel and SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), so that they cannot readily be sold off by a future government, Mr. Speaker. That, Mr. Speaker, is going to be a very important principle. It'll be interesting to see what members opposite do, Mr. Speaker, when this piece of legislation hits the floor of the Assembly.

But, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan in the last election like the fact that these four Crowns have business relationships and contracts with 12,000 private Saskatchewan businesses. They like the fact, Mr. Speaker, that these four Crowns employ more than 8,000 people in the province of Saskatchewan and are going to be an important source of employment in the future for young people in our province. And they like the fact, Mr. Speaker, that these Crowns will work with the private sector to build our economy.

I have the privilege right now, Mr. Speaker, of being Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Water Corporation. And it's an excellent example of a Crown that works with the private sector, Mr. Speaker. There is a lot of exciting work that Sask Water Corporation is doing. And it's now providing good quality, treated water to more than 35,000 residents of our province.

But when the design work and the construction work is done on the new treated water facilities, Mr. Speaker, and when the pipelines are built, they're not built by government. Mr. Speaker, they're primarily built by the private sector in this province. And we value the working relationship with those private companies, Mr. Speaker, and it's a partnership that works well for the people of Saskatchewan and in this case is providing high quality, treated water to many small communities at prices that they could never achieve on their own, Mr. Speaker, but they can achieve through the support of the Crown corporation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in this regard I want to contrast this view with the view that members opposite have consistently put forward in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And I think this is going to be a continued and ongoing important source of debate here in the legislature, because I noticed that the members of the Assembly are starting to have second thoughts about their position on the major Crowns.

But let's be clear, Mr. Speaker, about what their record has always been. Their record has always been one of supporting privatization, and I believe it will continue to be the case. We have 80 Crown corporations in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — Eighty-seven.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Eighty-seven one of the members

opposite says. And, Mr. Speaker, even after we pass legislation protecting SaskEnergy and SaskPower and SaskTel and SGI, which I look forward to seeing this Assembly adopt, there'll be 83 more Crowns, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite in the Saskatchewan Party want to sell off, Mr. Speaker. That's their position.

And, Mr. Speaker, we just heard from the member for Wood River. And I just want to remind members of the Assembly and the public who are listening what the member for Wood River said when he was running for the Saskatchewan Party leadership a few years ago. He said, Mr. Speaker, and I quote from the *Leader-Post* on April 4, 1998 when that member said: "I support the privatization of every Crown corporation."

Every Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker. That's what the member for Wood River said. And, Mr. Speaker, we . . . I want to also mention the positions that have been, for instance, consistently taken by many members of the front bench on the Saskatchewan Party side of government. Here's another quote, this one for the member for Saltcoats, Mr. Speaker, who said and I quote:

I honestly believe, Mr. Premier, if SaskTel was ever to be looked at and privatized, we should have done it a couple of years ago, Mr. Premier, before competition came in. I myself believe we have waited too long . . .

Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite had been in this House, Mr. Speaker, on the government side of the House, clearly they would have sold off SaskTel, Mr. Speaker. Clearly they would have. The member for Rosthern, Mr. Speaker, took exactly the same position, Mr. Speaker. And during the election, the only Crown corporation that the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party said would not be sold was the SGI Auto Fund.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the debate over the Crowns continues, Mr. Speaker. We won an important round with this election result, but the debate is not over. And members on this side of the House will stand squarely for supporting our Crown enterprises in a co-operative relationship with private business in this province to build a better Saskatchewan. And we reject the position of members opposite which is one of privatization, Mr. Speaker, privatization of at least 83 of our 87 Crowns, Mr. Speaker. As long as we're in government, we won't let that happen, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — So, Mr. Speaker, in closing I want to say that it will be my pleasure to support the Throne Speech that's before us today. I think the Throne Speech marks the beginning of an exciting new term in government, and I believe that we have a government in this province that will work with compassion and dedication to serve the people of this province for the next four years, and I hope for many years beyond that, Mr. Speaker. I'll be voting in favour of the Throne Speech. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad I have the opportunity to reply to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. But I would like to start by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on being re-elected to that position. I know your impartiality will bring good things to this House, especially with the numbers the way they are, so I look forward to working you with, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to congratulate the members in the House that have been re-elected and are back for the second, third, fourth time, but I especially want to congratulate the new members on both sides of the House, Mr. Speaker. I know they are going to look forward to having a very interesting time in the House.

Mr. Speaker, most campaigns in the province – I'm sure including yours – were 28 days long. In Melville-Saltcoats ours was 280 days long. We went through a very, very colourful campaign for a very, very long time. And I just want to take a minute to commend the gentlemen that I ran against, Mr. Speaker.

I ran against Mr. Osika, the past minister of Municipal Government who happens to be, Mr. Speaker, a very good friend of mine. And I want to commend him on a very good campaign, and he showed the class that he always showed in here right through the campaign.

