



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

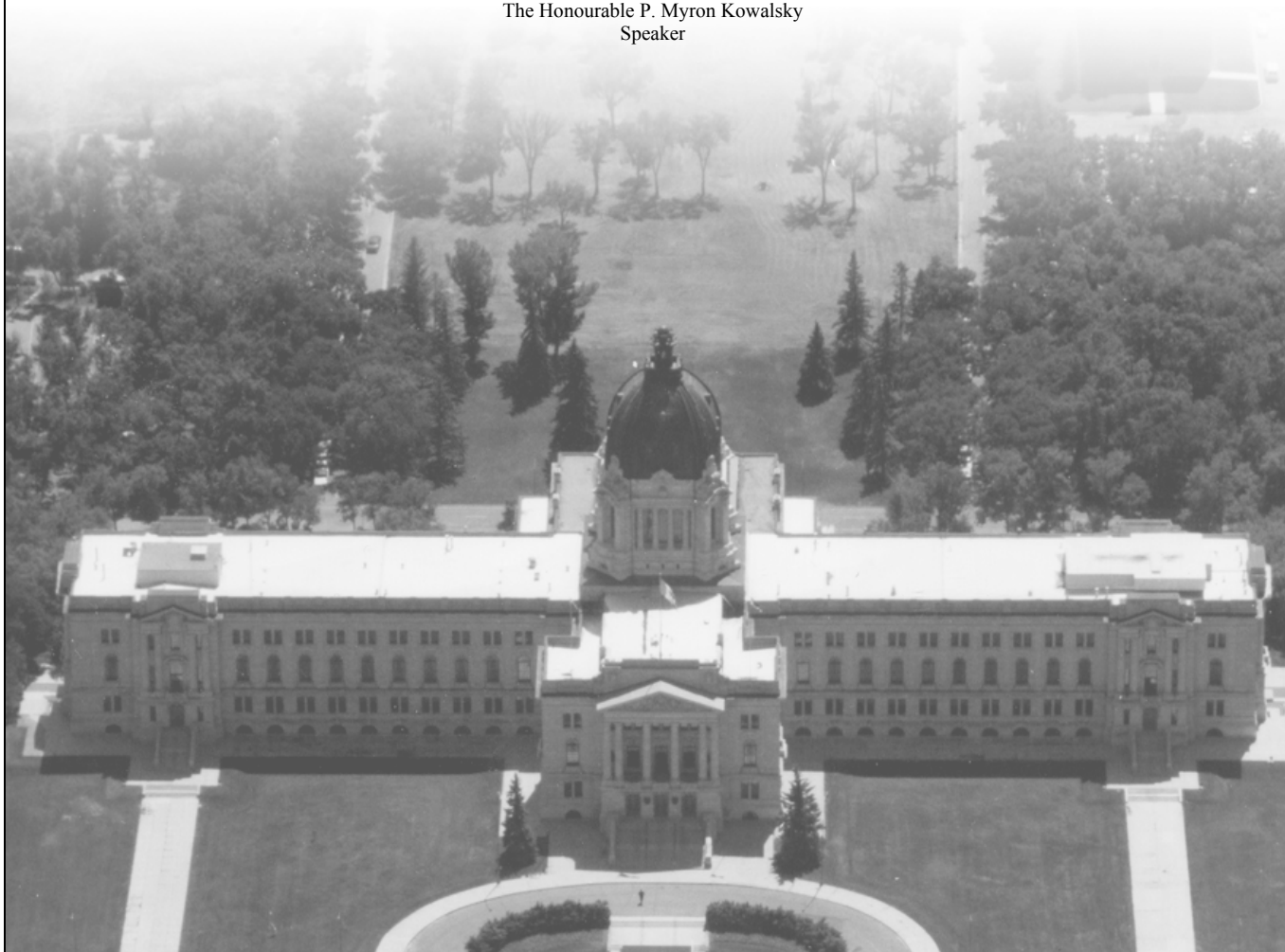
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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 Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I present a petition today that has been subject of long-standing concern in the Southwest. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by producers and Crown land lessees from the community of Tompkins.

I so present.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise in the Assembly with a petition from people of the Southwest that are extremely concerned about the condition of Highway 43, and the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway 43 in order to address safety concerns and facilitate economic growth in rural Saskatchewan.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by good citizens of Gravelbourg and Glenbain.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on behalf of the citizens of west central Saskatchewan very concerned with the state of health 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 continuation of the current level of services available at the Kindersley Hospital and to ensure the current specialty services are sustained to better serve the people of west central Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by the fine folks of Kindersley and Alsask.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received.

A petition concerning an increase in crop insurance premiums;

Another petition concerning services available at the Kindersley Hospital.

And addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 63 and 69.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day 17 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Learning: for the fiscal year 2004-2005, how many employees in the department will be receiving cost-of-living allowance increases in their wage? And further to that, what is the COLA percentage, and what will be the total value of the COLA increase?

Also, Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, I shall also ask, on day 17, the government the following question:

To the Minister of Learning: for the fiscal year of 2004-2005, how many employees in this department will be receiving scale increases in their wage? And further to that, what is the total value of those increases, and what is the total value of salary and remuneration paid to employees in this department?

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 17 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation: what impact would the recent hike in taxes on tobacco and alcohol have on musicians who perform at live venues in Saskatchewan taverns? Further to this, what consideration and study was given to this matter prior to the tax increase decisions; could these documents be provided for the Saskatchewan arts community?

I so present.

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 17 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Community Resources and Employment: for fiscal year 2003-2004, what was the total allocation for affordable housing construction? And further to that, was this all provincial funding, and if not, could you please provide a breakdown of funding from contributing sources?

While I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I have several more questions:

To the minister responsible for Community Resources and Employment: what is the mandate of the provincial housing policy framework for fiscal year 2004-2005?

To the minister responsible for Community Resources and Employment: in fiscal year 2004-2005, is the 12.6 million allocated for affordable housing construction all provincial funding? If not, could you please provide a breakdown of funds from contributing sources?

To the minister responsible for Community Resources and Employment: for fiscal year 2004-2005, how many third party grants will be reduced by this department? Which grants to those organizations will be so affected? And could you please list both the previous and the newly reduced amounts of each grant?

To the minister responsible for Community Resources and Employment: for fiscal year 2004-2005, how many third party grants will be eliminated by this department? Which grants to those organizations will be so affected? And could you please list the amount of each grant that is to be eliminated?

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 17 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: what are our Saskatchewan health policies for approving out-of-province MRIs when ordered by a specialist?

And also:

To the Minister of Health: which third party organizations will have their grants reduced and by how much?

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 17 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Learning: at what facility does the government plan to house the new nursing education seats, and how many new instructors will be hired to

accommodate the increase in nursing education seats?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a distinct pleasure for me to introduce to you 54 grade 8 students from Palliser Heights Elementary School in Moose Jaw who have occupied, literally occupied the west gallery.

Mr. Speaker, you will recognize these students because these are the students that you and I visited with about a month ago. And you will recognize that they took extreme interest in their preparations for doing the mock legislature and how impressed both you and I were. And their enthusiasm continues. And they're here today to observe, after having done their mock legislature, the House in action. They intend to be here for a while this morning and to observe proceedings into orders of the day I believe.

We met earlier for photos and drinks in a very, very brief visit. And I'll look forward to meeting with them when the photos are ready, and I have chance to visit back to Palliser Heights.

The teachers who are with them today are Steve Michaluk and Kevin Wicharuk as well as two teacher aides and two bus drivers; Mr. Speaker, you can't get all of these young people into one bus. And so it's great to see them in good number and looking so enthusiastic so early on this Friday morning.

I'll ask you, Mr. Speaker, and all of the members of the Assembly to join me in showing a warm welcome to the students from grade 8 at Palliser Heights School.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it gives me great pleasure to introduce seated in your gallery, the Old Trout Puppet Workshop troupe of Calgary. And they've been performing at the Globe Theatre here in Regina for the past two weeks. The members are Pete Balkwill, Steve Kenderes, Steve Pearce, Robert Hall, and Judd Palmer. Judd Palmer is a very good friend of mine. He has written four books, one of them, his second book, *The Maestro* was short listed for the Governor General's award for literature.

