



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

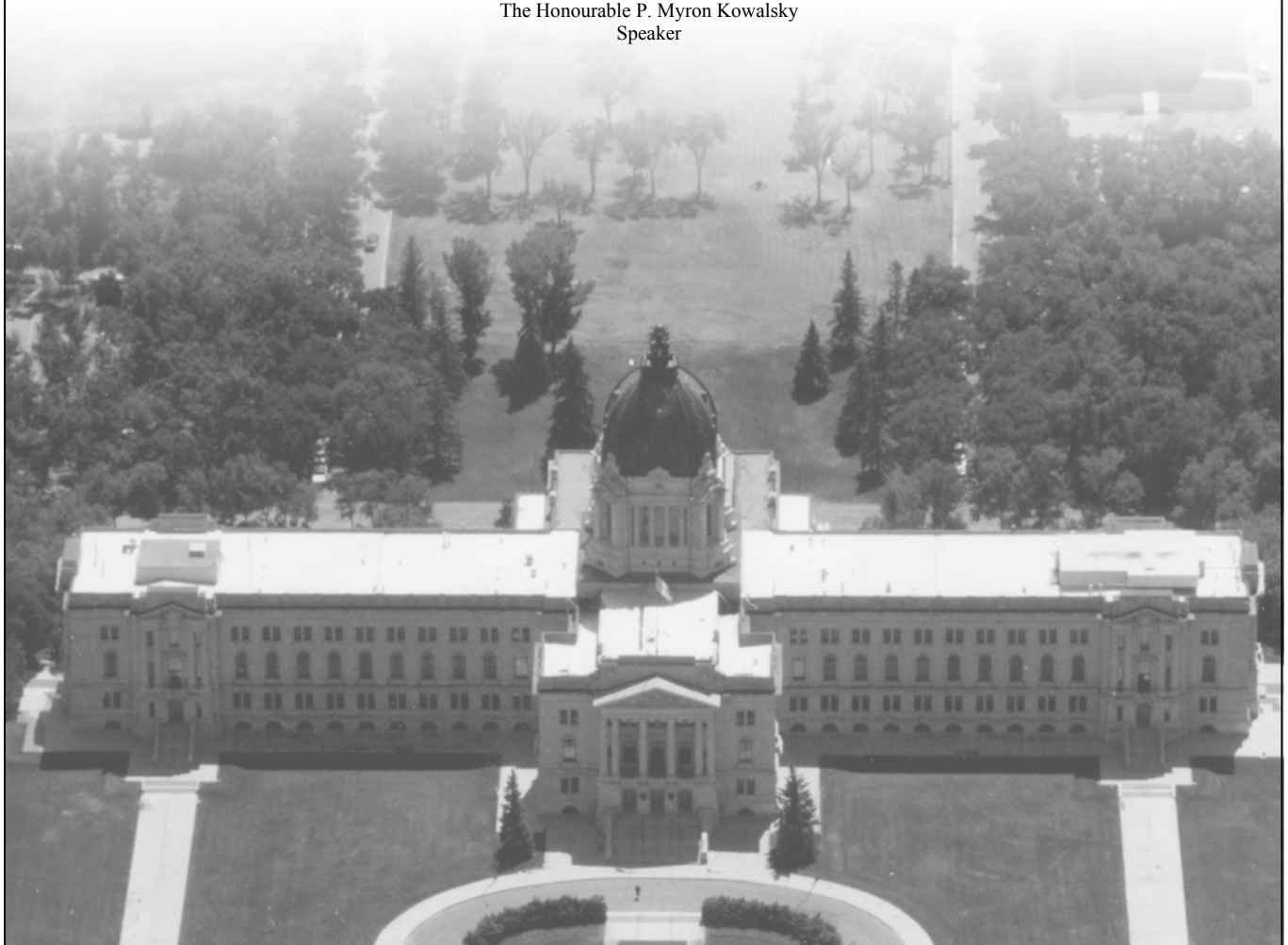
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

The Assembly met at 10:00.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, to present a petition on behalf of restaurateurs and people across this province regarding the tax on food:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition I present is signed by people from the communities of Windthorst, Corning, Kipling, Peebles, Glenavon.

I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of constituents primarily from the community of Maple Creek. And it concerns the proposed or worrisome possibility of a tax being added to meals. 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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of citizens concerned about the potential for the expansion of the PST (provincial sales tax) to restaurant meals in Saskatchewan. The prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government not to implement the Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education's recommendation to expand the PST to restaurant meals.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from the city of Swift Current, from Saskatoon, Lucky Lake, from Birsay, and even from Vancouver, Mr. Speaker.

I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from constituents of mine, addressed to this Assembly, about concerns that there are indications that the Government of Saskatchewan is contemplating major changes to its lease policy for Crown land. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads:

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

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from the communities of Eston and Lacadena, and I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition. 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 and confectionery foods.

The signators, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Yorkton, Goodeve, Rokeby, Norquay, Rhein, Theodore, Melville.

I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present on behalf of citizens of the province regarding the PST expansion on 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 recommendations to expand the provincial sales tax to include restaurant meals. Please do not tax our food.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from Dysart, Fort Qu'Appelle, Lipton, Regina, and Yorkton.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens concerned about the possible expansion of the PST to include restaurant meals. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by people from Lipton, Fort Qu'Appelle, Yorkton, Estevan, Balcarres, and Lebret.

I so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again this morning on behalf of citizens concerned about the potential expansion of the PST. 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, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of LeRoy, Muenster, Watson, Melfort and, incredible as it may seem, even from Flagstaff, Arizona.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand again today to present petitions of citizens concerned about the application of PST to restaurant food. 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 the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from across the entire province, too many communities to list.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a petition from citizens in my constituency that are getting quite concerned about the contemplated changes to the Crown policy leasing system. And the petition reads as follows:

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens from Bracken, Val Marie, Orkney, and Climax.

I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here signed by citizens opposed to possible reduction of services to Davidson and Imperial health centres.

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by good citizens from Davidson and Bladworth.

I so present.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I arise again to present petitions on behalf of citizens that are 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 disputes so that the water level of the Qu'Appelle River system can return to normal and end the economic harm and uncertainty this dispute has caused.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Fort Qu'Appelle, Pasqua Lake, and Cupar.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to present a petition on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan concerned with senior citizens and their bridge in living between independent living and long-term care. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that citizens of Unity and district remain in the community for this necessary service that will bridge the gap between independent living and long-term care.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by folks from Unity, Herbert, Tramping Lake, Wilkie, Kindersley, Saskatoon, Cut Knife, Kerrobert, Senlac, Denzil, Luseland, Reward, Scott, Lloydminster; and Provost, Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, and Calgary, Alberta.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional papers nos. 47 and 49.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 12 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Industry: how much money was paid to Phoenix Advertising for the Future is Wide Open campaign, and what was their commission?

I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 12 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister responsible for SGI: what research was done to justify the lower hourly rate SGI is now proposing to Saskatchewan autobody shops as compensation for paint work?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all the members of this Assembly, a Regina resident, Marilyn Mihalicz, who has joined us today in the Legislative Assembly. And, Mr. Speaker, I

would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming her to her Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Saskatchewan Farmer Receives Malt Barley Award

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to applaud the achievements of Ron and Glenda St. John from Kindersley area, upon receiving various awards at Agribition in Regina in November 2003. These awards were for growing the best malt barley in Saskatchewan. Ron farms south and east of Brock, continuing in the farming heritage of his father and grandfather. And seven of Ron's brothers also follow in this family tradition.

Upon submitting their barley sample to the annual competition staged by the Barley Development Council they won provincial two-row barley honours, awarding them several prizes including a trip to Vancouver.

The St. John's barley scored high for plumpness and protein which is highly valued. This occurred in a dry year when conditions were dry and protein was much higher than usual. And in barley, Mr. Speaker, as I'm sure the Minister of Agriculture knows, you don't want too much protein because this can spoil your beer.

Please join me in congratulating the outstanding farmers and to wish them ever success in their future endeavours.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Partners in Motion 10th Anniversary

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week one of the best known and most successful film and video production companies in Saskatchewan celebrated its 10th anniversary. I am pleased to say that this company, Partners in Motion, is located in the fine constituency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, the film and video industry, like other cultural industries, plays a pivotal role in Saskatchewan. On a cultural level it inspires, it stirs creativity, and it brings people together — perhaps not the opposition and the government, Mr. Speaker, but that's the way it goes. It also plays an important role in the economy. This year industry production volumes will reach \$47 million, and that translates into a lot of jobs.

Arts and culture, Mr. Speaker, they're good for the community and good for the economy. Partners in Motion has made huge contributions on both counts.

In their 10-year history, the management and staff of Partners in Motion have demonstrated time and again their commitment to their clients and the art of storytelling. Their record for excellence is reflected in the numerous awards they have received, including best editing, best sound, best director, best script, best analysis of a story. Clearly Partners in Motion can do it all and do it well.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate everyone at Partners in Motion on this, their 10th anniversary and I particularly want to acknowledge Partners in Motion CEO (chief executive officer), Ron Goetz, and president, Chris Triffo, for the work they have done in creating this highly successful production company, and for their ongoing contributions to the film and video industry here in Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Estevan Author Launches First Novel

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recently Estevan writer Katina Chapman saw a dream come true when she held the launch of her novel titled *Reservations*. And, Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to attend that launch.

In this, her first novel, the author spins a tale of romance and intrigue. *Reservations* is a contemporary love story set on the Canadian Prairies. The author carefully weaves a story pitting writer Brian Lonecloud and his Cree upbringing against cosmetics heiress, Cynthia Cavanagh. Writing has been a part of Katina's daily life, whether it be journal entries, letters to distant family members and friends, or magazine articles. Success came in 2002 when Canadian Disabilities magazine published an article she had written about her husband Rick, granddaughter Amanda, and their annual participation in the Terry Fox Run.

(10:15)

Ponder Publishing awarded this novel the grand prize in 2002 for the Write Your Heart Out Contest. It was chosen the winner over 100 entries from around the world. Katina has been a member of Romance Writers of America for several years. She is currently working on a new romance novel and working on her maternal grandmother's fascinating story.

Mr. Speaker, Katina and her husband Rick are the owners and operators of Tranquil Moments Custom Framing Gallery and Giftware store in Estevan — a store that promotes Saskatchewan artists and Saskatchewan products. They are both very involved in the Estevan community. *Reservations* is available at Tranquil Moments, as well as the Book and Brier in Regina.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Katina Chapman.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Fort a la Corne Diamond Discovery

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan's potential in diamond exploration continues to reach new heights with the recent discovery of another significant discovery at Fort a la Corne.

On February 2, Kensington Resources in joint venture with De Beers and Cameco announced the discovery of a high quality, colourless, and clear diamond weighing point seven seven carats, Mr. Speaker. This announcement was one of several that demonstrates the tremendous diamond potential in our province.

According to recently announced preliminary results, nearly 2,100 micro-diamonds have been recovered from about 740 kilograms of kimberlite at Fort a la Corne. Mr. Speaker, these preliminary results have exceeded Kensington's expectations and could potentially have an enormous economic impact on our province. The discovery of kimberlite pipes and diamonds in our province has led to extensive exploration and drilling by more than 30 companies. Saskatchewan mining productivity is ranked among the highest in Canada, and we're the third largest, non-fuel mineral producing province in the nation.

Mr. Speaker, a thriving mineral industry contributes to the growth of our economy and the quality of our life. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those companies involved in the diamond explorations in our province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

DMB Food Processors

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 7, 2003, DMB Food Processors of Canada announced that construction of a \$65 million, privately owned facility near Qu'Appelle would be started either last fall or early this spring. This facility will generate 350 full-time jobs and significantly increase the provincial slaughter capacity for cattle and hogs.

Mr. Speaker, the three major investors stated that day: we have received no grant aid, nor have we applied for any support from agencies such as CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan). Mr. Speaker, the minister of Agriculture, Clay Serby, and I'm quoting, who our prayers are with, stated that the government . . . no government funds will be going to this project directly, though there will be some infrastructure spending to ensure the project can proceed as, as duly need be.

Compliments to the government, because I've talked to the RM (rural municipality) and a few of the people that have been developing this, that the government is doing what a government should do. They're regulating. They're making sure the proper studies are done, and they will be supplying infrastructure for the facility. That's what a government should do. I can't help but look at the contrast between this announcement and the announcement made at the ethanol site where the Premier took his tent, pitched a tent, invited thousands of school kids by, and what has happened?

Absolutely nothing. The right way to do an announcement, the wrong way to do an announcement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Coronation Park.

Wascana Lake Excavation Celebration

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not quite like Genesis. It's not quite like, bring on the flood. But I do want to invite everybody to a bring-on-the-flood party at Wascana Lake this Sunday.

Mr. Speaker, the work started in January of this year and finished March 21. We want to celebrate on the south shore of Wascana Lake in front of the Legislative Building. The celebrations begin at 12 noon. The Wascana Lake revitalization project — or the big dig as we Regina affectionately call it — is a partnership between the federal, provincial governments and the city of Regina. The lake has been excavated to a depth of 5.5 metres between Broad Street and Albert Street bridges. There's improvements like a new pedway alongside the Albert Street bridge, an underpass at the Broad Street bridge, a creation of Pine Island where the old Broad Street bridge abutment is, and a seven-and-a-half metre deep area for fish to overwinter.