And I also want to commend Mr. Tocher who ran from the Liberals, who is from Esterhazy, successful businessman, and I hope he does well back in his business in Esterhazy, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to acknowledge Mr. Schmidt who made this a very colourful campaign in my area. And Mr. Speaker, as you know on this side of the House we like to promote private business, and Mr. Schmidt is back in private business, and I wish him well.

Mr. Speaker, I look very forward to representing the new constituency of Melville-Saltcoats, but with some disappointment. I'm disappointed to lose the communities such as Togo and Rhein and Kamsack. And I've met a lot of people in that area when I was their MLA, and I'm going to miss that camaraderie that I had with those people and the opportunity to represent them. But I know that they will be looked after very well by my colleague from Canora-Pelly, and I know he will enjoy representing that area.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to . . . And what brings this to mind is when the Lieutenant Governor was speaking and giving the Throne Speech that day, reading the Throne Speech, I thought what a fine job that our Lieutenant Governor is doing in this province right now. And I might mention, Mr. Speaker, that we have asked the Prime Minister to extend her tenure for another five years, especially being that it's the centennial year coming up, and especially being that she's doing such a great job in this province being the Queen's representative. I know in my constituency she's been out there a great number of times and does a tremendous job for the province and I would hope that the Prime Minister would see fit to extend her tenure.

(16:45)

Mr. Speaker, I would also be remiss if I didn't mention my friend, the MLA from Yorkton, and hope . . . wish him a very speedy recovery. There's something about that member from Yorkton that helps get my blood flowing in this House and I really miss him, Mr. Speaker. So I wish him a very speedy recovery.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — I look forward to him taking his seat once again.

Mr. Speaker, now to get into the Throne Speech. I feel, as I've listened to the Lieutenant Governor and I've read through it a couple of times, that the name of this Throne Speech should be, the lights are on but nobody's home, Mr. Speaker.

There's no vision. There's no direction. But I guess that's not a surprise when this is exactly the third Throne Speech in a row that says absolutely nothing and says a lot about that government on that side, Mr. Speaker. It's the same old, same old from the same old tired government. We hear the same old things day after day and it's getting kind of boring, Mr. Speaker. It's really time to change government to a Saskatchewan Party government that might have some vision and direction for the province.

Mr. Speaker, I look to the Throne Speech and I look to see, does it address the 19 straight quarters of population drop in this province? Couldn't find it anywhere.

Does it deal with the longest health care waiting lists in the country? Well just touched on them, but doesn't deal with them, Mr. Speaker.

Does it deal with the highest taxes in the country? No it doesn't, Mr. Speaker. Does it deal with the high education tax on property, especially farm land? No. In fact, it just skips right over it very quickly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have some quotes out of the Throne Speech. I'd like to start with this one, and it goes on to say:

We have a distinct way of achieving our goals, a special style that combines creativity with flexibility.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I wonder where the creativity is in dealing with health care problems, that we've saw so many problems already in the short time that we've been in here come to the front. Where's the creativity in shortening those waiting lists?

Where's the creativity in lowering our taxes and bringing new business, keeping our kids in Saskatchewan? Where's the creativity there, Mr. Speaker?

Where's the creativity when SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention was on, when the Premier was asked, are you going to deal with the high education tax on farm land? Well there wasn't much creativity there.

It goes on to say here, Mr. Speaker:

Engaging in a partnership with Saskatchewan people, our

government will deliver this mandate in . . . (the) same style of imagination and realism . . .

Well I thought for a minute, Mr. Speaker, and I thought, I've been here nine years and I haven't seen much imagination or realism out of that side of the House. And then I thought, no that's not right. The realism is this government, under this Premier, has brought in three deficit budgets. That's realism.

Mr. Speaker, the debt is increased by about a billion and a half dollars since they've taken over the last three years. That's realism. Where the imagination comes in is how they've dealt with it. The imaginary rainy day fund that they say they'd pay it off with which never existed, Mr. Speaker, because every time they run a deficit this province goes deeper in debt. Reminds you of the '80s, in which they were very good about chirping about, but now, Mr. Speaker, are doing exactly the same at just a higher rate of speed is all they're dealing with.

Mr. Speaker, I was very disappointed in this Throne Speech when it come to agriculture because agriculture is up against the wall right now. And a quote out of this goes to say . . . in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, says:

In partnership with farm families, farm organizations and rural communities, our government will strive to expand opportunities in agri-business and for farm families . . . We will create an integrated, value-added and research-based new agricultural economy.

The key word is we, the government will create. They still don't get it, Mr. Speaker. Private business will create. All they have to do is create the climate, lower the taxes, and everybody else will do the job that needs to be done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, I go on to read out of the Throne Speech:

Today, however, the highest agricultural priority for our government is to work with the livestock industry and other governments to open the borders to the export of Saskatchewan livestock.