Their current production in Regina is entitled *The Last Supper of Antonin Carême*, and I can tell you that it is getting rave reviews. I was out with them last night, Mr. Speaker, and following the production they were swarmed like rock stars. Sadly however, members of this House will not be able to see it as it has been sold-out, last night, tonight, and tomorrow, and I know this because my wife and I got the last four tickets. But I'd ask all members and colleagues of the House to warmly welcome the Old Trouts. Thanks very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to the rest of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce Danny Jewitt sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Danny's from Indian Head, finishing his final year in university here in Regina.

Danny's family and our family go back an awful long ways. His grandpa was the superintendent for Parrish and Heinbecker, and that was a company that my dad worked for, for 20-some years. So I always remember when his grandpa would come by, Dixon Jewitt, and what a special person he really is.

Danny is thinking about maybe working over in Europe for a year and then hopefully coming back to Saskatchewan. So I'd like all members to welcome Danny here to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of the south someone who is very familiar, Dr. Gordon Barnhart. Dr. Barnhart, as members will know, is a former Clerk of this Assembly, a former Clerk of the Senate of Canada, and a strong proponent and mentor for the legislative internship program.

I enjoy dealing with Dr. Barnhart as part of my responsibilities as critic for post-secondary education. All members join me in welcoming him.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, permit me an introduction at this time. I have the pleasure of introducing to all members, four very special guests who are with Dr. Barnhart today and these are familiar faces to us, to many of us now.

And these four bright individuals are the interns who have begun their work in January and will finish their terms in the end of July. And I would ask them to — each one of them is paired with an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) — I would ask them to rise individually as I introduce them.

Fabian Contreras is a student at the University of Regina studying political science and will be back in the fall to complete his honours thesis.

Ryan Griffiths, also a student at the U of R (University of Regina), and he's completed an honours degree in political science and will begin his master's studies in the fall at McGill.

Kim McKechney is using the credits he receives from the internship program to complete an honours degree in political science from the University of Saskatchewan.

And Joanne Harpauer-Digneau has recently completed a commerce degree in finance from the University of

Saskatchewan, and also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English.

Please join me in welcoming the Saskatchewan legislative interns to this Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I would like to add a special welcome as well to Dr. Gordon Barnhart who serves as a current university secretary. Dr. Barnhart is the academic director of the legislative internship program. Dr. Barnhart is more familiar to us, many of us, having served as the Clerk of this Legislative Assembly, and also then left to serve as Clerk of the Senate in Ottawa before going to the university here.

Dr. Barnhart has received many special honours. And Dr. Barnhart is also an author, having authored the *Building for the Future: A Photo Journal of Saskatchewan's Legislative Building*. And I understand will be releasing a new publication, possibly this June, titled *Saskatchewan's Premiers of the Twentieth Century*. Welcome to Dr. Barnhart.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier on the member for Moose Jaw North introduced a large group of students and teachers in the gallery opposite. And I'd like to join with the member in introducing . . . reintroducing one of the teachers.

Steven Michaluk is one of the teachers that accompanies this group, and Steven is a graduate of Sturgis High School — Mr. Speaker, Sturgis being a community in my constituency. His parents, Dennis and Judy Michaluk, I know are very proud of their son.

Steven's a great athlete, Mr. Speaker. He has been a member of many provincial and national lacrosse teams, and has won many awards, not only as an individual, but as a team. And I understand he's a significant hockey player. Having officiated a number of games a few years ago that Steven played in, I can tell you he's one tenacious centreman. And as an official you have to be very careful with your hand when you're dropping the puck because this man goes after it in a tenacious manner.

I'd like all the members to join me in welcoming Steven Michaluk.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(10:15)

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

2004 Paragon Awards

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, for the last five years Regina and

District Chamber of Commerce has presented the Paragon Awards. As the name suggests, Mr. Speaker, these awards are about celebrating business excellence in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, the Paragon Awards are a showcase for contributions and accomplishments of local business. They celebrate Regina's prosperity and they pay tribute to the leadership, generosity, and positive attitude of Regina's business community.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all members will join me in thanking Regina and District Chamber of Commerce for hosting this truly enjoyable event and in congratulating all the nominees and winners of the 2004 Paragon Awards.

Mr. Speaker, this year's winner of the Young Entrepreneur Award is Bruce Piasta of Edge Automotive Industries. Edge Automotive Industries also won the awards for export achievement and for new business venture. The award for community involvement went to Advantage Sign and Display Systems. For community alliance the winner was Rawlco Radio.

The Marketing and Promotional Achievement Award went to Conexus Credit Union. The winner for customer service excellence was Curves Regina. The award for innovation went to Luigi Benedicenti from the University of Regina. And the Athena Award, which is presented for assisting women in their attainment of professional excellence and leadership skills, went to Barb de la Sablonnière of Advantage Sign and Display Systems. And, Mr. Speaker, the 2004 Business of the Year is Conexus Credit Union.

Again, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to all involved with the 2004 Paragon Awards.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Reaction to Budget

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I sat down to read this morning's *Leader-Post*, I couldn't help but read Bob Hughes's regular column more than once. The column hits the nail on the head. So much so, Mr. Speaker, that I'd like to read a few excerpts this morning and I quote:

The road to Alberta is wide open, Saskatchewan.

But be aware, Harry Van Mulligen will likely be waiting for you somewhere at the border, hand outstretched, collecting a fee for leaving the province.

The Trojan Horse that . . . carried the desperate NDP election promises . . . (has) been opened and from it . . . spilled the most devastating budget this province has ever seen. The budget has shaken Saskatchewan to its very foundation, stripping . . . Saskatchewan of its hope, turning its back on the labour force it slept with, forcing young families everywhere to look elsewhere for their future, doing nothing for . . . (business) big and small.

Is this what the wonderful economic "momentum" Premier Lorne Calvert . . . (has) boasted of during the election campaign has produced? Despair.

Mr. Speaker, that ends that quote. Mr. Speaker, it gets much worse before he wraps up with these words, and I quote:

This budget from a government that has no new ideas and is old and tired and worn out and bored may (very) well be thought of by Lorne Calvert and Harry Van Mulligan as a great budget brought down in tough times. But this is really just a great budget for the economy of Alberta.

Will the last one out . . . turn off the lights?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Environmental Initiatives

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Speaker, as an educator and a newcomer to politics, there is nothing I appreciate more than creativity, imagination, and innovation. Nothing I appreciate more than ideas.

And so I'm pleased to read in the news this week a column about the 150 megawatt wind power project for southwest Saskatchewan, a project that will produce enough electricity for 64,000 homes. I read about a proposed wind power interpretation centre along the No. 1 Highway near Gull Lake; a biogas demonstration project at Cudworth; a SaskPower poster contest to raise awareness of climate change, the winners to be announced on April 22, Earth Day .

All of these initiatives, large and small, begin with ideas and these ideas are becoming a reality, as will Green Team, CO₂ injection, coal gasification, biofuels, solar power, ethanol, hydrogen, and more. We have all of the elements, Mr. Speaker, here in this province, and a long proud history of creativity and innovation even in the face of very challenging circumstances.

And so we invite the people of this province to ignore the cynics and naysayers. We invite them to contribute their creativity, their ideas to an economic model for this province that is green and prosperous; an economic model that, like medicare, will be a signature piece for this government — a green and prosperous economy.

Mr. Speaker, this is our commitment to the people of Saskatchewan and we have presented a budget that is not only fiscally responsible but also marks our determination to follow through with that commitment. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville.

Reaction to Budget

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reaction from the budget keeps flowing into our office. And I

know the members opposite are getting some of the same reaction. However I would like to share some of that reaction for their benefit. The people's letters say it best. Here is one, Mr. Speaker, from Saskatoon, quote:

Mr. Calvert,

If only the people of Saskatchewan could vote again. Do you honestly think you would form government after the budget you just presented? How can you, as a man of God, live with yourself after the deceitful . . . (beep, Mr. Speaker, I omitted the four-letter word for prevarication) you blatantly told the people of Saskatchewan?

How can you justify the money you wasted on advertising Saskatchewan has a wide open future when the budget said it . . . (was) time to leave or the door is closed for business?