These enhancements are going to make a fabulous lake even more fabulous and more usable. The deepened lake is going to be a much improved recreation facility, something that the whole province can be proud of when Regina hosts the 2005 Canada Games.

Mr. Speaker, please join our Premier, several ministers, Regina MLAs (Member of Legislative Assembly), the federal Minister of Finance, the mayor and city councillors, and many more as we come to Wascana Lake for the big flood starting Sunday.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Recreation and Leisure

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently there was a little bit of Hawaii in the middle of Saskatchewan winter at the annual Leaps and Bounds of the Biggar Chamber of Commerce:

The Community Hall was transformed into a tropical paradise for a Hawaiian luau. The speaker for the evening, Ross Milnthorp, Director of Leisure Services for the City of Humboldt, challenged the traditional thought on leisure services.

Elected officials and governments have considered recreation and leisure services as "soft services", said Milnthorp. It is not only that sector but taxpayers have long considered leisure services to be a necessary part of community but nevertheless were simply a drain on the tax dollar. Milnthorp dispelled that myth.

Through charts and statistics, he illustrated that leisure services are actually an investment for the community . . . (for) providing significant economic returns.

Derrick Smith, recreation director for the town of Biggar, gave some statistics on dollars spent in Biggar. Just as one example, having a senior hockey team such as the Biggar Nationals brought . . . an estimated \$43,000 into the community during the season. By not having a senior team this year that money was lost.

The Lloyd Hock Customer Service Award was presented to Sandy Guran of Silhouette Fashions. New businesses, business milestones, and expansions were acknowledged.

Please join me in congratulating the organizers and businesses for a very enjoyable evening at the annual Leaps and Bounds of the Biggar Chamber of Commerce.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Public Disclosure of Location of Violent Offender

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is an extremely disturbing story in today's paper about a violent sexual assault in Regina that might have been prevented.

Three months ago, Randy Scott Burgmann was released from the Prince Albert Penitentiary after serving 14 years for sex offences. The Edmonton police immediately issued a public warning about Burgmann. Mr. Speaker, the Edmonton police did this in the interest of public safety. Regina police applied to do the same thing here, but they were advised against it by a Department of Justice committee. Burgmann has now been charged with aggravated sexual assault of a 29-year-old Regina woman.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister, why were Regina residents not warned about this violent sexual offender?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, this is a tragic and horrific crime, and the sympathy of everybody in this House, I'm sure, goes to the victim. The decision as to whether to disclose the existence of the individual in question in the community is ultimately and solely the decision of the police service. And the Regina Police Service sought advice of a public disclosure panel, a civilian panel, but ultimately decided not to disclose this information. That's the balance they decided to strike in this particular case.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken: — Whenever a violent offender is released,

women in our community are at risk. But the Department of Justice committee says public disclosure could result in serious consequences to the offender. Mr. Speaker, what about the serious consequences to the rape victim? What about the serious consequences to the 29-year-old woman who was violently raped, left bleeding, and semi-conscious in a back alley and could now be emotionally scarred for life?

Mr. Speaker, this action put all women in our communities at risk. This could have been my daughter. This could have been someone's wife. It could have been someone's mother. Mr. Speaker, why is this government more concerned about the rights of a rapist than the safety of women in our communities?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the information about where this individual was residing was properly made to the appropriate police service, the Regina Police Service. It was not made to the Minister of Justice. That would not be appropriate. It wouldn't be practical. This information was provided to the Regina Police Service.

They have a difficult job in these cases. Well they have a difficult job in every case, Mr. Speaker, but in this case they have a difficult job. The Regina Police Service has to decide in each one of these cases to balance public protection against instilling fear in the community. They make these calls quite often, Mr. Speaker. They made this call in this case. In hindsight if they had made the call differently, perhaps this wouldn't have happened. Perhaps it would have happened anyways, Mr. Speaker. But it's a very difficult job the Regina Police Service have, and they made it in this case.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, this decision was made by the committee from the Department of Justice. It was not made by the police. Mr. Speaker, the actions taken put all women in our communities at risk. Is this acceptable?

The Edmonton police warned the public about this violent sexual offence, but in Regina the Department of Justice committee told police not to warn the public, and as a result a 29-year-old woman was raped and beaten, and left bleeding in a back alley. Which process worked better?

Mr. Speaker, will the minister order a review of its process for warning the public about dangerous offenders? Will this government do the right thing? And will they put the safety of women in our communities a priority?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has suggested, I think stated, that the Department of Justice ordered the Regina Police Service not to make this disclosure. If she has any documents, if she has any evidence of that order, I would request that she provide it to me and table it in this House.

There was no such order, Mr. Speaker. The Regina Police Service had a decision to make. They had the information. They consult, they consult an advisory committee of civilians, Mr. Speaker, but they made the decision. And they made a different decision than the Edmonton Police Service. And it was a judgment call.

And if the hon. member wants to continue to attack the decision that was made by the Regina Police Service, I think that is her right. But if she wants to suggest that the Justice Department instructed them to make that decision, I think that she'd need to prove it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Waiting Lists for Radiation Therapy for Cancer

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the last week or so the Saskatchewan Party has asked a number of questions about the length of waiting lists in the province of Saskatchewan. We've raised the case of 57-year-old Dennis Scott of Regina, whose prostate cancer spread after waiting six months for a biopsy. You've heard the tragic story of 65-year-old Duff MacDonald of Indian Head, who died after waiting six months to see a specialist for prostate cancer.

The Minister of Health has told this Assembly that cancer patients should not be waiting for specialists and diagnostic procedures like biopsy, but what about treatment, Mr. Speaker? To the minister: what is the average wait of cancer patients for radiation therapy in the province of Saskatchewan, and how do we stack up against our neighbour Manitoba?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, our cancer treatment in Saskatchewan is something that we can all be proud of. They end up doing the work that is required to make sure that we do have some of the best cancer care in the country.

I think last week there was a man on the radio talking about how he had moved here from New Zealand. His child received the bad news that he had leukemia. He checked around with his friends around the world, and they identified that the Allan Blair Clinic in Regina was in the top areas of treatment for the country.

What happens around the radiation treatment times may have some fluctuation in that, but at any given time they are working to make sure that this care is given at the appropriate times.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the minister didn't answer the question. We asked how Saskatchewan is stacking up against other provinces, for example our neighbour Manitoba. If you contact CancerCare Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, you will learn that the average wait time in that province for radiation therapy for prostate cancer is 1.7 weeks, Mr. Speaker. That's 12 days.

Manitoba faces the same challenges that this government claims to be facing in health care. People in this province are waiting more than 16 months, in some cases, for cancer treatment.

To the minister: why should people in Saskatchewan wait 16 months for cancer treatment?

(10:30)

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the announcement that was made on Monday of this week around target time frames had very specifically in that announcement the fact that all cancer treatments would be category 2 or higher. The optimum treatment time that would then be less than three weeks in that system. And that's the goal that we have and I am led to understand that we are very close to meeting that in a very high percentage of the cases.

The minister, or the member opposite refers to Manitoba. He points to one of the challenges we have as part of our Canadian confederation. Equalization system is supposed to provide fairness and equitableness across the country. We get about 120 million in Saskatchewan. Manitoba, they get about \$1.2 billion. That's money that relates to health care. I think all of us in Saskatchewan should be crying and saying let's fix this.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to tell this Assembly today about a Regina man named Bob Mihalicz. Mr. Mihalicz was diagnosed with elevated PSA (prostate-specific antigen) levels in November of 2002. He then waited more than seven months for a biopsy to confirm prostate cancer. He was forced to wait another three months before treatment was scheduled because of a bureaucratic mix-up at Sask Health.

Last month Mr. Mihalicz was finally scheduled for an April appointment to go on a simulator machine to prepare for radiation therapy.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: 16 months have now elapsed since blood tests first indicated cancer might be in progress, and yet Mr. Mihalicz still waits for treatment. If he lived in Manitoba, there's a chance he would have treatment in 12 days. Does the minister find this wait acceptable?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said before, when there are individual cases where there are challenges, I end up having the concern that I have for every person in Saskatchewan as it relates to the health care system. And these are things that we need to fix.

But what I would say is, in Saskatchewan we have a very good record of treatment and dealing with cancer patients and dealing with them on a regular basis right . . . and we . . . I would stack up what we're doing with anything across the country.

But we end up having a lot of frustration in trying to make sure we have the resources for the long term for our system. We're going to make sure that the surgeries are done in an appropriate time frame. We're the only part of the country that has so far set out target times. They don't have this in Alberta. They don't have this in Manitoba. They don't have this in Ontario. We are going ahead to make sure that we do this for Saskatchewan people because we want good care for them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, what they have in Manitoba is a 12-day wait for treatment of prostate cancer; that's what they have in the province of Manitoba next door.

Mr. Speaker, Bob Mihalicz's wife Marilyn has come today on his behalf. Every day Bob waits is another day that he is at risk that his cancer would spread outside the prostate. He and his wife are frightened that the cancer will spread if left untreated. He needs radiation therapy now.

I remind the minister that in Manitoba the wait may have been as short as 12 days, but today would be a good start for Bob.

Can the minister assure Marilyn and Bob that he won't have the wait any longer for his treatment?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the people who are involved in the health care system need to work with the professionals. If there are some challenges there, they need to work with those people that we have in the system — the quality care coordinators who end up identifying and working with patients. We also have others who are all part of making sure people get the care at the appropriate time.

It's always a challenge to try to deal with these kinds of cases here in this House. But what I would ask the member opposite is: what kinds of solutions do you have as the new leader? You have said to us . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would just remind the member that he's to speak directly to the Speaker. The member may continue.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I think I was asking you that question, but I'm sorry. But we're not allowed to include you in the debate.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition — he has stated, as the new Leader of the Opposition that he doesn't have any policy on anything because they're going to have policy conventions to do this. Let's get out and hear from them what kind of suggestions they have, because we have to work together on this and I assume that they're going to work with us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Care Issues Described by Nurses

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today we hear the absolute lack of any direction and policy from the government opposite. The minister . . . The minister not only should listen to the desperate cries of people in this province that need treatment, he should also listen to the desperate stories of nurses who are living through the crisis on the front lines of health care.

Mr. Speaker, when a dangerous incident threatens patients' safety in the ER (emergency room), nurses write situation reports that are filed with the nurses' union and with the health region. I want the minister to hear in the words of a real ER nurse what it's like to work inside the NDP's (New Democratic Party) failing health care system. And I quote:

inadequate physical space for demands on system . . .
unable to cope . . . dangerous situation has occurred again
. . . suicidal patient brought in with city police had
attempted suicide, left the emergency room without
treatment.

Mr. Speaker, what specific actions is this NDP government taking to address this critical shortage of doctors, nurses, and physical space and medical supplies that threaten patients' safety every day?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we have a plan on this side of the House. We've been working at it carefully and going forward. It includes many things. It includes the health . . . or human resource training of new people — that's the bursary programs. It includes the expansion of a number of different programs. It includes the recruitment of people. It includes the retention of people here in the province. It includes asking hard questions about what things we're not doing right so that we can fix them.

We have a quality council and that's . . . their job is to say . . . ask some really hard questions about our system. But that's the only way you can deal with some of the challenges, is to make sure that you go and solve those particular problems.

We're going to continue to work that way. If there are challenges in an emergency room, those are going to be identified and we're going to go ahead and work and deal with those. But it's a process where we work together with the professionals and we deal with them in a very positive way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, front-line health care professionals have been crying out desperately for help from this government and the government responds by firing the guy who raises the issue.

Mr. Speaker, if the minister won't listen to the cries of nurses

who are calling out for help, perhaps the Premier will listen to them.

Here's some more comments, and I quote:

all beds full . . . poor quality patient care for those in hallway beds . . . in a chaos lost a certified psychiatric patient . . . three patients in pediatric area unattended for seven hours . . . no time to do the checks . . . patient care situation unsafe due to lack of space . . . insufficient supplies . . . desperate . . . despite all attempts by management to help, we were in a desperate situation for several hours.

Mr. Speaker, these are the cries of nurses asking for help from this government. Does this government care, and are they listening?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this government and the members on this side of the House care. And we listen, and we're doing something about it.

What we've heard in the House this week from the members opposite on a number of different issues is that they want to run everything. They don't trust any of the professionals out there to sort out some of these issues and work with them. Our job on this side of the House and in this legislature is to work to get the resources for the people who are the professionals to do their job. And we're going to continue to do that.

And I encourage the members opposite to think like they're helping solve some of the problems as opposed to providing sort of a negative cloud over everything, because that's not what Saskatchewan people want. They want to go forward, they want solutions to problems; they don't want this negative atmosphere. There's no change from '99, there's no change from '95. Let's go ahead with the plans that we have on this side of the House. That's what the people said in November and we are going to do it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Strike at the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Learning. For a third straight day, SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) instructors were forced on to the picket lines by an NDP government that has refused to come to the table with a fair wage offer — the fact that the NDP is refusing to make any wage offer at all.