Good statement but no action behind it. The Premier of Alberta has just got back or just in Washington promoting Canadian beef and trying to get the borders open. Where's our Premier? The Premier that made this statement that he'll support other provinces and support our beef industry is at home, when he should be with the Alberta Premier helping get those borders open, which is really the best answer to all of the farmers' problems.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech lacks no vision and no direction. Everywhere you look in there there's nothing to be optimistic about for the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, when I looked in there for things to deal with agriculture and couldn't find them, the thing that came to mind right away was where the new Ag minister has been telling farmers lately, well after last year's Ag minister raising crop insurance premiums by 52 per cent, he's going to keep up the good work. He's going to raise premiums by another 13 percent. But that's not the end of

it. He's going to take away some of the coverage that farmers had before. So what we're going to end up within this province, Mr. Speaker, is farmers without any crop insurance at all because they can't afford to take it out, Mr. Speaker.

Now we have the CFIP (Canadian Farm Income Program) program. We went AIDA (Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance), CFIP, and the CFIP program now we find out is going to be short of funds.

And yesterday good news out of the federal government, federal budget today. The federal government's going to put \$65 million into that shortfall. What does our Agriculture minister tell us? No, ain't happening, not on here. It's not going to happen in the province of Saskatchewan. We're not putting in our share of the shortfall.

So what's happening, Mr. Speaker? The farmers that still have to have applications in and are looking for money are going to get a watered-down version of what they should have had because this government will not stand behind our farmers.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister came out with a \$1 billion aid package, and time will tell whether the farmers are going to see much of that money, Mr. Speaker. Quite often under this federal government and this provincial government the bureaucracy eats up so much of that money that our farmers actually see very little of it. But at first sight it looks to be a very promising payment to the farmers. And it's much needed out there.

Part of the program that I really am disappointed in, Mr. Speaker, in what they announced yesterday was that calves sold by a farmer before December 31 will not qualify. And that puts many farmers in this province up against the wall once again, Mr. Speaker, because they had to sell; it wasn't by choice. They had bills to pay. And they paid at very . . . or sold at very depressed prices. And now this \$80 a head — which isn't going to solve all our problems but which will certainly help — they will not qualify for. So I know the farmers that will qualify will be very appreciative of what's coming, and hopefully that they will get this money out very quickly.

Mr. Speaker, the key though — and I go back to talking about when the Alberta Premier was down in Washington trying to get the borders open — let's face it, that's still the best answer to the cattle problem, the BSE problem that we have in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to go back for a minute. And I mentioned it before about SARM convention which was very well attended. I believe there was about 2,000 delegates from rural Saskatchewan representing RMs (rural municipalities) there. But the main question that they asked this government and especially this Premier — are they going to deal with the Boughen report and are they going to lower the education tax on farm land?

And what was the answer, Mr. Speaker? No, we aren't going to deal with it this year; we may deal with it next year. In fact, the Education minister's comment on the radio — a number of times I've heard him say — is we may look at it next year. You know what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker? And we don't

know whether this term of sitting in this House is going to last for two years, three years, four years. Time will tell.

But I think what the plan is on that side of the House is they're not going to deal with the high education tax on property, both urban and rural. They're going to wait until the next election, come out with a great program when the election's on, and then leave it to us to clean up the mess.

Because I think what happened this time, Mr. Speaker, was they got caught in their own mess. They thought we were going to be government, knew there was a big mess to clean up. And the public said no, we're going to give you one more chance. And now they're having to deal with deficits, high debt, and the problems that they've created over the last 12 years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, farmers are dealing with low grain prices, the BSE, low cattle prices, and still no commitment from this Premier.

And, Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat concerned with our new Ag minister. I would hope that the new Ag minister is going to take a class 101 on agriculture because, as one of my constituents said, I hope what I'm hearing about the new Ag minister is not right, that his qualifications to be an Ag minister is because he had a horse once. And another one at the coffee table said, no, I think you've got that wrong; he saw a horse once.

So that's his qualifications. I wish that new Ag minister well because, Mr. Speaker — I know we're making fun of it to a degree — but it's such a serious problem out in rural Saskatchewan right now that I'm really pulling for that Ag minister and I'm hoping he bends the ear of government and gets behind our farmers in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the education tax on property a little . . . in a little more depth. And I think the problem that many farmers in rural Saskatchewan are having a hard time understanding, with the reassessment of farm land increasing and the education tax increasing but at the same time we're losing population in rural Saskatchewan. We're losing kids in schools in rural Saskatchewan. In fact we're losing schools. There's schools closing every year in pretty near every constituency in this province in rural Saskatchewan.

And at the same time, Mr. Speaker, our farmers are being asked to pay a higher level of education tax to support that system. In fact it's so bad in a number of school districts that rural Saskatchewan is being asked to pay 100 per cent of the costs that school divisions have, and the government pays nothing. I can think . . . I think Weyburn's one. I think there's one up by Biggar. There's a number of them that pick . . . are picking up the full tab, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have a number of other things to speak on the Throne Speech, but maybe I could continue tomorrow and adjourn debate at this point?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melville-Saltcoats 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: — Recognize the Government Deputy House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

The Assembly adjourned at 16:57.

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