The way you treated rural Saskatchewan in the budget is shameful. Not only have they had to go through years of drought, subsidy wars, bse, but now you have cut jobs, hospitals . . . (home cares) and tax exemptions. What a slap in the face. There is a tax revolt brewing in . . . (the) province, and you are the cause. You sure have made your mark on this province.

Mr. Speaker, these are the words of one of the citizens of this province. And as you can tell, they are angry at this NDP (New Democratic Party) Premier and his betrayal of the Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

26th Annual First Nations University of Canada Powwow

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 26th Annual First Nations University of Canada Powwow will take place this weekend at Regina Exhibition Park, with the Minister of Community Resources and Employment, the member from Elphinstone, and the minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation in attendance. This event is one of the largest and longest-running powwows in the country and draws thousands of participants and spectators from across Western Canada and the United States.

Powwows are a social, spiritual, and cultural gathering that celebrate traditional Aboriginal song and dance, and this weekend is an excellent forum for cross-cultural awareness and understanding.

Mr. Speaker, this powwow provides participants with an opportunity to renew old friendships and begin new ones. It's a chance for young Aboriginal people to celebrate their culture and to carry on the tradition, and it gives students at the First Nations University of Canada a chance to say thank you to their friends and family who have supported them through their educational journey.

This weekend people of all ages, ranging from 55 years and

over to 11 years and under, will compete in a variety of categories. Nearly \$24,000 in prize money will be awarded and a trade show featuring Aboriginal arts and crafts will be on display. A new career fair has also been added this year with a remarkable number of participants.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in acknowledging the powwow committee, their membership for their commitment, and the First Nations University of Canada for sponsoring this event. I encourage everyone to attend these outstanding performances and I wish all participants good luck.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Reaction to Budget

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too read the *Leader-Post* with interest this morning, reading the columns by Bob Hughes and by Murray Mandryk. Mr. Speaker, when I got a copy of the budget earlier this week, I noticed that there was no name on it. All it says is provincial budget. How's that for creativity, vision, and foresight? The fact the NDP government can't even think up a name for this budget is quite revealing.

As Bob Hughes puts it, this budget is from, and I quote:

. . . a government that has no new ideas and is old and tired and worn out and bored . . .

There have been a number of alternative titles being talked about. I call it the budget of betrayal. Others have suggested, budget of Saskatchewan: enclosed find a map of your nearest escape route to Alberta. From the *Leader-Post* editorial staff, they called it paying for our past mistakes.

Columnist Murray Mandryk went into that name that budget overdrive. And some ideas he had: "It's really a good budget unless you farm, drive, drink beer, or buy things." "Saskatchewan summers are too long." I like this one — "We won? Yikes! Now what do we do?" And finally, Mr. Speaker, "and you thought what we said about the Saskatchewan Party was bad."

Mr. Speaker, you know that this government's gas tank is empty when they can't even come up with a title for their own budget. I think his idea of a contest is great. First prize could be a 15-minute, no-holds-barred meeting with the Premier to tell him what you really think about this no-name budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Regina Association for Community Living Hosts Spring Fling

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow evening my wife and I, along with a number of other government members and their spouses, will be attending the Regina Association for Community Living Spring Fling. Mr. Speaker, the Regina Association for Community Living provides support to and

advocacy on behalf of individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. This association makes it their mission to ensure that people with intellectual disabilities can participate fully as citizens in our community.

Mr. Speaker, the Spring Fling is a fund-raising event in support of the association's ongoing programs and services; things like the Regina Respite Registry that gives access to qualified respite care providers, or the community kitchen program that provides adults with intellectual disabilities to live independently and economically.

Mr. Speaker, Spring Fling 2004 promises to be a great evening. Dinner will be followed by a silent auction and entertainment by the pianist Ken Jefferson, the Sax Pistols, and the Campbell Collegiate Bell Ringers.

Mr. Speaker, the Regina Association for Community Living Spring Fling is a fun evening in support of a very worthy cause, and I invite everyone to take this opportunity to attend.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Reaction to Budget

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today's headline on the front page of the *Leader-Post* says, and I quote, "Premier won't rule out health (care) premiums."

Page 20 of the NDP election platform from last election says, and I quote:

Lorne Calvert has made the New Democrat position clear:
no health care premiums . . .

Now why would anyone in the province possibly assume that that could mean no health care premiums, Mr. Speaker? How could they possibly assume that when the Premier's been so clear over a matter of four months? Maybe he'll consider health premiums. No health care premiums.

Mr. Speaker, question to the Premier is this: is this government seriously considering health care premiums after he put it in black and white, after he looked people in the eye and promised that under his government there would be no health care premiums?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, in November, October and November of last year, the people of Saskatchewan said very clearly to I think all political parties, they say they want the number one priority the provision of health care. They want publicly funded, administered health care made sustainable not just for today but for tomorrow. That was their priority number one.

But you know what else they said, Mr. Speaker? I heard it. I heard it loud and clear. The people of Saskatchewan said they want change. They want change. And, Mr. Speaker, you know who they, you know who they entrusted to bring about change? It was the New Democratic Party. It was this government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you, I tell you as we look to the future of health care in Canada, Mr. Speaker, I think we are all challenged, all challenged to look at all opportunities we have to preserve the fundamental principles, Mr. Speaker — the fundamental principles born in this province — that your access to health care services should not be determined by your ability to pay but by your need. That's the principle, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess the people of the province just didn't understand what the Premier meant when he said, no health care premiums. I guess it's the people of the province that didn't understand what he was saying.

But let me read that quote again from the platform. This is a quote:

Lorne Calvert has made the New Democrat position clear:
no health care premiums . . .

One more time. I'm quoting:

Lorne Calvert (if that is his real name) has made the New Democrat position clear: no health care premiums . . .

Mr. Speaker, the question to the Premier on behalf of the people of this province: why in the world would anybody in Saskatchewan trust what he has to say? Does his word mean nothing?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I'm rather well acquainted with the budget that's just been delivered in this House. I do not see health care premiums in that budget, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are those people who are giving thought, giving thought to the future of health care in this province and in this nation. There are . . .

(10:30)

The Speaker: — I would just ask members to allow the response to be given. I want to be able to hear it. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, there are Canadians and there are people across this province who are giving serious consideration to the future sustainability. And, Mr. Speaker, they are discussing ideas and proposed changes. Is this government refusing to talk to people about proposed ideas and

changes? Not at all.

But, Mr. Speaker, there are some principles, I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that will not change. And they are not principles, if I may say, shared by the group of men and women opposite led by the member of Swift Current. I tell you, the principle on this side is, this public health care system is going to remain publicly administered and funded. And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be determined on need and not on an ability to pay — the kind of system that they will recommend, Mr. Speaker.

We're willing to talk to people, we're willing to look at ideas. We're actually, Mr. Speaker, willing to stretch. We're actually willing to stretch, Mr. Speaker, but I tell you there are principles on which we will not stretch.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House subscribe to a principle — maybe it's a little old-fashioned for the NDP — and that's the principle of, oh I don't know, telling the truth to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — How about that for a principle? How about looking people in the eye and saying something that you fully intend to keep should you become the government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, I understand that Moose Jaw City Council has been considering reducing the number of . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I would ask members to refrain from continual interruption so that the questions can be properly heard and properly put. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I understand Moose Jaw City Council has been considering reducing firefighters. That must have the Premier concerned because his pants are on fire. They are fully involved in the wake of this budget. But we'll give the Premier another chance to be very clear.

In his election platform his words, his words: no health care premiums. Is he breaking that promise, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I invite the Leader of the Opposition to read the budget document. He will not see a health care premium. Now, Mr. Speaker, he talks about some part of my attire being on fire or something. Well I'll tell you, here is the leader, like the emperor, who's caught without clothes, without clothes, Mr. Speaker. You know why? Well he talks about . . . he's got lots of complaints, they've got lots of complaints but very, very short, if I may say, long on complaint but very short on answer.