And let's make no mistake, Mr. Speaker. The strike happened because of the NDP's refusal to give negotiators a mandate to bargain on wages. Yesterday the minister told students and their instructors to wait.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP's timeline is threatening to disrupt or nullify an entire year of studies for thousands of students. Will the minister agree today to make the future of students priority one? Will he direct negotiators to go back to the table with a fair wage offer so that instructors can get back to work and students can complete their studies?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I think it is naive on the part of the member opposite to assume that simply by providing a monetary mandate that the strike will be resolved immediately. There are a broad range of issues at this table that are complex and will require both parties to look for some compromise.

This is why we have asked for and brought in a conciliator to assist the two parties in moving forward. The member opposite either doesn't understand the collective bargaining process or simply attempts to exacerbate the situation and scare students, either of which is unacceptable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, I will let the students decide who doesn't understand. I will let the students decide who is arrogant.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, that minister seems to think that the NDP's timeline is more important than the students' timeline. The students who are having their studies disrupted today at SIAST campuses in Regina include nursing students. They include medical . . . emergency medical technicians.

Earlier today, we heard the Minister of Health tell families to continue waiting for critical surgical procedures and treatments. And now, we have the Minister of Learning who is willing to gamble the future of nursing students and EMTs (emergency medical technician) by playing a waiting game with them.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister, stop playing games with the lives and futures of the students. Will the minister give government negotiators a mandate to make a fair wage offer at SIAST so that bargaining can begin again, the strike can be settled, and students can be assured of the education they paid for and the education that they deserve?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, the member's question opposite is full of nonsense and histrionics.

This is not what I hear from students as they write and talk to me about it. They understand the issues are complex. They understand that the concerns of the instructors are there. They

also understand the consequences in terms of coming forward with a solution.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the member opposite will understand that a collective agreement will be reached in time and that the instructors will, in time, go back to work and we will end up with . . . (inaudible) . . . peace.

This approach that the member opposite is using does nothing to assist in this process. He comes forward with no options in terms of moving forward. He has not . . . has no suggestion in terms of how we deal with this. This party opposite opposes our plan to try and get a fairer shake from Ottawa that would assist in this. And he comes forward with no ideas on where we should move with a mandate. If he has an option, if he has an idea, I am sure every member in this House would love to hear it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Government Handling of Current Issues

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, have you ever seen such a pathetic government especially in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — We asked them to protect women from sexual predators, Mr. Speaker, and they hide behind the police service when there are committees of the Department of Justice that could make a difference. We asked them to make sure that Bob Mihalicz gets treatment for his prostate cancer. They hide behind the quality councils, Mr. Speaker. We asked them to make sure SIAST students can get an education, can complete their studies, and they hide behind negotiators.

Mr. Speaker, we say to them that they are the government. Mr. Speaker, we say to them that the member for Riversdale is the Premier of the province.

The people of this province want them to stand up. They want them to stand up for patients. They want them to stand up for taxpayers who need to be protected in their neighbourhoods. They want them to stand up for students.

What does this government do, Mr. Speaker? What does this Premier do? He ducks. When will he stop ducking and stand up for Saskatchewan people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(10:45)

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, what we have seen today and over the course of this week is an insight into both the thought and the policy and the politics of this opposition and its new leader.

Mr. Speaker, what would they have us do? Well you see daily

in this House they would have this government expend more money on health care, on justice, on education. Every day they call for more money. Then the leader stands up and criticizes the government who is putting new dollars and new resources into those very things.

But perhaps even more troublesome, Mr. Speaker, is what we have seen here today. What would this party have government do in Saskatchewan? Well they'd have us take over decisions that are appropriately made by the police. They would have us take over decisions that are appropriately made by medical professionals and medical people who are administering the health care system. They would have us take over decisions made by the Legal Aid Commission. Mr. Speaker, this is a very, very dangerous, dangerous opposition. It's not a pathetic opposition, Mr. Speaker; it is a dangerous opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker. I'll tell you what the Saskatchewan Party would have this government do. We would have this government stand up for the people of this province — rural and urban, north and south.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — We would have that Premier put the people of this province ahead of process, that's what we would have this government do. Mr. Speaker, throughout just the first few days of this session we've seen the government duck from its responsibility with countless excuses. Since November 5, the provincial election, we've seen them break promise after promise after promise.

So I ask the Premier again, when can the people of this province expect him to put them first instead of his interests and his processes over on that side?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — When, Mr. Speaker, when will this Saskatchewan Party put the interests of the people of the province ahead of their own political agenda?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — That is the question: when will that happen? Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we have stood on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan when we have invested in health care, when we have invested in education, when we have invested in supporting farm families. And what have they done? They've criticized every one of those investments. When this government is standing for the people of Saskatchewan in battling the national government for a fair and equitable equalization, what do we get from members opposite? Criticism, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're standing for the people of Saskatchewan — you bet. What we need is an opposition who will finally give up

its hunger quest for power and join with us on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 8 — The Gas Inspection Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Sask Power.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 8, The Gas Inspection Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for Sask Power that Bill No. 8, The Gas Inspection Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

Bill No. 9 — The Electrical Inspection Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Sask Power.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 9, The Electrical Inspection Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for Sask Power that Bill No. 9, The Electrical Inspection Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

Bill No. 10 — The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi sur l'administration des successions

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I move that Bill No. 10, The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 10, The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

Bill No. 11 — The Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 11, the post-secondary education and skills training amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Learning that Bill No. 11, The Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Next sitting.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — To ask for leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I don't have all the names with me here, but I just wanted to make a special welcome to folks in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

In note is the tribal chief, Richard Gladue, of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council — but more important also is a friend of mine — the chief of Birch Narrows, Robert Sylvester. Mr. Speaker, he has travelled a long ways to be here today and I want to make sure we welcome him here.

And also to point out that there's a . . . As we all know in the Assembly, I'm a hockey player and he's a hockey player as well. And this weekend's a big tournament and nobody phoned him to play, Mr. Speaker. So I'm not sure why, but I'll try and make room for him in my team if there is room. And I feel bad about that.

But I want to ask all members of the Assembly to please welcome these very special guests, especially Chief Robert Sylvester from Turnor Lake.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions 1 through 4 inclusive.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has submitted responses for questions 1, 2, 3, and 4.

I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand on behalf of the government today to convert for debates returnable, questions 5 through 14, inclusive.

The Speaker: — Questions 5 through to 14 have been converted to motions for return (debatable).

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCall: — I can feel the love, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday when I left off, I was talking about some of the challenges that face Aboriginal people in our society, particularly in an inner-city community like mine in Regina.

Those challenges must be overcome if Aboriginal people are to take their rightful place in our society. Now I don't mean to give the impression that this will somehow be a matter of the provincial government doing these things for Aboriginal people. Rather, it's a matter of this provincial government working in partnership, strong partnership, respectful partnership, in an environment of mutual respect with Aboriginal people and governments. That's what will move the situation forward.

The challenges are many but there is a lot to be hopeful about. There have been gains in terms of labour market participation, in terms of income levels, in terms of education and training gains. There is the concrete achievement, quite literally, of the opening of the First Nations University of Canada, a tremendous achievement and one that will have an exponential effect I believe on the standing of Aboriginal people in our society.

And I think that there is a change throughout larger society towards Aboriginal people, though the recent public opinion survey work that was done around the treaties shows just how far we need to go.

But there is a change coming, and in this regard I welcome the positive remarks made by certain members opposite on this issue in various of their first speeches. I hope these words are borne out by actions down the line. One can only hope.

Another much more hopeful sign of the advances being made by Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan is I think the fact that the members from Athabasca and Cumberland are seated at the cabinet table of this government. In fact the member for Cumberland is at once both the first female Aboriginal member of the legislature and the first First Nations member of the cabinet. And it's about time, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCall: — This is the kind of progress we need if we are going to go forward together in a good way, if we are going to build the future for all Saskatchewan families. And to build that

future we have received a mandate from the Saskatchewan people. And our first efforts at delivering on that mandate have been laid out in the Throne Speech, preparing Saskatchewan for the next generation.

I would remind the opposition that a mandate usually goes for four years. So at that time, at the end of those four years, then they can feel free to yell and scream and holler about what was or was not achieved.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech builds on the solid platform on which this government was elected. And I think that it is just this kind of action in this . . . entailed in this Throne Speech from a government, that the families in Regina Elphinstone are looking for.

To start, there are measures to promote opportunity and education. We are going to implement the CareerStart program. We are going to expand the School^{PLUS} model to more schools — a measure that is of particular interest to me because this approach builds on the success of the many community schools, and many of them are in fact in the fine constituency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre. I myself am a proud graduate of Kitchener Community School, one of the first such schools set up by the Blakeney government.

We are going to add more child care spaces. We are going to establish Green Teams — bringing together young people, jobs, and the building of a greener Saskatchewan. Young people are concerned about the environment, Mr. Speaker, and the Green Teams are going to give young people a chance to translate that concern into positive action.

We're going to expand the youth job recruitment plan to include both the broader public service and the private sector. And this government is going to enhance the post-secondary graduate tax credit program, making it even more attractive for post-secondary grads to put their new skills and knowledge to work right here in Saskatchewan. Others have spoken at greater length on this topic, Mr. Speaker, so I'll suffice it to say that I am very supportive of this government's plan to build a green and prosperous economy.

This government of ours is also going to improve the quality of life in Saskatchewan. Health care is central to achieving this goal and we'll be hearing more on this topic from the Health minister shortly. But I do want to say that it is our number one priority and we'll putting our money where our mouth is come the budget — and if only the feds and the opposition would do the same.

There are other measures to improve the quality of life for Saskatchewan people and I do want to express particular encouragement about the coming plan to introduce a strategy to assess and support people with cognitive disabilities which includes fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. We are going to put forward a comprehensive disability strategy and I'm very excited about the plan to introduce a new housing strategy for low-income families, something that we will hear more about in the budget and a program that I can't wait to see get underway because if we are going to stabilize families and communities at risk, then housing is a critical part of that equation.

And we are going to continue to build independence by enhancing the Saskatchewan employment supplement and family health benefits programs.

To improve the quality of life in all our neighbourhoods, we need to take on crime — and not just by being tough on the causes of crime like the measures I've just outlined, but being tough on crime itself. In Regina there is a comprehensive drug strategy underway. We have had some success in reducing car thefts by working in partnership with municipal government and with law enforcement and we are interested in taking the lessons of this strategy and putting them to use and taking on the problem of break-ins. Increased revenue sharing will have an indirect impact on the ability of municipalities to allocate more resources in the fight against crime. And there have been good measures enacted over the past few years in response to the great work of the special committee to prevent the exploitation of children in the sex trade. John schools, car seizures, the safe house, and anti-cruising laws are all having a very positive impact.

In a similar vein we will be introducing new legislation this session to give police new tools to combat the scourge of houses used for the sale of drugs and for prostitution. We're going to take these houses on, and we're going to shut them down. And we are going to improve the safety and security of our neighbourhoods. And we are going to make these things happen in the context of a budgetary process that is tough, but fair. And we are going to prepare Saskatchewan for the next generation.

And as we set about doing these things, we know we will face opposition from the people across the way. Some of them like to say a lot of wild things while they're doing this, such as the smears that are often made against Tommy Douglas and Allan Blakeney, two individuals who have contributed so much to build social and economic progress and prosperity for not just Saskatchewan but for the whole of Canada.

(11:00)

Now I do want to say that the member for Silver Springs made some comments yesterday that went significantly against this small-minded trend, and I commend him for it. But even that member couldn't resist in engaging in one of the favourite phoney debates of the opposition by levelling the charge that this government is not interested in creating jobs or prosperity, or that we think that only government can create jobs.

That is not the case, Mr. Speaker. And I think that our record of social and economic progress speaks for itself, despite the challenges of drought and low grain prices and BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy). And we are going to make that progress in partnership with private sector, with the co-operative sector, and with Aboriginal people.

And I think that the member from Silver Springs would do well to keep that in mind, Mr. Speaker, if we're going to have a real debate in this Chamber about how to build progress in Saskatchewan. And given that the member recently came to this Assembly from a job with a federal government authority devoted to fostering economic development and diversification in Western Canada, hopefully he will, Mr. Speaker.

Something else I find interesting in the actions and the words of the members opposite is the fact that many of them just can't seem to accept the fact that they lost the election. In fact they blame us for that loss, Mr. Speaker. And isn't that just like the opposition — always blaming someone else for their problems.

The problem wasn't the fact that people didn't trust or like their platform. And that somehow gets discarded in their haste to blame us. The most stunning example of this tendency were the remarks of the former leader of the opposition as reported in the March 1, 2004 edition of the *Leader-Post*. And I quote:

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

This entails a breathtaking amount of arrogance, Mr. Speaker, and an astonishing amount of denial. And to cite an old joke, Mr. Speaker, it would seem that denial is not just a river in Egypt.

Now the opposition has stated their intention to review their policies, to bring the new tone, and to stretch their comfort zone. And I wish them luck in this. But if the early results provide any indication, the new tone seems to be exactly the old one, albeit with more pop cultural references. We will be hearing ... We will be watching and listening from this side with interest.

To close, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people I work with to serve the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, particularly my constituency assistant, Colleen Smith. She's hard-working, compassionate, and she makes me look good which takes some doing.

I also want to thank my family. My wife, Kelly, does so much to challenge me, to inspire me, and to keep me moving forward. She is a formidable political activist in her own right, and I learn so much from her. She is the love of my life.