So I thought, well they've got all these complaints; maybe the Leader of the Opposition has a new idea somewhere. Maybe he's got a new idea somewhere so I thought, well what I'll do is I'll just go on the Internet, and I'll just look on his new Web site with his nice picture right on top. I turned up to his policy platform page. What do I see, Mr. Speaker? A blank page. A blank page with not one, not one policy idea — a blank page. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the new leader is an emperor without clothes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely amazing. This is absolutely amazing. The Premier wants to talk about ideas from this side of the Assembly. Well we'll start with this one: tell the truth. Tell the truth to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. There's a suggestion. There is an alternative that the official opposition proposes. At the next opportunity the Premier of this province should tell the truth to the people of Saskatchewan. It's little wonder they don't trust him.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has said that the people of Saskatchewan misunderstood what he said during the campaign — they just didn't get it. So we're going to let him be perfectly clear going forward. Will he stand in his place today, stand in this Assembly and commit to the people of the province that in future budgets, in the next budget he will not increase their taxes?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, this government will do what we have done as New Democrats in government for decades. And that will be to make the responsible choices, the sometimes tough and sometimes difficult, always practical and always responsible choices to build a future for Saskatchewan people.

Now when that member who now leads the official opposition had his little schooling in government, when he worked in government and had his schooling in government, the process then when you had a little problem, you know what they would do, Mr. Speaker? Well they'd find something to sell off. And when you didn't get enough out of that, you'd find something else to sell off. So they sold off Sask minerals; then they sold off the oil company; then they sold off the potash mines. And when all that didn't work, what do you do? You go to New York and you borrow some more money. You borrow yourself into oblivion.

That's the school of government that this group of men and women operate in. That's not the school of government here. We will take the practical, sometimes tough but always responsible choices, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Isn't it amazing, isn't it amazing that this Premier who inherited a half billion dollar surplus from Mr. Romanow and Ms. MacKinnon, this Premier who then promptly added a billion and three-quarters to the debt of the province would

have the gall, would have the gall to talk about increasing debt for future generations in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — This Premier, this Premier who has brought down successive deficits since he walked back through those doors as the Leader of the NDP ought not to lecture anybody about balancing the books of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely essential, if our province is to be competitive, if our province is to send the right signal out to those who might invest and help grow our province, the Premier can send a message now to those groups and to the people of this province and say he will not be dipping into the pockets of taxpayers again. Will he just simply make that commitment, Mr. Speaker, to the House?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, well the member from Cannington now shouts from his seat, where has the money gone.

Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, where the money has gone over the last three years: four hundred and seventy-seven million new dollars — new dollars — to the funding of health care services in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Where has the money gone? One hundred and seventeen million new dollars to the provision of education. Where has it gone? Another 162 million to deal with the crisis that has faced our farm families in BSE and in drought. Where has it gone, Mr. Speaker? It's gone to the Environment department to battle forest fires. Where has it gone? It has gone to the peoples of Saskatchewan in the services and the programs they require.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Leader of the Opposition again, I ask him again to once stand in this House or stand publicly in the rotunda, stand somewhere and say two things. Where would he not have spent these dollars; where would he have . . . not have spent these dollars? And two, where is his plan for today — where is his plan? If he were . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Health Care Resources

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On budget day the Minister of Health issued a news release. In it, it said that hospital closures and conversions were on the way.

I have a copy of the Premier's election platform right here, and guess what? It doesn't say a word about closing hospitals and closing beds. Mr. Speaker, could the Premier please point out where in his election platform he talks about closing hospitals and closing beds?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, in this budget this government has worked together to get money for health care that will provide service for people in Saskatchewan. But it's not sufficient to do things the way we've been doing them now.

As the call comes right across the country to reform how we provide health services, we're going to look at that and do that. That means change in what happens in every community in this province. It also means change in every community right across the country.

We can do this according to a plan that we developed earlier and make sure we go forward with those kinds of principles, or we can do it helter-skelter with a blank-page plan like the members opposite.

I encourage that new, unelected Leader of the Opposition to call a policy conference of his people to put forward to the people of Saskatchewan some ideas around health care planning so we can put it into the hopper of ideas that we're going to have to reform health care in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, once again this Premier said one thing to get elected and then turns around and does exactly the opposite. Mr. Speaker, in his platform the Premier promised to improve health care facilities around the province, not close them — improve facilities. In fact, the Premier never said a word about bed closures and hospital closures. Once again, he has abandoned his election platform and betrayed the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: how many beds is he closing; how many hospitals is he closing; and where is he doing it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the people on this side of the House reflect Saskatchewan characteristics. And the number one characteristic of a Saskatchewan person is to be practical, deal with challenges in a straightforward and honest way. And I think that that's exactly what we have done through the Minister of Finance's budget here.

We are going to look at and deal with those issues in a straightforward and honest way, and we're going to talk with people in the province as we do it. We're going to make hard choices because that's what we have to do.

The members opposite have, I think, a good part of their body of members with the same characteristic of practicalness. But let's hear from them some ideas about how to do that rather than this kind of going back in the past — trying to sort out some things where they made some major mistakes in the election campaign.

We're going forward. We're leaders. We're going to be leaders not only in Saskatchewan, but in this country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister says that his government and his plan is dealing with people in a straight . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister says that his plan and his party deals with the people of Saskatchewan in a straightforward way. Well, Mr. Speaker, following the Fyke report, his action plan, this minister's action plan said, and I quote:

No closures or conversions of hospitals. The answer to financial sustainability is not to be found in the conversion or closures of small hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, the minister said this in his own action plan. If he's talking straightforward to the people of Saskatchewan, will he tell the people, is he going to close hospitals and convert them to health centres?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we are going to be looking at every dollar we spend in health care in the same way that we're looking at every dollar we spend in education, we spend on agriculture, that we spend on environment, everywhere, because practically people want to know that we're making the best use, the most efficient use of those dollars in providing the services that they want.

Sometimes, well always, things change and you have to re-evaluate what you're doing. That's what we are going to do as a government. You make some of the tough choices and you go and you build. And our goal is to build something that provides services for everybody.

Members opposite, they can be part of that process or they can sit out on the side and snipe. I would suggest to them that the people of Saskatchewan expect more of all of those people and the work that they are supposed to do as MLAs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville.

Closures of Long-Term Care Beds

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in this last election the Premier and his party ran around the province scaring seniors telling them, telling them how the Saskatchewan Party was going to close long-term care beds and throw seniors out of their homes.

Well, Mr. Speaker, guess who's doing exactly that? This Premier, Mr. Speaker. His budget attacks by closing long-term care beds.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier point to one place, one place in his election platform where he talked about closing long-term care beds?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite I know has many, many years of experience in Saskatchewan. And I know that he also has lived through many, many changes in how our society is organized.

There are different expectations for our generation as to what kind of care they want in the long term. We are going to listen to the concerns that people have and plan to provide the long-term care for us and for our parents and grandparents in a way that responds to the kinds of concerns that they have.

That may mean that we change some of the structures that provide long-term care, but are we going to provide for our people? Absolutely, because that's who we are. We care about our neighbours.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I've had a lot of experience in this province. But this election was a very unique experience.

Mr. Speaker, the most despicable part of the Premier's campaign — and that's the unique thing that I've experienced, despicable election — the most despicable part of the Premier's campaign was how the NDP went around scaring seniors.

There's only one leader who's attacking seniors and it's the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Two years ago, two years ago he tried to jack up their long-term fees. That didn't work, so now he's going to kick them out of their beds.

Mr. Speaker, how many long-term care beds is this Premier going to be closing? How many seniors is he going to kick out of their beds?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(10:45)

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the last election in this province was about trust and I would say that the members opposite had many opportunities to set forward what they wanted to do for this province. But unfortunately their platform and everything that they said did not reveal a plan about where we were going.

And so the people said no way, we don't trust those guys, we still don't trust them, and until they change the way that they do politics and actually present ideas and set forward plans, they will never ever be in government. And I ask them, come and help — contribute to fixing and dealing with the problems in Saskatchewan. We appreciate good ideas and we will work to find those ideas to make sure that our province grows and continues as a leader in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Provincial Parks

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister gets up and has the audacity to talk about trust. It's the people of this province that now do not have the trust of this government.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. As the NDP's budget betrayal spreads across the province, even former members of the NDP's former government are expressing their serious concerns. In fact, in one case, the NDP's wrong-headed budget choices brought one former NDP cabinet minister to tears. It's no wonder, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP has decided to even close provincial parks till the middle of June. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Will the Premier explain how the future is wide open but the parks are closed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, our budget sets out a clear plan to meet the priorities of the people of Saskatchewan — health and education. It also sets out and supports our priorities in environment, which is safe drinking water, environmental protection, and forest fire suppression. So there are some tough choices to make.

All the parks this summer will be open on the first day of summer. We want to make sure people get good value for that and so we've taken a look to see where the park is best utilized. So, Mr. Speaker, this summer the green thing to do is have all the parks open and they will be open.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They may be open, but summer might be over before they're open.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's decided to shorten summer. He says that'll save about 25,000 bucks a week. And, Mr. Speaker, when your family goes to the park, it's going to cost you more money to get into the park. You want to go for a swim in the pool, it's going to cost you 10 per cent more this year, thanks to the NDP's decision to increase swimming pool admissions. And, Mr. Speaker, if you want to relieve tension around the campfire with a hot dog, the NDP gets you with its \$3 new wiener roast tax.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Premier forcing Saskatchewan families to pay for the NDP's budget disaster by taxing their summer vacations?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, our priorities are clear in this government — health and education — and they're clear in the environment too.

But we have a wonderful park system and we want to keep that strong and quality. And so, it costs about \$14 million to run our park system and so we need to make sure we have good value for that.

Now during that one month, the 6,700 campsites are utilized about 20 per cent. Is it a wise choice to keep all the campsites open? I'm not sure. So we have to take a look at that, you know.

So we have to make sure we get good value for our parks, and I think this is the right thing to do. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, finally something truthful came from the other side in that we do have wonderful parks.

Then why are they staying closed? Why are they staying closed until halfway through summer, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, they're shortening summer, they're taxing campfires, increasing fishing licences. It's all bad news for Saskatchewan family.

And now it's even worse for Saskatchewan tourism. Not that the NDP was really concerned because, last week, a reporter asked the NDP new Environment minister what he thought about tourism, to which the minister responded: Tourism. Hmm. That's something we'd like to get into.

Well, Mr. Speaker, tourism is a key industry in Saskatchewan, even if it's a new concept for the minister.

Why is the NDP taxing the holidays of Saskatchewan families and driving tourism out of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, tourism is a key part of our green and prosperous economy and that's a key part of our platform and we're really supporting it here.

I was delighted a couple of weeks ago to be in Saskatoon when the Parks department got an award for increasing our park usage by 11 per cent. It was quite an accomplishment, Mr. Speaker. And we're going after more people. They want to have a quality product and so it has to be paid for and this is a fair and reasonable way to raise those funds.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House are willing to give the Environment minister time to get briefed exactly on what tourism means to this province.

But in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, here's what one tourism professional shared with the Saskatchewan Party in an e-mail this morning. And I quote:

Their budget doesn't make any sense. Cutting back park hours and staff is going to drop the revenue in tourism to an all-time low. I'm a tourism counsellor and I know how important the parks are, not only to Saskatchewan people but also to visitors from across the world. I'm at a loss as to why they are doing this.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister help this Regina-based tourism counsellor by answering her question. Why did the NDP decide to close parks, shorten summer, increase entry fees, charge more for swimming and fishing, add a wiener roast tax? Why did they do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it is, it is clear to the people of Saskatchewan why this government is making some tough choices — it is to preserve publicly funded medicare in this province, it is to preserve education, and it is to bring us to a fiscal balance that can set the platform for the future.

Listen to what we hear in this House, Mr. Speaker, on a daily basis. They over and over and over say we want more money for the parks; we want more money for health care; we want more money for agriculture; we want more money for the highways, but don't, but don't increase the fees and don't raise the taxes, and meanwhile balance the budget. That's the kind of opposition thinking we've got; that's why they're in opposition, Mr. Speaker, and that's why they'll stay there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions no. 34 and 35.

The Speaker: — Responses to 34 and 35 have been submitted.

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 no. 36 to 39 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Questions 36, 37, 38, and 39 have been converted to orders for return (debatable).

Pursuant to . . . Order, please. Order, please. Pursuant to an order of this Assembly we now go to government orders.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

The Speaker: — I do now leave the Chair for the House to go into Committee of Finance.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply

The Chair: — The first item before the committee is consideration of interim supply, and I invite the Minister of Finance to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Seated beside me on my left is Ron Styles, the deputy minister of Finance. Seated on my right is Kirk McGregor, the assistant deputy minister for taxation and intergovernmental affairs. Seated beside him is Dennis Polowyk, the assistant deputy minister for treasury and debt management. Seated to the left of Mr. Styles is Terry Paton, who is the Provincial Comptroller for Saskatchewan. Seated behind Mr. Styles is Glen Veikle, the assistant deputy minister for the treasury board branch. And seated behind me is Joanne Brockman, the executive director of economic and fiscal policy. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, if I might just make a few opening comments. The issue that we're dealing with today is interim supply. Interim supply provides the opportunity for the government to receive approval for certain monies to enable the important work of government departments and agencies to proceed, even though the budget for the new fiscal year has not been officially approved. And in our parliamentary system, at the end of the day, the budget has to be approved by the Legislative Assembly. But in the meantime we need funds to support the work of government departments and activities, and that's what interim supply is about.

With this interim supply Bill today, we are seeking approval for an appropriation equal to one-twelfth or one month of the budgeted amount for all departments, except for the Department of Learning. The supply Bill seeks approval for one-tenth of the operating grant funding for K to 12 (kindergarten to grade 12) schools, and it's recognized that school boards generally operate on a 10-month basis.

With the level of funding requested in the interim supply Bill, departments and agencies will be able to cover their expenses for the month of April. And in the event that the budget is not passed by the end of April, we will seek approval for additional funds to ensure the work of the government can continue following the month of April.

(11:00)

Having said that, Mr. Chair, I want to recognize that we are doing interim supply with the leave of the opposition. If the opposition had not given us leave to do this, we would not be able to pursue interim supply today, so I want to recognize their co-operation and say that the people of Saskatchewan owe them a vote of thanks for their co-operation.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to provide, for the members opposite, a summary of the amounts that are being voted today, and if I could have one of the Pages take two or three copies over to the opposition critic.

And I think that's it for my opening remarks, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

The motion, that no. 1, resolved . . . I would move, Mr. Chair, no. 1:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$510,262,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 2005.

The Chair: — It is resolved, no. 1:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$510,262,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 2005.

Is the committee ready for the question?

I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you very much for those opening comments, Mr. Minister, and welcome to all of your officials this fine Friday morning.

Mr. Minister, as I have indicated to you directly and to your staff, we want this discussion this morning to take place more in line with clarifying the new ideas that we have presented in the budget in terms of summary financial budgeting for the first time in the province of Saskatchewan, the new system of accounting for capital construction in highways, and how it will affect the budget that the people of Saskatchewan see.

And I'm sure, Mr. Minister, that you appreciate that not everybody studies the documents as thoroughly as you — and hopefully myself and other officials — to be able to look at the document and try to get an understanding. Mr. Minister, I'd just like you to clarify — you indicated in your opening remarks that this is a one-twelfth interim supply request of all departments except Learning. Did you mean specifically for the K to 12 section of Learning, or was it for both the post-secondary department and K to 12?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, the one-tenth provision is for the foundation operating grant to support the K to 12 system.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you for clarifying that, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, there are a number of questions not only in expenditure, but of course in revenue. And we look at summary financial presentation for the first time for the province of

Saskatchewan. And Mr. Minister, I guess I'd like you to clarify for the people — what does an ordinary Saskatchewan resident see when they look at a General Revenue Fund, Fiscal Stabilization Fund, Treasury Board Crowns, Treasury Board organizations, Crown organizations, and then they see a bottom line that says approximately \$312 million of deficit.

Could you indicate how the department arrived at this model? Is this a model that is followed by other provinces in a similar fashion? And we understand, and everyone in Saskatchewan understands that, I believe, Saskatchewan as a province has the most number of Crown organizations and Crown agencies in all of Canada. So it makes for, I believe, about four pages of actual documents that need to be presented.