And I want to thank my mom and dad. They gave and they give us McCall kids so much and they set such fine examples. They taught us to respect other people and that to whom much is given, much is expected. They taught us to be good neighbours, to work hard, and to lead by example. And they keep teaching me these lessons and more to this very day.

I also want to thank my siblings and their spouses and their kids for the love and joy that they bring to my life. And I want to say a special thank you to Carolyn and Madeline, my sister-in-law and my niece. They have shown me what grace and faith and love in the face of adversity is all about.

Many of you will know that my brother, Neil, Carolyn's husband and Madeline's father, was diagnosed with cancer in October and he died on December 3. He was 30 years old. I want to thank many of the people in this place for the kind words and thoughts and prayers during this hard time. Neil was a beautiful guy and we were a year less two days apart in age and we went through so much together, and I can't believe that he has passed on from this world.

Neil was a Baptist youth pastor, and he was ordained as a minister just before he died. There is a verse from Scripture that

provides a good comment on how Neil lived and died and how he lives on in the hearts of many. The verse comes from the prophet Micah and it reads as follows:

He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?

In his faith and in his life Neil lived up to these words, and it is to him that I dedicate these remarks. It is to all the lessons that he taught me and all the gifts he gave me to which I will forever turn for comfort and guidance and inspiration.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Throne Speech.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great honour to enter into this debate on the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents, the people of Thunder Creek.

I don't enter into this debate every year because some part of me needs to take a good rip at the government, although that seems appropriate. Mr. Speaker, I don't enter into this debate because my House Leader orders me to, although I would if he insisted. I don't enter into this debate, Mr. Speaker, because I just need to hear my head . . . (inaudible) . . . although that seems to be reason enough for some of the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I enter into this debate out of respect for my constituents from the constituency of Thunder Creek and the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the people of my constituency are hard working and productive, like people I have met from all over this province. They work hard on their farms and ranches, they run their businesses with all of the skill and dedication that they can manage in a very discouraging political environment that is so hostile to agriculture and to business.

They ponder with their families of the potential for selling their farms or ranches or businesses if things continue to deteriorate in this wonderful province that has so much potential. And, Mr. Speaker, they wonder where they will have to move their families and what they will do to look after them if their businesses are among those that fail.

Or they go to work every day for the private sector that staggers under the weight of oppressive taxes, overregulation, and a political atmosphere that is unfriendly to the companies that they work for. And they pray with their families that the company that they work for will not be among those driven out of this province by this oppressive socialist regime.

Or, Mr. Speaker, they go to work every day in the public sector and they worry about cutbacks and layoffs in their health district or their school district or the Crown corporation or government department that they work for. And they go through the employment opportunities in the province of

Alberta and other places.

They don't go through this grim exercise because they want to leave this beautiful province that they love so deeply but because, Mr. Speaker, they are afraid their jobs will be eliminated or centralized by this desperate government that clings greedily to power by the narrowest of majorities.

They understand, Mr. Speaker, that health care and education and safe highways and social programs that help to get those less fortunate or those who may just be temporarily down on their luck back on their feet are not the priorities of this government. They understand that the priorities of this tired old government — this government that is fiscally bankrupt, morally bankrupt, and totally bankrupt of any workable ideas or solutions of any description — are different than that.

The people of this province know that the main priority of this government is to build a socialist Utopia here at their expense — an island of socialism, Mr. Speaker, in a sea of private enterprise, isolated economically from the rest of the continent and most of the world.

They know, Mr. Speaker, that socialism has never been successful anywhere on the globe. They know that it has always without exception visited suffering and hardship on its people. They see that happening here, Mr. Speaker, and they look on in disbelief that this bankrupt, tired old government leads them down this path to oblivion.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province watch as this morally bankrupt old government invests hundreds of millions of taxpayers' hard-earned dollars into businesses in this province that drive private investment to greener pastures where they will not have to compete with a government treasury to survive. And they look on in disbelief as those government-owned investments invariably go on to lose more millions of dollars annually in operations, even though they operate in a monopoly or near-monopoly situation.

Mr. Speaker, they wonder why this government doesn't just allow the private sector to run our businesses, and why this government doesn't put those hundreds of millions of dollars into education or into fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Mr. Speaker, they watch this out-of-control, philosophically driven government invest hundreds of millions of additional taxpayers' dollars outside of this province in locations all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, every one of those investments has lost money for Saskatchewan taxpayers and failed to create any employment in this province. Wouldn't we be better off, people ask, if that money were put into health care or highways in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — Order, please. I'll ask members not to be conversing in loud voices across the centre here so that we may hear the member who is on his feet. And I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the people of this province see how economies operate in more successful and affluent jurisdictions. And they understand that

our economy, or any economy, needs new investment in order to prosper. They know that it is not good enough to recycle taxpayers' dollars into crazy, empire-building investment schemes and pass that off as a strategy for economic growth. The people of this province know that doesn't work.

Mr. Speaker, they wait patiently for this government to launch the strategy that will begin to expand the economy of this province. More and more of them, Mr. Speaker, are beginning to realize that those members opposite are philosophically bound to do things just the way they have done them for years; bound to socialist doctrine, no matter what the cost to this province or the people of this province.

Saskatchewan people know that our province is the second largest oil producer in the country. They know that we're the third largest producer of natural gas in the country and that, with the right government in place, that we could move up the ranks in both categories.

They know that we are the largest producer of potash in the world at about one-third of the world's supply every year and with potential to expand, as markets and our own political situation align.

They know that Saskatchewan is the largest producer of uranium in the world at about one-third of the world's supply every year. In a political climate in this province that is anything but friendly to the uranium industry, they know that we sit on the richest uranium ore in the world, with almost unlimited potential for expansion under the right political regime. And they understand that this Premier and other members of that NDP government support organizations that lobby to shut down our uranium mines and to ensure that processing jobs all go to other jurisdictions.

The people of this province know that we possess 47 per cent of the farm land in this vast country. They understand that we are the second largest beef producer in the country and that we have huge potential to expand in both cattle and hog production.

People also know that in spite of our natural advantages in the industry, agriculture is not a priority of this government. Instead, agriculture is blamed by this government for all of the economic woes of the province.

But the people know better. They know that this irresponsible government has painted this picture for the people of Saskatchewan, or tried to, in order to cultivate a rural-urban split among voters that has been somewhat successful for them.

But the people of this province are seeing through this cynical strategy of divide and conquer. People wonder why our own government seems to be in dispute with our most productive industries on an ongoing basis. And they know that that cannot be productive for the province and that it must be a deterrent for the new investment that we need so badly.

(11:15)

Mr. Speaker, in this Speech from the Throne, the government speaks in high platitudes about making Saskatchewan ready for the next generation. Education and opportunity is the title of

one page. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, that just weeks before the release of this Speech from the Throne, this NDP government reneged on an election promise that would have helped post-secondary students with the high cost of getting an education in this province. Actions speak louder than words to the people of this province.

They will say, Mr. Speaker, that they are just putting that program off until they can get their fiscal house in order. But people see a pattern developing, a pattern of deceit and broken promises because they remember that the NDP government promised a similar program in the 1999 election campaign, a program that was at first postponed and then quickly abandoned altogether, just as this one will be.

The NDP rely on the people of this province to have short memories, Mr. Speaker, but they are wrong. Saskatchewan watched as they won the last election — albeit by the slimmest of majorities — on a campaign of fear, deceit, and lavish promises that they had no intention of keeping. The people of this province will be watching as they break their promises and they will remember.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne also speaks in high platitudes and vague generalities about creating a brighter future for our Aboriginal youth. Our Aboriginal youth are the hope for the future of this province. They want to stay in the province. They are more and more interested in becoming well-educated, contributing citizens, and they give Saskatchewan a population bubble in the age group where the rest of North America is at a shortage.

But, Mr. Speaker, these young people need two things. They need to be provided with opportunity and encouragement to become well-educated and they need opportunities after they are educated. The philosophical leanings of this NDP government drive the investment out of this province that is necessary to provide that opportunity. And this Speech from the Throne is silent on the topic of providing opportunities for education.

Mr. Speaker, what this Speech from the Throne promises the Aboriginal community is the status quo and that simply falls far short of the mark. Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne makes much of creating a green and prosperous economy. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, prosperous economies don't just happen because a government says in its Speech from the Throne that it would like to have one.

Prosperous economies begin to happen when governments put the conditions in place that will attract investment — something, Mr. Speaker, that this government has never been committed to. In fact, that is the very thing they are most ideologically opposed to.

Agriculture is more important in Saskatchewan than in any other part of this country, Mr. Speaker. And it only receives the lightest brush of recognition in this Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture in this province is in a tailspin, the likes of which we have rarely if ever seen. The NDP answer to this crisis is to raise crop insurance premiums three times in the last three years, with combined increases over those three years

that add up to more than 120 per cent.

And, Mr. Speaker, each time an increase has been suffered, this government has imposed an accompanying reduction in coverage as well. Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether or not anyone over there on that side of the floor understands how things happen on a modern farm.

Today most farms operate on borrowed money, and producers must have bankable programs that they can rely on and that their bankers can rely on to get them through the tough spots.

Mr. Speaker, this government has recently let agricultural producers down by refusing to match the last \$65 million that the federal government has committed in order to top up the CFIP (Canadian Farm Income Program) program so that it will be fully funded.

This week, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture stood in this House and told Saskatchewan farm families and their bankers that they should be happy they will receive up to about 88 per cent of the money that the CFIP promised . . . program promised.

2003 was a disaster in Saskatchewan agriculture, Mr. Speaker, with drought, grasshoppers, very low commodity prices, and BSE that has devastated our usually profitable cattle industry. These things all hit simultaneously and through no fault of our producers.

But instead of reacting to this crisis in agriculture, this Minister of Agriculture seems proud that they might put up the money that they budgeted for CFIP before there was a crisis, even though, by the minister's own admission, that will leave CFIP underfunded and unable to meet its commitment to farmers.

Mr. Speaker, this government mentions the oil and gas industry in its Speech from the Throne. Revenue from oil and gas is up from the very conservative forecast that was made in last year's budget. But revenues are up mainly because the price of oil and gas are at or near record highs, not because of substantially increased activity, Mr. Speaker, as this government would have us believe.

In fact drilling in Saskatchewan this year will be substantially less than what the industry had intended prior to last fall's election. Is that any surprise, Mr. Speaker? On top of the ongoing challenges that the industry has with this government, in the very next paragraph of the Throne Speech the government speaks with giddy enthusiasm of its intent to replace conventional energy as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, almost every economic reference in this Speech from the Throne is related back to the public, to public involvement in the economy. And Mr. Speaker, that doesn't work.

Ethanol is a perfect example of that, Mr. Speaker. About a year and a half ago this NDP government announced a deal with Broe industries from Denver to build an ethanol plant at Belle Plaine, with 40 per cent of the investment capital to come from the taxpayers of this province. But we needed far more than one plant to build an ethanol industry and we warned them, Mr.

Speaker, that the private sector would not come to compete with the treasury of the province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the announced deal with Broe industries was bogus. There never was a deal, Mr. Speaker. Recently this NDP government admitted there was no deal with Broe Industries to build anything.

They made that admission on a Friday, Mr. Speaker. And on the following Monday the private sector through Husky energy stepped up to announce that they would build an ethanol industry without any Saskatchewan government involvement. When will they ever learn that government involvement in the economy drives away investment and stifles economic growth in the province?

This Speech from the Throne deals also with enshrining public utilities in legislation. Mr. Speaker, the four Crown utilities are not under any threat, at least not from those of us on this side of the House. There's never been any discussion among our caucus of privatizing the four major Crowns, which I presume are the Crown utilities that are referred to in the Speech from the Throne.

But, Mr. Speaker, one could be forgiven for thinking otherwise, after hearing what those members opposite said about our intentions during the recent election campaign. Mr. Speaker, those members opposite also told the people of this province some other things that weren't true.

They told the people of Saskatchewan that we would throw seniors and others out of care homes and on to the street, and Mr. Speaker, that kind of fearmongering is apprehensible, immoral, and they knew it wasn't true.

They said we would lower the minimum wage if we became the government. Nothing could be further from the truth. Virtually no one in this province would support such a thing and rest assured, Mr. Speaker, that we wouldn't either. Mr. Speaker, during that election campaign, those members opposite told the people of the province that if we were elected, we would, and get this, Mr. Speaker, they said that we would destroy health care in this province — that government, Mr. Speaker, that government that has created the longest waiting lists in the country, that government that allows our people to die of cancer while waiting on lists for treatments, that government that allows emergency patients to lie in linen closets for a day at a time before receiving treatment, that government that allows a situation where hospitals are on a code burgundy, or in other words full, Mr. Speaker, for a week at a time.

Mr. Speaker, these misrepresentations of the truth are not the sort of thing that one would expect from an hon. government or from hon. members. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, those tactics did work to some extent. But by using those tactics, they proved far more about themselves than they ever did about us.

Mr. Speaker, apparently fear really is a much stronger emotion than hope. But the people of this province know that they were misled by those NDP members. The people of this province are watching the performance of those members, and they will hold them accountable for their election promises.

Mr. Speaker, many of those promises have already been broken and the rest soon will be. They won't keep their promises, Mr. Speaker, because they never intended to. They have no new ideas for this province, no plan for economic development, no interest in making the lot of our people better, no desire to help our Aboriginal youth take their rightful place in society, no idea how to create the opportunities that will keep our young people in this province. And no will to break away from their socialist dogma to enable these things to happen.

Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne is devoid of any vision of the future of this province and only serves to underscore the many shortcomings of this failing government. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I will not support it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is certainly a pleasure to be in this Assembly and to participate in this Throne Speech. It's a real pleasure to be back in the Assembly here, Mr. Speaker, after our recent election.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, it's quite an honour for me and quite a privilege for me and a unique situation. This is my first experience at being re-elected. And I must share with you, Mr. Speaker, being re-elected certainly beats the alternative. I can assure you that.

But I want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate you on being re-elected as a Speaker of the Assembly. I think that the statement of . . . the fact that you are the first Speaker to be re-elected in this Assembly sort of is a strong indication of the high esteem that all the members of this Assembly hold you in. And I want to congratulate you for that, sir. And I want to assure you that, as in the past, I will co-operate with you fully in maintaining the decorum of this Assembly.

I also, Mr. Speaker, want to take this opportunity to thank my seatmate and former seatmate, the member from Wascana Plains for letting her name stand in the election of the Speaker. Whenever we make a commitment to take on the role of an official position in the Assembly here, it's done with great commitment. And I want to thank her for making that commitment and making that decision. And I want to thank her for allowing the democratic process to work. So thank you very much.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Sutherland, for being elected as the Deputy Speaker once again. I think that we . . . he has served us very well in the past and I know will serve us very well in the future.

I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate the member from Saskatoon Fairview for being appointed to the Deputy Chair of Committees, a role that I have played in the past. And I know that our member from Saskatoon Fairview will do an

excellent, excellent job in the Deputy Chair's position. And I'm sure that all the Clerks at the Table are much relieved to know that he will be there and I won't be. It will lighten their workload because they won't be chairing me through the session as they have in the past. So I think they will appreciate that.

I also want to congratulate all the members of the Legislative Assembly who have been re-elected. It is an honour, I think — and I can say this I think upon behalf of everyone — it's quite an honour to be elected to this place to represent the people of Saskatchewan. It is an honour that is bestowed upon, overall, very few people in Saskatchewan, and I think we all appreciate that recognition by our constituents.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(11:30)

Mr. Harper: — I want to say a very special welcome to all of the members of the House who have been elected the first time. I think that they will all add their contribution to this Assembly. Their comments I think will be welcomed by all of us. Many of them, being elected for the first time, will bring a fresh and new perspective to it, and I think we're all waiting to hear from them in turn and to hear what their ideas and their thoughts are.

But most important, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the fine people of Regina Northeast for allowing me the privilege, the honour, and the humbling experience to represent them in this legislature. There are no finer people in Saskatchewan than the people in Regina Northeast.

And recent redistribution caused the boundary lines to move in my constituency and caused my constituency presently to be 55 per cent new area to me. So as a result of redistribution, we lost some old friends that we had gotten to know and built relationships with, but it also gave us an opportunity to meet new ones and to build some new relations, and I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to expanding upon those relations.

The boundaries of Regina Northeast, as I've said, Mr. Speaker, have changed to some degree. I retain the area of Uplands which is an area that is solely in Regina Northeast. The boundary line then follows Ring Road down to Winnipeg Street, and then goes down Winnipeg Street to Dewdney Avenue, encompassing all of Eastview community. In the past I represented part of Eastview, but now the entire community is in one constituency, and I think this is well received because now we have the entire constituency in one constituency, and there's certainly a relationship there that we can build on.

The boundary lines then follow Dewdney Avenue out to Prince of Wales, and it encompasses the communities of Rothwell Place, the north half of Glen Elm, the north half of Glencairn, the north half of Glencairn Village, Parkridge, and the very new area of Creekside which is a growing area with a lot of new homes coming up. And that's a real pleasure to go out and door knock in, Mr. Speaker, because it's an area that's filled with young people with families, salt-of-the-earth people, people who are excited about being in Saskatchewan, excited about

being in Regina, and they're raising their families here, and they're really the engines of our economy.

Mr. Speaker, during the last summer and during the election campaign, I had the opportunity to do a fair amount of door knocking and visiting with people in my constituents . . . my constituency, I should say. And I would like to take the opportunity to share with you a few stories that I came away with.

One was a gentleman who I'd had the opportunity to speak to on his doorstep, who lived on Fleet Street. What I found interesting about our conversation was the fact that he was born and raised in Halifax. He was employed as a IT (information technology), a civilian IT man with the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police). And with the RCMP he'd worked in the communities of Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, and now Regina.

And he shared with me that as a federal employee, he was paid for the responsibilities that he carried out despite the community he lived in. He and his wife had just finished a six-year stint in Vancouver when an opening came in the RCMP detachment or depot at Edmonton and Regina for his services. He said that he and his wife did a fair amount of research on the Internet to determine which community they wanted to move to. They quickly decided on Regina. And I asked him why. And he said well to be honest with you I could never hope to live in and own a home like I live in today, in Edmonton or Vancouver. He said in Vancouver I drove an hour and a half to work in the morning and likely two hours to get back in the evening. He said here in Regina I can drive to work in 15 minutes. He said your winters suck, but he said I like the rest of Saskatchewan.

The same experience on Dewdney Avenue; I run into a young couple who was originally from Manitoba. She was born and raised in Thompson, and he was born and raised in Brandon. They met while going to university in Winnipeg. They married, worked in Winnipeg for a brief time after they graduated from university, and then went to Calgary where they lived for six years and moved to Regina.

They like Regina. They like the city. What they like about Saskatchewan is the atmosphere here. What they like about Regina is the fact that it's a community in which they can move around in, go anywhere they want in 20 minutes and receive all the services that they ever require.

During the campaign I was door knocking on nagy street, nagy crescent actually, and I run into a young university couple who had just moved into the house there a few weeks earlier. They were both going to university. When I introduced myself and give them my candidate's card, I was pleased to see a smile come to their face. And they said well isn't this a coincidence, we were just talking about the election here this morning and we've decided we're voting New Democrat. I said well I'm pleased to hear that of course, but would you mind sharing what your reasoning was? They said well we believe that the New Democrats have the history, but they also have the future to build Saskatchewan into the kind of Saskatchewan that we want to be a part of.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Just down the street — in fact it was a block or two over and I can't remember the street for sure, Mr. Speaker — but I had the opportunity to knock on a door and a lady answered and she . . . I introduced myself, as I would, and I gave her my card. And she looked at me kind of puzzled and she said are you the party that wants to make Saskatchewan like Alberta? And I said no, no, we're the party that wants to make Saskatchewan like Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — She said to me, well then I am voting for you because I have lived in Alberta. She said I paid \$89 a month for free medicare. My brother still lives in Red Deer, Alberta, drives exactly the same make and model and year of car as I do, only he pays \$4,000 insurance while I pay 800. She said I lived in Alberta but I moved back to Saskatchewan because I couldn't afford to live in Alberta any more.

Mr. Speaker, that is why Saskatchewan has, year over year in most recent times, led the nation in economic growth. Mr. Speaker, are there challenges facing our government? Yes, there is. But challenges are good. Challenges are good, Mr. Speaker, because I remember a saying that my grandfather used to use; he used to say if you don't want to be challenged, then don't do anything.

So I'm proud, Mr. Speaker, that we have challenges before our government because we are doing things. We are moving forward. Despite the fact that the opposition wants to hold us back and slow us down, we're not going to do that. We're moving this province forward.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — The challenge, Mr. Speaker, when you have a record year after year of leading the nation in growth is to maintain that, is to maintain that growth. The challenge is to continue to grow and develop a strong and prosperous economy. And, Mr. Speaker, we cannot have a strong and prosperous economy with poor people.

This is why part of the plan to grow that economy is also to grow the union sector within Saskatchewan. When we look around Canada, this great nation of ours, we quickly recognize many communities that are prosperous, that have a strong economy. And when we look closely at that makeup of that community, we quickly recognize that it has a strong union base, a strong union payroll.

Mr. Speaker, we don't even have to look beyond the borders of Saskatchewan to recognize that. Those communities exist here in Saskatchewan. One that comes to mind quite quickly is the community of Esterhazy. It's a farming community plunked in the middle of a farming area. But it is a prosperous community, a vibrant community, and it is also a community that enjoys a strong, union-based payroll.

Mr. Speaker, despite the opinions of the members opposite, unions are not job killers. Unions are engines that grow the economy. In fact union members invest in Saskatchewan. They invest in Saskatchewan companies. And through the Labour Venture Capital Fund, Mr. Speaker, they invest in companies

right here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — The most recent numbers that I have seen suggest that including with this year's investment, the Labour Venture Capital Fund has invested over \$32 million in Saskatchewan in the last four years. That investment, that investment is in 13 different companies right here in Saskatchewan, and they have created over 375 jobs for Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Is there a challenge facing us as a government in growing the union sector as a part of the pillars of our economy? Yes there is. When we look at the fact that in the union halls of the construction industry unions, unemployment runs at about 80 per cent, while at the same time over this last number of years, unionized contractors only get about 17 per cent of all government construction work.

The challenge here, Mr. Speaker, is to develop a tendering process that will insure that unionized and non-unionized contractors all have a fair and level playing field on which to bid. I know, Mr. Speaker, that our government will develop that fair policy and soon all citizens of Saskatchewan will enjoy equal access to Saskatchewan government work.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech recognizes the need to address the minimum wage issue. Now I want to make some personal comments here and I want to make it absolutely clear these are my personal opinions. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the minimum wage issue has been a political football for far too long. It is my opinion, and my personal opinion, Mr. Speaker, that the Minimum Wage Board should be done away with. And it should be replaced with a system that would increase the minimum wage of Saskatchewan over the next four years to bring it up to 70 per cent of the average industrial wage of our province. And then that minimum wage should be tied to the industrial wage through legislation, so that any changes to the average industrial wage of this province would be reflected in the minimum wage each and every year.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot have a strong and prosperous economy with poor people in it.

Mr. Speaker, there are challenges facing our government. And our government is going to meet those challenges head-on by working with the various stakeholders and finding resolve to those challenges.

Mr. Speaker, our government is a government to build a strong and prosperous Saskatchewan. Our government has the commitment and the desire to build that strong and prosperous economy. But most importantly of all, Mr. Speaker, our government has the vision and the support of the majority of Saskatchewan people to make this province all that it can be.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that on behalf of the people of Regina Northeast I will be supporting this very

progressive and forward-looking Throne Speech. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your election and the Speaker to his election.

It's interesting to be back here again like the member just opposite just said in his speech. It's nice to be elected, but it's always better to be re-elected back to the House. And it's interesting.

I want to offer my congratulations to new members opposite and on this side. I know they will find their time here enjoyable and fun most of the time as I have. I would also like to thank my family for their support, especially my mom and dad who are probably watching today — with their support of looking after things back home while I'm up here; with my dad and mom for helping to run the farm while I'm up here; my brother-in-law and my rest of the family for their support.

I'd like to thank the voters who put their faith in me again to send me here the second time along. I'd also like to extend my wishes to the member from Yorkton on a speedy recovery on back to the House, as all members do. I know that when I talk about agriculture in the upcoming Throne Speech, I'm going to miss some of his witty remarks. I know that the present Agriculture minister, his remarks I don't think are going to be quite as funny or as witty. And if the member from Yorkton is watching today on TV, if it makes him feel better, he can always throw something at the TV when I start talking about agriculture.

(11:45)

I also want to give my thanks and appreciation to my CAs (constituency assistant) — Clark Puckett, Donna Petit — who basically while I'm up here keep the office running, do a very excellent job, and probably one of the main reasons that I got re-elected. They do a very good job of responding to constituents back home and doing a very excellent job there.

I want to talk a bit in this Throne Speech about my new constituency before I get into the Throne Speech. Mine changed quite dramatically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, basically thanks to the NDP taking out another rural voice in rural Saskatchewan when they amalgamated a rural constituency out there. And that basically makes us all, all our constituencies larger. My constituency right now consists of roughly 4,500 square miles. To the members opposite who mostly have cities, there are two northern MLAs who have bigger ones, so they know the challenges that we face out there in rural Saskatchewan as you try to talk to your constituents out there.

Making it 4,500 square miles makes it very, very difficult to be in constant contact with your constituents. I have one that just phoned me and wanted to have a meeting in Wynyard this Friday. That's a two-hour drive. Not that I'm complaining but that's just the time it takes to get there or to get back and that's not even from my edge of my constituency. It's a three-hour

drive from one edge to the other. Most of the members opposite that the constituencies in the cities, basically when they take their dog out for a walk that evening can walk through most of their constituency, so I would hope that they appreciate the challenges we have out there in rural Saskatchewan as we meet with our constituents out there. And I hope that in the future they take that into consideration, that they don't try to take out more rural voices out there in rural Saskatchewan.

When I talk a bit about my new constituency, it stretches out to Wynyard. I wasn't that happy with the commission boundary. When they first started they basically wanted to take the name Arm River right out. That was one of the first names that was in this province. Arm River was since 1908. And Arm River has a very, very long and proud tradition of the way they vote. There was only one brief little incident in the 1970s — and it was very brief — one little term when they actually voted in a socialist member here. And even that I think he got in by three votes, if I remember right. I could be wrong; it could be four, it could be five. But it was very, very tight. And since then, they've been voting the right way since then, Mr. Speaker.