We see in the outline that you have presented, in the document that you called budget and performance plan summary — I should qualify that, not the General Revenue Fund — you indicate a lot of agencies and a lot of government boards that will contribute either deficits or incomes to the whole fiscal plan. How did the Department of Finance arrive at all of those numbers?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Chair, sorry, to put this in the context of something that might be understandable . . . And for me, I always try to relate it back to my own household. And in our household, we have a joint chequing account, out of which most of our activities are done. Here in government we have a General Revenue Fund and the General Revenue Fund receives the money, all the public monies through taxation and transfers and the like, and out of that General Revenue Fund then we make our expenditures.

And similarly at home, we have a joint chequing account out of which most of our activities flow, but we will also have a savings account. And in the past the budget documents have simply presented the activities, if you like, of the chequing account or the General Revenue Fund.

Now we're also putting forward the other entities that we're involved with as a government. We're also putting forward what the activities of the savings account, in this case the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

We're also putting forward, in household terms, individual chequing accounts that members of the household might have. Well in this case we're putting forward the financial plans for various entities that don't fall within the General Revenue Fund, but nevertheless are controlled to some extent by government. And by that I mean the Crown corporations. So we then ask the Crown corporation, what is your plan for the coming year; what is your financial plan for the coming year? And we incorporate that in the summary financial plan that we put before the people of Saskatchewan, so that in addition to the General Revenue Fund, people then get a sense of all the government activities.

Some of those activities we can control more than others. We can certainly through policy and direction have some control over the Crown corporations, although we can't control, for example, the input cost for some of our Crowns that drive up their cost and reduce their dividends and therefore reduce what they can transfer to the General Revenue Fund. But, you know,

to some extent we can control those entities.

Other entities that we can't really control, we can't control, for example, the activities of the crop insurance. That's a stand-alone entity. It's funded through premiums and subject to some formula with Ottawa and the provincial government, and we might have liabilities going up in a particular year related to the drought and so on. We don't necessarily control that from the Legislative Assembly.

We don't control for example, the liabilities into the Workers' Compensation Board, which is also now part of the summary financial plan.

So many of the things we do control; some of them we do not really control.

Having said that, we're putting them all together so that it's all there for people to take a look at and get some sense overall of the financial picture for the government.

Having said that, I would point out that we have always reported, at least for the last 10, 12 years or so, we have always reported in this fashion.

We have always provided a summary financial statement of previous spending for all these entities. And we say now it's time to go one step further and to now put forward a summary financial plan which shows what the activities are going forward into the future. And that's what we've done with the plan.

But the short answer to your question is: we asked the various entities — whether it's the Crown corporations, whether it's Treasury Board Crowns, whether it's the Workers' Compensation Board — what is your budget, what is your financial plan for the next year that we could incorporate in this summary financial plan that we're putting before the people of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I know that . . . at least I believe that you wouldn't have this information available at your fingertips, but maybe your officials do.

On page 76 and 77 of your summary document, immediately a number of people that have looked at this document said they understand, you know, the contributions of the Liquor and Gaming Authority sort of matches what has happened in the last number of years if you look back at the Public Accounts documents, and they can see a little increase.

But two of the Crown Management Board organization Crowns that just jump out at individuals are the Saskatchewan Power Corporation and SaskTel. And we see that the projected revenue or projected profit that ended on March 31 just a day ago was going to be at 187 million for SaskPower. And that is expected to drop to 112 million, a loss of \$75 million worth of profit. The other one is Saskatchewan Telecommunications — profits ending March 31, 85 million; and now an expected profit of 41 million — another loss of about 44 million.

Mr. Minister, those two organizations are showing that their

activities for the fiscal year 2003-2004 in comparison to 2004-2005 are going to drop by nearly \$120 million.

Now I know that there'll be questions posed in Crown Corporations. But since we're using the revenue from those corporations now to help run the province of Saskatchewan on a regular basis, and as you've indicated before, this has been the process that has been followed in that we had summary financial statements, but those were always summary statements of the year gone by.

Now for the first time we're seeing in this Legislative Assembly a plan put forward by all parts of government — all entities of government, if I can use that expression — that says, this is what we expect in the way of profit. The question that people are asking is: why do we expect a decrease of \$120 million worth of profit in just two of those Crown corporations?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, I thank the member for the question. First, I just point out that what we do here, recognizing that the government has a fiscal year that goes from April 1, yesterday, until the end of March next year, the activities for the Crowns are stated on a calendar year basis.

And as near as we can determine . . . And again as the member points out we'll have an opportunity in the Crown and Central Agencies Committee of the legislature to ask questions about these budgets on the part of the Crowns or at least what their . . . have in this plan; that as near as we can determine the SaskPower last year projected or they estimated a profit of \$100 million. This year they're projecting a profit of \$112 million.

(11:15)

The forecast increase in their profitability we understand is related to increased earnings they achieved because the extent of their debt that is in foreign currency, and because of the appreciation of the Canadian dollar they were able to make a gain during the course of this year. They're not projecting a similar gain next year as we understand it. For that to happen then the differential between the Canadian dollar and the US (United States) dollar would have to be much narrower than it is now.

So that's for SaskPower. We do not have the information with respect to Sask Telecommunications. And I do remember from some meetings that I've had that SaskTel has had, like other government entities that are reflected in the budget, there is some re-evaluation of . . . that goes on an ongoing basis with respect to pension plans. And some of those pensions plans, primarily because of lower earnings in the last year or so, are now having to make adjustments. And this may well be the case with respect to SaskTel. But I hesitate to say this is it, this is the reason for SaskTel, or this is the correct answer for SaskPower.

But again the responsible individuals for those Crown corporations will attend the Crown and Central Agencies Committee, and they will have to explain in those committees what these figures mean.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chairman, the Crown corporations that you've indicated are contributing dollars based on individual entities. Could you indicate where

Crown corporations that have been involved outside of the province, not only in Canada but internationally, where would we see a report on international activities of Crown corporations as to whether or not they are producing a profit or a loss? Are they in the individual entity of each of the Crowns or are they in CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) as a net line?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, what we received from the entities outside of the GRF (General Revenue Fund) is a consolidation from them as to their financial plan for the coming year, and that is what we are reporting here. So we just take their numbers for their entity and that's what we put here.

We don't have all of the details from each of the Crowns — all of their revenues and all of their expenditures and how they're broken down and where they spend these funds and where the funds come from. We are provided with a consolidated number; that's why it's called a summary financial plan. That's what we're including in the summary financial plan.

Having said that, all of the Crown agencies are obliged by law — we think that's a good improvement in reporting and accountability — are required to provide annual reports to the Legislative Assembly. And then those annual reports for all the entities — international holdings of these Crown corporations, I guess mostly SaskTel and SaskEnergy — also have to be reported to the members of the Legislative Assembly and are used by the members in the Crown and Central Agencies committees to put questions to the responsible individuals for those Crown corporations.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, would any of your officials have an explanation for the Saskatchewan Auto Fund numbers that you supply on page 77?

I note that for the estimate for the year that just ended, the forecast was \$22 million of a deficit. The end result at March 31 was forecast to be an \$11 million profit. So things changed in the Auto Fund to an expected 22 million loss, to an \$11 million profit — obviously about a \$33 million net change. And now we're forecasting, or you are forecasting that we will again have a loss of \$20 million approximately — 19.8 I believe is the real number — in the Saskatchewan Auto Fund.

We recall not too long ago — about a week and a half ago, I believe — that SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) has announced a increase in registration fees that would result in, I think the estimate was, \$4.5 million of additional revenue would be obtained by the changes and the increases to all of the registration fees.

Can you indicate why we now expect to see a \$30 million change in the net position of the Saskatchewan Auto Fund?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, as near as we can determine, the improvement during the course of the last fiscal year in the Auto Fund reflected a one-time recognition of a new actuarial estimate with respect to unpaid injury claims for prior years.

But the budget for the coming year, we're not really clear on. It appears that it's an improvement from the budget from the

previous year, but we're not clear on that and again that's a question that should be directed to the responsible people. It doesn't have anything to do with our fees or anything like that. But this is a question that should be put to the people responsible. It's a good question but we don't have the answer here.

Mr. Krawetz: — I appreciate that response, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I'd ask one of your officials to contact the appropriate department and to get an explanation if they could to myself, as official opposition critic, as to why we expect a \$19 million loss versus an ending of 11. And the minister is acknowledging that that's going to take place, and I thank him for that.

Mr. Minister, Workers' Compensation Board, on that same page, is indicating that while having had . . . just ended with a nearly \$8 million deficit is going to project a \$10 million deficit. And I notice, Mr. Minister, in the auditor's reports of the last number of years, that going back to March 31 of the previous year, Workers' Compensation Board was indicated here that the net loss for that year was \$93 million.

And I recall the questions in the legislature — and I'm sure you do as well, Mr. Minister — where the minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board said, this is a one-time thing. We have had a problem with the stock and investments, and there was a tremendous change in the actuarial values of assets. And that was going to be a one-year type of situation.

And I think everyone realizes that assets and pension . . . pension assets as well as investment have changed dramatically. And in fact we're seeing them, we're seeing them respond very positively.

Yet Workers' Compensation Board is planning to use \$10 million of taxpayers' money — additional taxpayers' money because it's not going to be contributing any profit at all to whole scheme of running this province. It's going to in fact ask for \$10 million increase in the debt because it's going to operate on a \$10 million loss. Has Workers' Compensation Board officials conveyed to you why their fiscal plan for 2004-2005 is a deficit plan?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, we cannot provide a clear, substantial response to the member's question with respect to the Workers' Compensation Board.

I would point out though that this board does not in any way use funds from the taxpayers. This is a board that is funded through premiums from employers. And it's possible that in their operations that, from time to time, that they will have deficits, either because some of their interest earnings are down, or for other reasons because their claims may go up relative to their assumptions. But at the end of the day, the taxpayers are never called upon to provide funding to the Workers' Compensation Board to compensate for losses that they may have at any one time. This is, any losses that they have are intended by them to be covered by their premiums over a period of time.

But we will undertake to have people from the Workers' Compensation Board contact the member and to provide him with an explanation of the figures that are here in the summary financial plan. But we are simply not in a position . . . Neither

would I want to speculate and then find out that my speculation might have been in error about the activities of the Workers' Compensation Board.

But again generally speaking, as with crop insurance, you may have a loss in one year, but in the long run we expect those who provide the funding for those entities to cover those losses. And that would be the case with respect to Workers' Compensation as well.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And I appreciate the fact, Mr. Minister, that you're going to use other officials to help educate, not only the province, but myself.

Mr. Minister, and I want the Workers' Compensation Board officials to explain to me when we see the auditor's report and we see that the ending position for retained earnings prior to the loss of 93 million was 49.9 million, leaving a deficit position in the Workers' Compensation Board of 43 million as of March 31 last year. Then you . . . I note in your document that there is a \$7.8 million deficit projected for last year's operations.

I would believe then, and the question that I'm asking is, would your officials explain to me, then will the net position — the deficit position — of the Workers' Compensation Board, which was at \$43.4 million on March 31 of '03, will that be changed by a further 7.8 million for the year that just ended on March 31 of 2004 and an additional 10 million for this coming year? Those are the questions that I ask, and I know that you will see to it that your officials produce that.

Mr. Minister, a very general question now. When we looked at the new system that we were going to move . . . And by the way, I'd like to extend to you and to your officials . . . Mr. Paton and Mr. Bayda and Mr. Styles made a presentation to our caucus and to . . . many of our members were in attendance, to try to get a better understanding of what we were going to be seeing for the first time in the province. And it was very helpful, and I want to thank your officials for doing that.

The comment that was made though is, when we look at the whole economic picture of Saskatchewan, it's not just a position of looking at the GRF (General Revenue Fund), or it's not just looking at the pages 76 and 77. But you always have to turn to net debt, if I can remember Mr. Paton's comment, that net debt was the important number to look at just how are things changing as we look at amortization of assets.

(11:30)

So, Mr. Minister, could you explain to the people of the province, when you have a deficit position of 283.8 million at the end of your document on page 77 and then of course when you look at net debt, that number is now changed to 312 million. Could you explain how amortization has now come into play for assets and how it affects the end deficit position for the upcoming year.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, again the surplus or rather the deficit at the end of . . . estimated 2004 on a summary basis and which includes the not-for-profit insurance organizations, is \$283.8 million. The net debt makes an allowance then of approximately \$30 million for borrowing that

we are doing to support capital in the province. And that then increases the, like the net debt by 312 from 283. And that's generally the reason for the difference.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, could you indicate which departments, which capital expenditures of which departments are being affected by the new amortization plan that we are following in the province of Saskatchewan from now on?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, I would refer the member to page 18 of the Estimates book for the current year. And the Estimates book provides a schedule of capital activities for the General Revenue Fund entities. And most of the allowances there are in the area of Highways and Transportation.

But we also make an allowance on the net debt for capital in the Crowns and other sectors such as SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation), but we would not have the details on those here. But the details for the General Revenue Fund and those that have to be voted by the members of the Legislative Assembly, those are on page 18 of the Estimates book.

And by and large most of the capital expenditures there are with respect to the Department of Highways and Transportation.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, while today's interim supply is dealing with one-twelfth, I note that in the specific estimates of the Department of Health, I believe there is \$27 million allocated for capital which is the same number as was allocated before in last year's budget. Is the one-twelfth request . . . will that include capital projects?

We know that there are many communities, many health authorities that are looking forward to capital investments. When will the department, or is the department already allocating the capital in this one-twelfth request? Or will there be additional need for capital monies to be expended through regional authorities?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — The one-twelfth provision also includes one-twelfth for capital in the budget.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, will the Minister of Health be announcing, as does the Minister of Learning in the K to 12 structure or in the K to 12 system through the facilities department, will they be announcing the capital projects for the upcoming budget for all of Saskatchewan? Will we be seeing a list, or can you provide that list for us right now?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, we do not have the list of the capital projects and their various stages of development with us. Those are individual announcements that will be made by the Minister of Health as time goes along.

The various health authorities and those that are responsible for capital development, they'll be in various stages of development as they go along. And I guess at the appropriate stage the Minister of Health and the ministers of Education will be making announcements, but we don't have the details on

their capital projects with us.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I'm going to turn to a specific question now, and that's dealing more so with the questions that have been raised in this Assembly around the funding that comes to the province of Saskatchewan from the federal government and the profits that you recognize.

My first question though deals with the Fiscal Stabilization Fund or as the opposition refers to it, as a line of credit. And we have a difference of opinion as to whether that fund has any money. But, Mr. Minister, in your mid-year report — I believe the first document that you were responsible for when you became Finance minister — on page 10 of that document, there was a paragraph that described the acquisition of \$79.3 million from the federal government. It was the transfer of monies from the federal government for the First Ministers' Accord and they were monies that were allocated for subsequent years. As a province, Saskatchewan was sort of taking its advance and being able to gain that entire \$79.3 million.

Mr. Minister, in that mid-year report, you stated that the monies were going to be placed into the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Yet, Mr. Minister, you know, as a tracking of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, you indicated that the opening balance for the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, or line of credit, was going to be \$577 million. And in the document that you presented on March 31, on page 12 you said that the situation remained the same — \$577 million. Yet your mid-year report stated very clearly that the monies obtained from the federal government for years not 2003-2004, that that money was going to be placed in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

Can you tell me whether the \$79 million was received by the treasury of Saskatchewan? And secondly, where did the \$79.3 million get deposited?

Were there changes made to individual health authority expenditures? Were the boards, the health authority boards, were their estimates increased to the sum of \$79.3 million or, as you indicate, I believe in the summary document, you talk about bringing the money back for subsequent years.

We need to have a clear explanation about the federal transfer of \$79.3 million for health purposes. Was it spent, is it being spent, or will it be spent in future years?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, we are booking, as a deposit to our Fiscal Stabilization Fund, the full amount \$79.3 million in the '03-04 fiscal year. And we project expenditures in this coming budget or withdrawals from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund of \$47.7 million and put that towards the purposes for which it was intended.

And in the '05-06 fiscal year, we project the remaining withdrawal of \$31.6 million to support these health initiatives. So we're taking it in as revenue in '03-04 and then expensing that this year and next year.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Minister, I don't understand, and I'd like you to explain or your officials to explain. On page 12 you indicate that the opening balance of the fund is \$577 million —

that's the line of credit. You indicate that to balance the General Revenue Fund you will require \$275.4 million. It does not talk about 79.3 additional millions of dollars coming in as a revenue. Or are you saying that the 275's been lowered to that amount because it already includes the credit? That's not explained and I think we need some clarification on that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, the net transfer to the GRF at the end of the fiscal year is \$275.4 million. And that then reflects a deposit of the \$79.3 million from the health renewal funding.