Think of that. Almost 100 years, almost 100 years of not sending a socialist member to this legislature.

So the name Arm River has a very long and proud tradition of that. And we went to the Boundary Commission and I thank them for the submissions that they let us submit and the hundreds of letters that we submitted and thousands of people around the constituency wanted to keep the name Arm River. And that end of it, I do thank the Boundary Commission for finally reinstating the name Arm River on there, calling it Arm River-Watrous.

But another thing with the Boundary Commission. I still have a few questions . . . (inaudible) . . . Basically they look like they drew me a square box in the middle of Saskatchewan. My old constituency had natural borders where it was. It was along the lakes, which to me made sense. Now I basically split two lakes. I split RMs. I almost split farmyards.

They basically just drew a line — if you look in my constituency — from the edge of Dundurn all the way to Wynyard. I mean there's even an odd house, I'm pretty sure, that they went right through, that depending on which day that the enumerator was there, which constituency they would vote in.

I think if there . . . if they still had a family member that was voting and still living there, if he was on one side of the house in his bed and he called that his home, he'd vote another constituency. I basically, I don't even know what the thinking of that was. And I had a lot of calls over that.

When I'm going out meeting with my new RMs, and like I say, RMs that are split on that, lakes that were split instead of . . . I split Quill Lake and I split Long Lake. I don't know why they couldn't have used some of them as natural boundaries. I still don't know why, what the thinking was behind that. But it's a challenge that I will accept and that I am getting around my constituency very well.

Also I'd like to talk a little bit about my new constituency since

this is the first Throne Speech that will be dealing with my new area, so I would like to make a few comments on that.

I did pick up some larger areas. I picked up towns. I picked up Wynyard, which I'm getting to know quite well. It has Lilydale poultry products there, employs a lot of people there. They also have the Big Quill Resources and Cargill Grain company or plant there, water bottling and plastic plant.

My next constituency deals . . . is Watrous that I've gained. And everybody knows there about the mineral waters, Manitou Beach, Danceland, which is known throughout the province, so it's picked up some nice areas.

But basically my constituency hasn't changed at . . . much in the idea of the people I represent. Grain farming, cattle ranching are still two of the primary industries in that province. Even in the towns like Wynyard, Watrous, Davidson — my three biggest centres — the people are still tied to the rural, agricultural-based farming in the province at that end.

So in that respect, nothing has changed. The view hasn't changed and obviously it didn't; in the new area I did very well. So they still represent . . . or I represent the free-thinking people of Arm River-Watrous, which is very good.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brkich: — One other that I like to mention, I've picked up two Aboriginal reserves — Kawacatoose and Day Star. And I'm looking forward to working with the chiefs there. I've had meetings with . . . I've stopped there a few times, and it's been very good.

I used to have the reserve just outside of Dundurn — Dakota Whitecap. And Chief Darcy Bear and me got along very well. We used to meet at least two or three times a year, and I'm looking forward to having the same kind of open response with my new Aboriginal bands. And I know that . . . I've been there; they're very good communities. I was very impressed with the way they, with the band councils and also with the offices there. And then I know that they're looking to grow with Saskatchewan in the future, at that end.

I also want to talk a little bit about Drake. It's a meat-packing plant that is quite well known throughout the province, surviving very well despite the BSE out there.

But a lot of the businesses are all struggling out there, but they're all, they all know that this province has huge potential — huge potential to grow if only this government would make some, even some minor changes to allow that out there.

On Blackstrap this year there was . . . taken over by two young entrepreneurs. Sean Dunn was one of them. Blackstrap the last few years was run, but it ran into trouble, I believe, last year. They took over a huge challenge to get that mountain up and running again. They have a lot of long-range plans. They want to do a lot of summer events there. In fact this weekend there's an event coming up with some bands coming out.

But the original start-up, they did have problems with the government; there was some red tape, there was some problems

with leasing equipment from the government. And I can remember meeting with them in November and December and they were quite concerned that the government, I won't say put up roadblocks, but yet weren't really bending over backwards to try to get this mountain up and running, especially when they're working on such a short time frame to get it up and running. You don't have a lot of time between . . . Their season is very short at that end and they, they with . . . I worked with them and we managed to get it up and running. I'm looking forward to that. But they'd also, they'd mentioned a few problems with the government I'm hoping can be corrected throughout this summer on some of the leasing equipment that the government still owns there.

Also, talking a bit about agriculture in this Throne Speech. I really don't see a lot that is going to encourage agricultural producers out there. I had a lot of calls when this government, lot of e-mails when this government decided not to throw in their share of the CFIP (Canadian Farm Income Program), of only paying out . . . They're only going to get 88 per cent of that, Mr. Speaker. Basically, that's a broken promise.

I can remember the member from Yorkton when he made that commitment. He had said, when they . . . The government said they were throwing in their 40 per cent, that the farmers will be receiving 100 per cent of the money promised to them. He made that promise in this House, Mr. Speaker. And I just wish the ongoing Agriculture minister would follow up with that promise of filling, of fulfilling that promise.

There was many people out there that had that money coming in and went to the banks making payment arrangements on that, and now they're going to be getting at least 12 per cent less money coming in. That's a substantial cut to the people out there on top of the crop insurance rates which are going anywhere from, up from anywhere from 10 to 30 per cent, and basically with less coverage, Mr. Speaker. How is that helping the agriculture communities out there? They know that there is tough times out there.

You'd think that they could, they could hold the line on that, or try to change the coverage to try to help more people out there in the agriculture end. But they seem to be forgetting about agriculture. They make a lot of words about it, but yet they seem to blame the province when it doesn't, why it doesn't grow when agriculture suffers. Well, you have to make a vibrant agriculture community out there if you want that, your province to grow.

At the agriculture end, I want to make a couple of comments on. Now myself, I'm not an organic farmer but I've had a lot of people tell me that that it is an industry that could grow — could grow, Mr. Speaker, but one of the main stumbling blocks of that is that they have to pay basically double freight rates, Mr. Speaker, on account of the Wheat Board. And I'm not totally against the Wheat Board but I think that there are some changes that have to be made. They have to be totally . . . they should be flexible, and that's something when you talk to the Wheat Board about the members opposite, they just clam right up. They think it's, that basically that the sun sets on them.

And I think there has to be some, some changes to the Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker, if you want this province to grow. One of

this is the organic industry. It's not going to grow, it's never going to grow unless there is some minor changes made to the Wheat Board. Why, they pay double freight right now. If they go to ship their wheat they pay roughly — depends where they are at — \$1.10 a bushel freight. The wheat hasn't left their yard, it's still sitting in the bin, and they're paying \$1.10 freight. It hasn't left their yard. That's \$1.10 they're paying already expense.

On top of that, when they do the buy back program usually the government or the Wheat Board will, anywhere from 60 cents to \$1 higher than the initial payment's going to be when the crop year is done. So it's almost like a tax. That's an added burden. So looking at almost \$2 higher than normally they could get for that wheat.

And then when they do sell it, they have to pay the freight to wherever they are shipping at. So that's usually another 50 cents or \$1. So till there's some minor changes made to the Wheat Board at that, that industry will never grow. On value-added, that's why there's no pasta plant. Same thing — they face the same kinds of problems that the organic people do.

If you want to set up a flour mill, a pasta plant, anything to do with cereal grains, you're paying that extra \$2 a bushel. And the wheat hasn't, or your product hasn't left the yard. It's just a surcharge that they take on the side. Until that there's some changes on that, we will never have value added here in the cereal grains industry. It hasn't happened and it's not going to happen, so that basically the argument talks for itself. It hasn't grown and it's not going to grow till there's some changes there, till this government is willing at least to talk about things like that.

I hear lots of things about on the other side, how we're not flexible on this side, or, come over and talk to us. Well I've talked to some members over there and I've listened to the speeches over there. And boy, when it comes to their way of thinking, she's like their way or the highway.

There is no change, there is no . . . that they can't get away from that total socialist or co-operative. If it deals with them two issues, it has to be 100 per cent perfect. They can't even, even consider the idea that maybe there could be some changes in that, that maybe them ideas aren't 100 per cent right. And that is until that attitude changes over there, this province and the agriculture and the value-added is never going to grow at that end, Mr. Speaker.

(12:00)

Talk a bit about the Crowns and why a lot of people are, some people are dissatisfied with them. I will talk about . . . I have two communities, Craik and Imperial, that have their own cable companies. They entered an agreement with SaskTel, I think it was . . . I have the paperwork down in my office. I may be wrong on the date, but it was roughly around the 2000 to 2006, for a certain amount to pay for pole use.

In 2002, SaskPower comes in, takes the contract away from SaskTel, rips it up. Doesn't inform the towns that had the contracts except to send them a bill saying that they're going to

increase the rates over the next two years. The first year is a 67 per cent increase, the third year a 73 per cent increase, and the next year is an 80 per cent increase. Didn't even consult with the towns, basically just tore it up.

With that extra money, it's not like they're providing more service, more infrastructure. All it is, is . . . The agreement that was made on it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was poles. The towns are using SaskPower poles to run the line of their own cable company on this pole. A little tiny, little thin line — it's already there. Using that, SaskPower has decided to basically gouge these towns throughout the province.

You have to ask yourself why. I don't think it's a big demand on the power poles. I don't think that little line has tore down many power poles. And besides, you have a contract up to 2006.

The town says, hey we're willing to renegotiate at the end of the contract. We signed a valid, legal contract. We're willing to negotiate. If the price wants to go up afterwards, hey that's what we face. We designed our cable companies with the price in this contract. When we set out our services, we sent out a rate for the . . . yearly, to our customers to get them signed up. That's what we used.

So now we've got this added increase. So we have to go back, Mr. Deputy Speaker, go back to the people and say, we have to charge you more to use this cable, to use this cable.

How is that helping small rural towns who are basically trying to get their own cable companies, own little things? That's just one instance of the Crowns always trying to compete with the local businesses instead of working with them. Over the number of years, the Crowns want to run things of every little business.

And at the utility end, they're very good at it. Do their job. Stay in the utility end. But why do they want to get into businesses?

Outlook was another one. The IRON Solutions magazine, they had to go buy one in Ontario to compete with the one in Outlook, employs 20 people. I mean, right now he's struggling. That's 20 less people that could be out of a job because a Crown had to buy another dealership magazine, and keep it in Ontario, that services Western Canada. Now how is that helping rural Saskatchewan? How is that helping it grow?

They had made . . . Another agency, Rural Revitalization. That was supposed to work with that and help problems with that. And there has not been one instance where they've actually helped the businesses out in rural Saskatchewan, worked with it. You want to really grow the businesses, get the Crowns trying not to drive the small businesses out of town, out of business out there in rural Saskatchewan.

Health care, on the Throne Speech . . . you know, no vision out there and that scares a lot of people. Over the years, I've read a lot of petitions on people that are scared about losing their services in Imperial and Craik and Davidson. Right now there's rumours that some of the little hospitals are in trouble. There's a rumour . . . I've even had calls from Moose Jaw about a rumour about a seniors' complex that may be closed. You know, people are very worried out there.

The beds . . . right now Davidson, a long-term care and Imperial . . . I'm not sure about Davidson. Now Imperial is five. There's five on the waiting list. You close some more beds out there; where are these people going to go? They're going to overload the system somewhere else, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You're going to have to look at trying to expand the services and work with the people. I mean we can talk about the waiting lists going down the line. When I look at the response from the Health minister out there and the Finance minister, I get very worried that they're going to be cutting some more hospitals out there and some more long-term care beds out in rural Saskatchewan. And there's nothing left to cut. They're cut basically right to the bone. You cut any more out there and this system is getting ready to explode out there.

You want to . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you look at a government, you should be looking at their legacy. And you look at the Chrétien government, it's going to be remembered for the scholarship scandal, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You look at the Devine government. It did a lot of good things, but when you mention its name, debt always seems to be associated with that particular government.

But what is this legacy of this particular government going to be? If it continues down the same path that it is going, Mr. Deputy Speaker, its legacy was going to be having the most longest waiting lists. It's going to have the poorest health care, having people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, people die unnecessarily under its watch. That's what this government, if it continues down this path, that's what it will be remembered for.

And then we can talk about the debt that this Premier is starting to incur. The previous premier had left a little surplus there. Now this Premier is running close to \$1 million-a-day deficit. What do you think he's going to be remembered for 20 years down the road? He's going to be remembered, I think, with disgust and contempt, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's what he's going to be . . . what this government is going to be remembered by, if it continues down the path of the way it is serving rural Saskatchewan with health care throughout the province. That's how it's going to be remembered.

It's going to be remembered, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of 19 quarters — 19 quarters of continuous population loss, the only province in all of Canada that that is happening in. That's what people are going to be remembering this government — the depopulation of rural Saskatchewan. The gutting of rural Saskatchewan — that's what this government is going to be remembered for. And it's going to be remembered by disgust and contempt over . . . many years from now. And that contempt and disgust is out there in rural Saskatchewan. All you have to do is look around the members here they've elected, over the number of years. And that disgust and contempt is there. And it's going to be there for a long time.

And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's creeping into the cities, the disgust and contempt for that Premier and that government with the three new members that we have here. And it's going to keep growing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And eventually we will be getting rid of that government. We came that close to it. When we get rid of that socialist government, it will be the best times for Saskatchewan. And that's what we

need, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Finally maybe we can get this province on the right track and get it growing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at that end.

With that Mr. Deputy, I think you probably get the idea I'm not going to support this Throne Speech. I've listened to four Throne Speeches that made the same promises. And what did we have, Mr. Deputy Speaker? What did we have after each Throne Speech through that year? We had population loss. We didn't have any growth in rural Saskatchewan. We had the waiting lists get longer after each and every Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I can't see one bit of difference with this Throne Speech. It's about time this government actually did some action, maybe thought outside the box, forgot about their socialist ideological ideas that just has to be basically just straight socialist. If they're not running it, if the government can't run it, than nobody else can run it. They can't work. Well till this government starts thinking outside the box, this province will keep going backwards, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Hagel: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is indeed an honour for me to enter into this Throne Speech which is taking place in what I would describe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as historic times.

First of all I want to say congratulations to you on your acclamation as Deputy Speaker, and I look forward to your continued good service to us here in the Assembly. I want to join others in complimenting the honourable member for Wascana Plains in her contest for the Speaker's Chair. It is a noble position indeed and requires dedication of good people, and I want to compliment her.

I want to say congratulations as well, Mr. Speaker, to some others who are here. I've listened to many of the speeches that we've had over the course of the past few days, and I want to especially say congratulations and welcome to those members on both sides of the House who are here for the first time.

As I've listened, one of the things that constantly impresses me, Mr. Speaker, is how people come to this place motivated to do well, to serve their province well, not with the . . . all with the same ideology or the same political philosophy or biases, but every single one of us who is here will never ever forget that first day that we walked into these chambers, took our place, saw our name on the plate on the desk, and felt just humbled and overwhelmed by the obligations.

And what I want to say is I appreciated very much the idealism and the honour that has been reflected in the speeches by first-time members and to say to all of the first-time members, keep that idealism. It is what makes you strong, no matter which side of the House you're on, and will enable you to serve the people of Saskatchewan well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I want to join the others as well in

saying congratulations to the hon. member for Walsh Acres and to Saskatchewan Rivers. It is a special honour that many of us have never ever known, and they have both carried out the duties of being the mover and the seconder of the response to the Speech from the Throne with excellence, both of them, and many others, Mr. Speaker. But I want to say particularly to both the members from Walsh Acres and Saskatchewan Rivers: great speeches that they can proudly give to their children and their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren as the first statement that they made when they came to this honourable institution. And I say congratulations to you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — As well, Mr. Speaker, I want to express my thanks to the good people of Moose Jaw North who saw it fit to have me return as their representative for the fifth time. And it is with great humility that I accept that responsibility and pledge to the people of Moose Jaw North that I will do my best in the years ahead and the . . . that make up this term, the next four or five years that serve out this term of office, to serve both them and the people of Saskatchewan well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I've listened carefully to the Throne Speech debate, and now if you've ever wanted to hear a debate which is an expression of contrasts, you've been hearing it here. We've been hearing two very, very different perspectives on each side of the House, Mr. Speaker, two very different perspectives.

Mr. Speaker, we stand at this point in time on the cusp of history as we are readying to enter into our second century as a province in this great nation. And as we do this, Mr. Speaker, we simultaneously do two things. We look back in history with a sense of pride and accomplishment and confidence about what has happened in this province over the course of the past 10 decades. And at the same time, based on the accomplishments that have occurred in this province in which many pioneers of our first century came to build a future, a future filled with hope and promise and prosperity to those who will take their place as citizens, we look back with a sense of confidence and, Mr. Speaker, we also look forward as a result of our view of our past with a sense of optimism and confidence once again. That is the nature . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — That is the nature of the view that we take as we enter our second century. And it is a time, Mr. Speaker, when the people of Saskatchewan expect of us in this House to serve with the same dedication and vision, long-term vision for the future of the province of Saskatchewan this day as they did 100 years ago. And, Mr. Speaker, what we've seen in this debate and the Speech from the Throne is a statement of vision from one side of the House, and whining and complaining and making of excuses and criticism about our province. Mr. Speaker, it is a contrast of visions that we are seeing here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the vision is

very simple. The vision is very simple. I told the media when they asked me, my home media asked me, on the day of the Speech from the Throne, what do you think of the Speech from the Throne? I said two things. Point number one, it was one of the shortest speeches that I've ever heard — the Speech from the Throne — in the years I've been in the House. And secondly, it was one of the most inspirational.

And it was one of the most inspirational, Mr. Speaker, because I believe it was appropriate for the time in which we are. As we prepare ourselves to move into the second century as a province in this great nation, it is a statement of vision which is tied to the hopes and the dreams and the aspirations of Saskatchewan people.

The vision, Mr. Speaker, is stated very simply. The vision in this Throne Speech is one that the future in Saskatchewan, our second century in Saskatchewan, will make this a place where there is a future for young people to make their futures for themselves and their families in a green and prosperous and sustainable economy here in the home of Canada's home of medicare and, Mr. Speaker, where the utilities that they have are the most affordable in the nation.

That's the vision, Mr. Speaker, that will take us not only into the next year and the next decade but into the next century here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(12:15)

Mr. Hagel: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to make some comments specifically about that vision, that positive vision with which I stand firmly, and I want to contrast to the failing vision of the Saskatchewan Party opposite.

Let me start first of all with the positive. And I know when I speak about positive things, it irritates the hon. members opposite because they are troubled by people who will think positively, which is a Saskatchewan tradition for the last century and for the next century. It is builders who think positively. It is those who are wanting to criticize and tear down who will be rejected over and over and over again as having the right to lead the province into a prosperous and secure future.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we've talked about the future of the province of Saskatchewan in this Throne Speech, we've touched on a number of things that appeal to the very important practical concerns of those who are young in our province today. And we have talked here, Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech about the importance of the School^{PLUS} system, about CareerStart program, expanding the youth recruitment for employment well beyond just participation in the Crowns, but for all of Saskatchewan.

We have talked, Mr. Speaker, in this Throne Speech about expanding Canada's first post-secondary graduate tax credit. And the Minister of Finance will have more to say about that next week, I suspect, in the budget.

Mr. Speaker, we have talked about building a prosperous and green, sustainable economy. We've talked about, Mr. Speaker,

in this Speech from the Throne about summits that'll bring peoples together in Saskatchewan to reflect and to offer positive suggestions and ideas for continuing to build a sustainable green economy here in our Saskatchewan, which is sensitive to the social needs of people. Mr. Speaker, we have talked in the Throne Speech about the importance of the natural resources in our province — whether they be under the land or in fact on top of the land, whether we're talking about agricultural or mineral resources.

Mr. Speaker, we have talked about building an economy that is based on the strength that we have as a province, focussing on our strengths and energy and making the Saskatchewan of the second century a province which is rich in energy and uses that to build the economy and provide the needs not only of our province but of the nation, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — We talked in the Speech from the Throne about the expansion of carbon dioxide injection projects and enhanced oil recoveries and the wind production of energy, Mr. Speaker, that's taking place over on the west side.

All of those things that are part, Mr. Speaker, recognizing . . . On this side of the House, we recognize that you can be green and you can be profitable at the same time — at the same time, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — And, Mr. Speaker, here we are. Here we are in the homeland, in the homeland right here in Saskatchewan, the home of medicare here in our nation. One of the greatest contributions of our first century of the province of Saskatchewan, one of the greatest gifts of the people of Saskatchewan to the people of Canada has been medicare.

Mr. Speaker, born in this province without the support of the federal government, born in this province without the support of the federal government which has now become an identifying characteristic that causes Canadians to say, we're Canadian. You ask 99 out of 100 Canadians, what's the difference between a Canadian and American, and many of them will say, a Canadian is an American with medicare.

Mr. Speaker, born here in Saskatchewan . . . Mr. Speaker, we are concerned today about the continuity of the ability to provide the kind of health care people in Saskatchewan deserve, and we are going to continue to stand firm for the people of Saskatchewan as we take on the federal government and their responsibility to provide health care, the security of health care not only for the people of Saskatchewan but for people across Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — We've heard the Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker, talking about changes that are being made and time targets for surgeries. The first again here in Saskatchewan; first in Canada. Is it any surprise that once again — once again as we work to improve this health care system of the nation — that the nation looks to Saskatchewan to take the lead? And we're

doing it again.

Mr. Speaker, we're in this . . . In this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, we're talking also about building securities for those who are vulnerable in our society, the employment supplement, Mr. Speaker, and support for housing to those who are lower-income.

Mr. Speaker, I will never forget the first campaign I was in and going door to door in Moose Jaw and coming across the door of a woman who had been living in a Moose Jaw Housing Authority home for some 15, 16 years. And, Mr. Speaker, I will never forget the conversation of that.

You know how many of us will have in the course of our campaigns conversations that stick with us forever. I will never, ever forget the conversation with this woman who had raised her children — and she'd done it well. And now she was, Mr. Speaker, she was feeling very, very vulnerable because her youngest child was in grade 12 and about to leave home.

And this mother who had lived with minimum kinds of income, but who had served both her family and I would suggest her community well, was feeling particularly vulnerable because her child was going to leave home. She had stayed at home to take care of her children all these years and now she was going to have years of time out of the workforce and no place to live.

And I said then, Mr. Speaker, I made a commitment to that woman that this will change. This will change. There will become a day in our province in which people who are vulnerable and have low income will authentically have the right to believe and to aspire to own their home, to bring to their families the security and the assurance and the confidence for it to be a place to build a future. And, Mr. Speaker, I am very, very proud that in this Throne Speech, and to be announced later, there is a long-term strategy for home ownership that will bring homes to the people of Saskatchewan who have not been able afford them, and I stand very firmly in support of that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we've also said, we've also said as a commitment to the people of Saskatchewan out of the campaign that we held last fall, that there is a commitment of this government to the people of Saskatchewan to stand firm in terms of their right to expect the lowest cost utilities bundle in all of Canada. Mr. Speaker, that was a promise made to the people of Saskatchewan, and that was a promise made in the Throne Speech that was read by the Lieutenant-Governor. And, Mr. Speaker, this government will deliver to the people of Saskatchewan, as has been our tradition over the course of our first century, and we're going to do it again.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've also recognized . . . I've heard over on the other side, they have been, they have been extolling the great fears of socialism, the great fears of socialism, they say. Ho, it is a frightening thing indeed. They, Mr. Speaker, if you listen to them, if you've listened, and particular if you've listened to the veterans, they'll tell you there is nothing more scary to the people of Saskatchewan than socialism. This socialism, Mr. Speaker, that introduced the first medicare program in Canada. Mr. Speaker, this socialism that introduced

affordable power, affordable telephones, affordable electricity, the most affordable auto insurance in the nation that has been a part of the tradition of the New Democratic Party in the first century, Mr. Speaker, it will be part of the legacy of the second century.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Because you see, Mr. Speaker, what you do, is if you want to build a second century with legacy, then what you do is you build on the strengths of the first. And it will be part of the intention of this government, Mr. Speaker, in this sitting of the House, to introduce legislation that will forever make it a guarantee to the people of Saskatchewan that they will be able to expect their Crown corporations to deliver for them as they have come to see them in the past, and that will continue into the second century.

Well, Mr. Speaker, well, Mr. Speaker, now we have to find ourselves just taking a look at the other side, at the other side. Because you kind of have to wonder if there is something different going on over there. And what's going on over there? We have a group of men and women over there, Mr. Speaker, that tell us they are the new and improved Saskatchewan Party. New and improved, they say. New blue dots.

They are the party that's on the move. They are simply salivating, Mr. Speaker. If you are listening to them, they are simply salivating at the prospects of bringing down the government and moving to the other side. Well if you listen to their story, that's their story. They're a party on the move.

So what are the signs? What are the signs of a party on the move? As we look through history, they're not hard to figure out. I mean what you do is you look at what the people think. And, Mr. Speaker, on that side of the House we have a political party that in 1999, they were kind of the new kids on the block and they got themselves in 1999 election some 42 per cent of the popular vote in the province of Saskatchewan. Pretty impressive for a new group.

Well they're a party on the move. They're a party on the move. And just to prove that, Mr. Speaker, they went out to the campaign in 2003 and what did they come home with? Thirty-eight per cent of support. A party on the move.

Whoa. Just a second. Just a second. Mr. Speaker, somebody's got, somebody's got the graph upside down, it would seem to me. The graph is upside down.

So you want to know a party on the move, you listen to the best poll of all. You listen to the people at election time who make the decision. Because there's no guesswork. They're not telling you what they think they might want to do; they're telling what you did. And, Mr. Speaker, they're saying in '03 compared to '99, you're four points less popular than you were before. That's what the people said.

But, Mr. Speaker, maybe that's just an aberration. Maybe it's just an aberration. Because, Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully. I listened to the speeches, and they tell us over and over, they have got it figured out. They are right and the people of Saskatchewan are wrong. That's what they're saying. Poor

old people of Saskatchewan just couldn't quite figure out how bright the Saskatchewan Party is.

But, Mr. Speaker, they decided after the election it was a time for a new leader. Well I'll tell you another way that you can figure out a party on the move. If you're a party on move and you're destined to be, you're the government-in-waiting, then people from all over are clambering to be at the lead of this thing. They want to be leading this thing.