(11:45)

Mr. Krawetz: — Okay then, Mr. Minister, thank you very much. But I'll try to simplify that for myself and for people.

What you're saying then is that you received a \$79.3 million advance of federal dollars. And you've applied it to debt by placing it in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund so that you didn't have to draw down the Fiscal Stabilization Fund line of credit by an additional \$79.3 million. It in fact is \$275.4 million. I think that that's what you've just indicated.

You also indicated that for this year where you have indicated that a \$158.1 million of additional transfer from the line of credit is going to be needed, that you had a breakdown of that. You said that some of that is for health.

Would you be able to provide then the complete breakdown as to where you're seeing this \$158.1 million? Does it contain additional credits that the province of Saskatchewan has received maybe for agriculture or for health or for any other departments? Are there additional monies that have been set aside that you're now pulling into the revenue picture by taking additional monies out of the line of credit?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, I might say that what we're doing here is using the Fiscal Stabilization Fund to deal with a peculiar problem presented by the federal government where they want to expend . . . expense all of the money that they're putting into what's called a diagnostic medical equipment fund; they want to expense that all in one year. But we recognize that this is something that has to be expended by us over a couple of years because it makes sense to do that.

So we took the money they provided for us in '03-04, use our Fiscal Stabilization Fund, if you like, the health renewal funding section of that, to receive the transfers from the federal government. We are now expending those over the course of this fiscal year and next fiscal year. The net transfer to the GRF this year from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund is, as you know, is \$158.1 million — \$47.7 million of that then is the funds that we set aside for the diagnostic medical equipment fund. And next year we propose to set aside or withdraw from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund the remaining \$31.6 million for . . . in recognition of that fund.

The federal government sometimes says look, here we have the money, take the money. But you know, expending this money over . . . generally you do that over a period of time. You can't just say, well we've got the money today; we can expend it

today. So we are using the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, if you like, to allow us to expense those funds in a more appropriate fashion.

And so for this year, our net transfer to the General Revenue Fund from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund is \$158.1 million — \$47.7 million of that is the allocation for the diagnostic medical equipment fund. Thank you.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you for clarifying that, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, much was made of the federal government's surplus, or anticipated surplus, at year end, March 31, 2004. And the Finance minister, Mr. Goodale, made I believe a pretty strong point of telling everyone that indeed there was more than \$2 billion worth of surplus, and therefore \$2 billion was . . . would be distributed to all provinces, I guess proportionately. I think Saskatchewan's share, roughly being 3 per cent of that, was going to translate into about \$60 million.

Mr. Minister, is that \$60 million a revenue that is showing in the budget of '03-04 — the one that just ended? Or is it revenue that we would be seeing in the health transfer? Where is the additional \$60 million that Saskatchewan would be receiving as a result of the \$2 billion federal surplus?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — I would refer the member to page 14, the schedule of revenue in the Estimates document. And if you go to the transfers from the Government of Canada and the estimated transfers for the Canada Health and Social Transfer and then the forecast transfer, the allowance for our share of the \$2 billion then is in the forecast '03-04 transfer from the . . . or the Canada Health and Social Transfer from the Government of Canada.

That was a source of some concern for us, that we had the Prime Minister and other people at the federal level signalling that this was . . . these were funds that were going to be made available to us for the current fiscal year. But at the end of the day to take into account, you know, generally accepted accounting principles, we have had to incorporate that money and put it as a federal transfer in '03-04.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Minister, then what I'm hearing from you then is that the \$750.7 million of the forecast revenue from the health and social transfer contained the \$60 million that we're being promised as a province. And I see acknowledgement of that so I'll accept that.

Now, Mr. Minister, there are two . . . For the first time, the federal government transfers in health and social, in the area of health and social transfer are being divided, and now we see a health transfer and we see a separate line item for the social transfer.

If I add the two numbers that you have in your document, Mr. Minister, I see a number of about \$678 million and the previous revenue that we obtained for health and social was \$750 million. We see a significant drop. Is that primarily due to the \$60 million that was going to be a one-time fund that Saskatchewan was going to receive? Or does population loss have anything to do with the numbers in the health transfer and in the social transfer?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, you'll see that the Canada Health and Social Transfer is now broken down into the health transfer and a separate social transfer. When you add those two together, you get a figure that's more or less equal to the difference in the 62.9 million that we received last year from the federal government as our share of the \$2 billion health additional allowance. And so that largely accounts for the difference.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Minister, I'm not you know looking at being picky, but 678 million revenue expected for this year, last year 750. That's a difference of what — 72 million, okay.

So there is a . . . If you take the 62 million that you just said — fine, we understand that. That's 10 million. Is the \$10 million decline due to population drop, or is it a change in the dollars per person that the federal government is transferring to us? Why did we drop \$10 million comparing you know equal to equal? And I'll use my old school term, apples to apples, Mr. Minister. Why have we dropped 10 million bucks?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, the figure that we have, the difference like something less than \$10 million, would reflect the reduction in entitlement from the federal government on account of the new census figures for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, you know, we can continue this discussion for a long time. And I know we are going to be talking about Interim Supply again and we'll have that opportunity to look at specifics and, you know, questions around equalization formula and what's wrong with it and why Saskatchewan needs to move forward. So we are going to have that opportunity again.

As you've indicated, this is an interim supply request of one-twelfth of the operation. And we need to move forward to ensure that school boards and hospital boards and any other agency receiving monies for the month of April will have that in place.

And I would conclude my questions, Mr. Minister, by just asking . . . And your officials have been very helpful in years past. The category of transfers from the Government of Canada, there is that category called other. And I know it includes just a huge number of different departments that receive various monies from the federal government. And your officials have provided a breakdown of that on a sheet of paper to me in days following — not today.

So I'd ask if you would indicate to your officials if they could supply me . . . Rather than a formal written request, I'd make a verbal request of a breakdown of that category of other, \$157.8 million that is received from the . . . that is anticipated to be received from the federal government for the various departments. Would you see that your officials supply that to me?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, yes we will. We'll provide that information to the member.

The Chair: — The motion before the committee is no. 1:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$510,262,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 2005.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — Are we agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That is carried. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, I move no. 2:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain changes and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005, the sum of \$510,262,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

(12:00)

The Chair: — No. 2:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005, the sum of \$510,262,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

Is the committee ready for the question? Is this agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That is carried. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, I move that the committee rise, and that the Chair report that the committee has agreed to certain resolutions, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Chair: — The minister has moved that the committee rise, and that the Chair report that the committee has agreed to certain resolutions, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That is carried.

FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of Committees.

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Finance has agreed to certain resolutions, has instructed me to report the same, and to ask for leave to sit again.

The Speaker: — When shall the resolutions be read the first time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

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

resolutions be now read the first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that the resolutions be now read the first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Motion agreed to and the resolutions read a first and second time.

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Later this day, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Later today.

I recognize the Minister of Finance.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move . . . by leave of the Assembly, I move that Bill No. 18, The Appropriation Act, 2004 (No. 1) be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 18, The Appropriation Act, 2004 (No. 1) be now introduced and read the first time. Is leave of the Assembly granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. 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.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill read a first time.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly and under rule 57(2), I move that the Bill be now read a second and third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has once again requested leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 18, The Appropriation Act 2004 (No. 1) be now read a second and third time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second and third reading of this Bill.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill read a second and third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, I'm advised that Her Honour is here for Royal Assent.

ROYAL ASSENT

At 12:06 Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took her seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bill.

The Speaker: — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly accorded the supplies required to enable the government to defray the expenses of the public service.

In the name of the Assembly I present to Your Honour:

Bill No. 18 - An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Year ending on March 31, 2005

to which I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

Her Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I thank the Legislative Assembly, accept their benevolence, and assent to this Bill.

Her Honour retired from the Chamber at 12:08.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, it's the first weekend in April, it's a weekend of opportunity and spring, and I wish all the members a great weekend.

Having said that, I move the House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

The Assembly adjourned at 12:09.

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CABINET MINISTERS

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Premier

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

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

Hon. B. Belanger
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