And right after the election we heard many . . . Yes, we heard, I think, the member from Cannington; I think he wanted, I think he might have said somewhere along the line he wanted to be the leader. I think one of the new members from Saskatoon. The member from Wood River, he tried it once before. He thought about it again, although it would cut into his time as the honorary president of the Joe McCarthy fan club, Mr. Speaker. Cut into that. So that kind of dissuaded him.

Member from Weyburn, member from Melfort, the member from Cannington . . . or from Canora, the member from Canora, they all said that they kind of thought they might like to be the leader of this party on the move. Well, Mr. Speaker, they all thought about it. And we've heard some people, Mr. Speaker, in this Throne Speech refer to songs as part of a theme, to capture in song the movement that was going on, that express their heart.

And you know what I think was going on, Mr. Speaker, in the Saskatchewan Party leadership? There was a little theme that I refer to, the Saskatchewan Party leadership polka; it was the polka. And many of us will recognize it was to the tune of . . . and many people recognized the "Too Fat Polka." And they started jumping up and down and singing this one: I don't want it, you can have it, it's too bad for me; it's too bad for me, way too bad for me.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — The Sask Party too bad polka, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, not long ago the New Democratic Party had a leadership convention. They said, we're going to change the leader. How many people stood for the leadership of the New Democratic Party when it came to cutting bait? How many stood, Mr. Speaker? Count them — seven; seven; seven. Mr. Speaker, seven in the New Democratic Party.

When it came to the Saskatchewan Party and it came to cutting the chase, how many people out of 1 million people in Saskatchewan, how many people said, I think I'd like to be the leader of the Saskatchewan Party? How many? One — one.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can understand; they're feeling a tad discouraged. But you know there is a way, there is a way of getting your message out to the people of Saskatchewan. It was used by political parties for centuries, Mr. Speaker. It's called the leadership convention. What you do is you hold a leadership . . . In fact one of the ways to let the public know how your party is on the move and it's captured the ideas and the inspiration of people in Saskatchewan, you hold a leadership convention. And you say, how many came to our leadership convention? You ask them.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party had a leadership convention. Some 20,000 New Democrats voted, Mr. Speaker, in a preferred ballot. And there were actually some 2,000 people who were voting there that day.

Well, Mr. Speaker, how many people came to the leadership convention of the Saskatchewan Party? How many were there? None — none. Nobody came.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — None. Nobody. A leadership convention with nobody. Nobody, Mr. Speaker.

Well then you have to ask yourself, surely this is the party . . . Well okay, you know, not going to mess around with those messy little leadership conventions. Things might come out that you don't want to have said. And, Mr. Speaker, so then they said, well okay, we're just going to name our guy; we're just going to name our guy. Why in the world if you've only got one person who cares to lead the operation do you tell the world who he is on the ides of March? Why do you do it on the ides of March? Along came March 15 . . .

(12:30)

Mr. Speaker, you know I'm reminded of that old Wayne and Shuster skit that we'll all remember when Julius Caesar's wife kept saying, I kept telling him: Julie don't go, don't go, she said.

Well but on the ides of March, on the ides of March, they marched out the member from Swift Current and what did they say to him? They said you get out there, you get out there; we'll be back here, we'll be back here right behind your back. That's what they said; that's what they said.

Well, Mr. Speaker, so maybe they've made an odd mistake or two. Who knows; who knows. But surely, surely then, then we have the opportunity to come to the debate on the Speech from the Throne in which it is the time-honoured, noble tradition in which the political parties who make up the Assembly will stand and will state their vision for the future. And at this historic time, for the second century of the province of Saskatchewan, why is it, Mr. Speaker, that you have on one side of the House member after member after member standing and supporting the statements of the future that were in the Legislative Assembly . . . in the Speech from the Throne, and on the other side you get not one new idea. Not one.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I tried to enter this Throne Speech debate as objectively as I could. Now I got to admit I was a little biased when I started, a little biased when I started. But, Mr. Speaker, when I listen to the voices coming from both sides of the House there's no question in my mind — there's no question in my mind — there is one side of the House that stands for the principle of entering boldly into our second century as a province, willing to make the tough decisions that the people of Saskatchewan expect of those that they declare to be their leaders, willing to make those decisions that will enable us to move forward with a sense of confidence and optimism and assurance of this being a good place to build a future, a good future for young people in a green and prosperous economy

here in the home of medicare in our great nation, Mr. Speaker, in a place in which utilities are the most affordable in the nation.

For all of those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I will be standing in favour of the Speech from the Throne and I will be standing opposed to the negativity and the negativism coming from the opposite side.

Mr. Speaker, I will be voting in favour of the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hart: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have certainly seen some impressive speeches being delivered in this House this week and late last week. And I don't really know how that you follow an act like the one that the member from Moose Jaw North has just put on.

I can understand, Mr. Speaker, why perhaps that Broe deal out at Belle Plaine failed back in September 2002. This NDP government, they had the big revival tent, they bused in the children and the supporters, Mr. Speaker. But you know what they forgot to do, Mr. Speaker? They forgot to get the revival preacher from Moose Jaw North to rev up the crowd and deliver the message, Mr. Speaker.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm tempted with . . . after listening to the member from Moose Jaw North to simply adjourn debate but I think perhaps I will make a few comments before we do that, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would at this time like to congratulate you on your re-election to the Speaker's Chair. As a number of members have said, it is the first time that anyone in this province, and perhaps in Canada, has been re-elected to the Speaker's Chair, and my congratulations to you.

I could perhaps recall or explain our little discussion that yourself and myself had in Southey when we talked about the Speaker's position and so on. And I had indicated to you that I'd received your letter and said . . . and told you that ordinarily, under normal circumstances, that I would support you. But I then with a very straight face said to you, Mr. Speaker, that I, in this case, I couldn't because I was thinking of running for the position and you . . . your reply to me was that I probably would win. And then of course I chuckled and we . . . and I said also that I think I would have to leave my community and perhaps the province if I would make that kind of a move. And so I, once again, I would like to congratulate you.

And I'd also like to welcome the new members, the newly elected members on both sides of the House, to the legislature. It is, can be, a very daunting place when you get up to make your first speech. And I know back after the '99 election when I first rose to deliver my maiden speech it was unnerving, Mr. Speaker. And I have to congratulate all the new members for the quality of the speech and the content that they delivered. It was very impressive and they raised the bar very high, and it

really makes those of us who have been before really dig in a little deeper and try to maintain that level of debate, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at this time too I would like to pass on my well wishes to the member from Yorkton. While in this House we differ politically and have our debates and so on. But there are things that transcend politics, Mr. Speaker, and health is one of those things. And I would like to say, and particularly if the member is watching, that I wish him all the best in his battle with cancer, and I hope to see him take his place in the near future in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't welcome our new face at the Clerk's table, Iris Lang. Iris's parents live in Southey, which is in my constituency, in fact it's a neighbouring town. And Iris grew up in Southey and I would like to welcome her. And I'm sure she will serve all the members of the Assembly very well.

I have known Iris's parents for quite some time, particularly her father. He is an avid hockey fan and has refereed hockey, minor hockey games for many, many years. He hasn't done that in the past while; his age has kind of caught up to him. But he refereed when my sons were playing hockey, and Jack didn't have anybody involved in hockey at that time but he loved the game and he'd come out and ref minor hockey games. In fact we would quite often tease him that he's getting up in age and that we were wondering if he was reffing by ear. And he said sometimes he was, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to at this time also thank the voters from Last Mountain-Touchwood for once again re-electing me. We underwent significant changes in the electoral boundaries and I would . . . I'm very pleased that the voters of Last Mountain-Touchwood have once again placed their confidence in me.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't, at this time, thank the members of my family for their loyal support that they have given me over the years, and particularly my wife Marlene.

Our family has undergone a few challenges, I guess, in the last year or so. We have a couple of our granddaughters living with us. My in-laws, Marlene's parents . . . Her mother passed away last April here in, well actually in the home in Cupar. And her father is living in the home in Cupar and he's elderly and failing health and he certainly requires Marlene's attention. And I help out whenever I can, Mr. Speaker.

But Marlene, my wife, certainly has a number of added responsibilities and she is certainly coping with them very well. And as I said, as all members will know, this public life is demanding; you're away from home quite a bit and you're not able to be there for your family members. So I really appreciate the support that my family and my wife have given me over the last few years of elected life.

I'd like to just at this time, Mr. Speaker, just briefly outline and say a few things about the constituency of Last Mountain-Touchwood. As I had said it has, prior to the last election, underwent some fairly significant boundary changes. In fact I have been told that 42 per cent of the constituency is

new to the constituency. We inherited most of the rural portion of the old Melville constituency.

So we have lost towns like Raymore and Wynyard which Wynyard was the largest town in the old constituency. But as the member from Arm River-Watrous has said, and I'm sure he will, he'll do an excellent job of looking after the residents of Wynyard and I have every confidence in his ability, Mr. Speaker.

The constituency now has towns like Balcarres and Ituna and Lemberg, Abernethy and Neudorf, and a couple of other smaller communities of Duff, Fenwood, and Goodeve, Mr. Speaker.

And we were a rural constituency prior to the boundary changes but we like to boast that we had at least one community over 1,000 people. Wynyard was over 2,000 people. Now, Mr. Speaker, we are truly a rural community. Our largest town is under 900 people so if you want to look at a typical rural constituency, Last Mountain-Touchwood would be such a constituency.

The issues of the residents of Last Mountain-Touchwood are the same pretty well as the issues of the people across this province. Being a rural constituency, of course agriculture is prominent, the challenges in agriculture — BSE, cost of production, the CFIP program.

And I have had a number of constituents call and tell me how disappointed they are with the Minister of Agriculture's refusal to fully fund the 2002 CFIP program. In fact many of the farmers in our constituency, probably 2002 was the only year that they ever qualified, Mr. Speaker, and now they're being told that they will only receive 88 per cent of their entitlement, Mr. Speaker.

And I should probably just explain a wee bit for those people who don't understand how the program works. In order to qualify for a claim under that CFIP program that this government really didn't have any input into — they just accepted whatever Ottawa designed, Mr. Speaker, and said, well okay I guess we're going to have to go along with it — in order, as I said, in order to qualify for a payout under that program, farmers would have to have their income drop by some 30 per cent down to at least 70 per cent or lower than their long-term average income. And now what we're hearing from this NDP government, the federal government has put up the additional funds to pay out their portion of the claims at 100 per cent.

But these folks across the way here are saying, well these NDP, this NDP government has said, well those rural people, they probably won't ever vote for us again and so, you know, money's a little tight. And we said we put . . . that we're going to put up 70 per cent . . . \$70 million to the program. We will or are in fact going to spend that, that's what the minister told us. To this point in time the facts haven't really borne that out, but I would hope that they would at least put in their 70 million and the rest of it they're just going to have to do without, Mr. Speaker.

And I should tell you at this time that the farmers of this province have noticed what this government has done — or

failed to do, Mr. Speaker. And they will certainly be . . . will not forget that, Mr. Speaker. And this government can use all the scare tactics they want. The rural people of this province know what's going on and so do the urban people, Mr. Speaker, and they won't be fooled again, Mr. Speaker.

Highways, property taxes, and health, of course are major concerns of our constituency, Mr. Speaker. And I must say that if . . . in the last few months, if I would judge by the number of phone calls and inquiries that we've had at our constituency office, health would top the list of the concerns of the people of Last Mountain-Touchwood.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think what I'd like to do is tell you what the NDP's candidate that they had in Last Mountain-Touchwood had to say after the November 5 election, and I'm quoting from an article in the *Fort Qu'Appelle Times*. The candidate, Mr. Hillier said, Last Mountain's rural nature is going to mean a tough next four years.

And that's coming from their candidate, Mr. Speaker, after the election of an NDP government. I think that, I think that sort of a comment, Mr. Speaker, certainly speaks volumes. Even their own people don't have any trust in their ability to deliver on their own . . . on their promises and to solve the major problems that are facing our province, Mr. Speaker.

And as I said, Mr. Speaker, the agricultural issues are certainly prominent issues in my constituency, and I'd already mentioned the CFIP problems.

(12:45)

The BSE, it goes without saying. We have a large beef sector in the constituency and the impact of the mad cow, the BSE has certainly been devastating to some of our farm families, Mr. Speaker. And with the recent announcement by the federal government, there is a bit of support there. This government claims to make . . . that they had some support for ranchers and farmers of our province.

They talk about the \$55 million that they've put into the BSE programs in support. All we need to do is look at, at what other provinces have done — Alberta. I hate to use the comparison of Alberta, but there are times when we just must, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's beef industry is perhaps two or maybe three times, two and a half times larger than ours. The Alberta government's support to their industry is in the neighbourhood of 4 and \$500 million. And these people are very proud, Mr. Speaker, that they have put 50, a measly \$55 million into that industry.

And the reason that they haven't put any more money into it is because they probably don't have it. And why don't they have it, Mr. Speaker? Because we don't have a growing economy in this province. We don't have the ability to respond to these crisis that come up from time to time, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking at the clock and I have quite a number of other comments that I'd like to make and I don't think the time would allow me to conclude. So, Mr. Speaker, at this time I would move to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood 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. I recognize the Deputy Government House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I would move that the House 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 that motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m. I ask everybody to drive safely and to have a good weekend.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:47.

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