



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

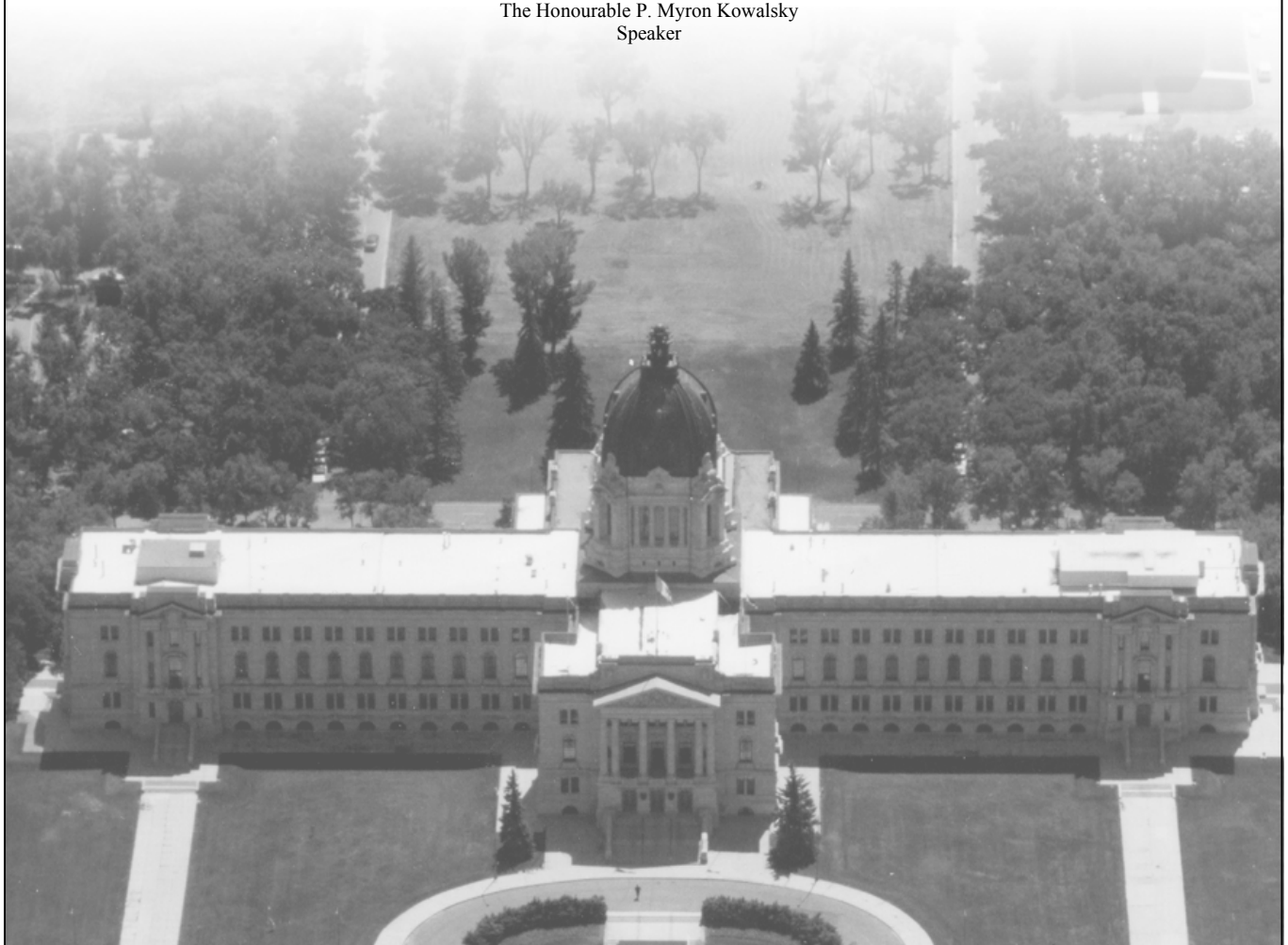
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you are probably aware the issue of forced amalgamation of school districts is a hot topic in the Southwest. I present this petition on behalf of constituents of Cypress Hills.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to reverse the decision to force the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and continue reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these three pages of petitions are signed by individuals from the communities of Burstall, Richmond and Mendham. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by residents of the province of Saskatchewan who are concerned that their primary agriculture support program, CAIS (Canadian agricultural income stabilization), is not fully meeting their needs and the prayer of this petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the CAIS program receives adequate provincial funding, the funding formula is changed to ensure equal access to compensation, and to contribute funds to the latest BSE assistance package released by the federal government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from the communities of Consul and Robsart. And I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present on behalf of farmers to do with the CAIS program and the underfunding by the provincial government. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure the CAIS program receives adequate provincial funding, the funding formula is changed to ensure equal access to compensation, and to

contribute funds to the latest BSE assistance package released by the federal government.

The signators, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Weyburn, Fillmore, Creelman, Montmartre, Osage, and Stoughton. I so present.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with this NDP (New Democratic Party) government's lack of commitment to the CAIS program. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the CAIS program receives adequate provincial funding, the funding formula is changed to ensure equal access to compensation, and to contribute funds to the latest BSE assistance package released by the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Gull Lake, Tompkins, Hazlet, and Webb, Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present but on behalf of residents around the Claybank area regarding their brick plant. The petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reconsider its decision to reduce funding to the Claybank Brick Plant.

Whereas in duty bound . . . and as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this . . . petitions are signed by people from Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Stony Beach, Briercrest, and Claybank. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of people from my constituency who have deep concerns over the CAIS program. 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 action to ensure that the CAIS program receives adequate provincial funding, the funding formula is changed to ensure equal access to compensation, and to contribute funds to the latest BSE assistance package released by the federal government.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by people from Estevan, Torquay, and Macoun. I so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy who have been very concerned for several years about the deplorable state of Highway 35 south of Weyburn, but are even more concerned at this time because the NDP have chosen to turn the highway back to gravel. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to make the necessary repairs to Highway 35 north from the United States border in order to prevent injury or loss of life and to prevent the loss of economic opportunity in the area.

And these petitions are signed, Mr. Speaker, by several residents from many communities across Saskatchewan, as well as from several of the United States.

I so present.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise with a petition from citizens in the Southwest that are extremely concerned over the forced amalgamation of the school divisions. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to reverse the decision to force the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and continue reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by good citizens of Lafleche and Woodrow.

I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here calling on the government to repair and resurface Highway 15.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that this portion of No. 15 Highway be repaired and resurfaced immediately so as to remove the safety hazards to all motorists who rely on this vital road for transportation and economic purposes.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Semans and Raymore. I so

present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition to revisit the effects of the TransGas Asquith natural gas storage project. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately address the concerns of all individuals affected by this project, pay 100 per cent of the costs involved to rectify disruptions to water supplies, produce an environment assessment study encompassing a larger area outside the scope of the project, disclose the project's long-term effects on these areas, and consider alternative sources of water for the project.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Delisle, Grandora, Asquith, Arelee, Vanscoy.

I so present.

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

Mr. Chisholm: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition regarding the cutback in health services in the Manitou health district.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take necessary steps to increase funding in light of the recent federal health care agreement and reconsider its decisions that have reduced service in the Manitou health centre.

And as is duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have 50 signatures here from people from Neilburg and Marsden area.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Assembly today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan concerned with the reduction of health care services in rural Saskatchewan.

The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take necessary steps to increase funding in light of the recent federal health care agreement, and reconsider its decisions that have reduced health service at the Manitou Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed all by the good folks from Neilburg, Saskatchewan. 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 amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan, that's sessional papers 637.

A petition concerning provincial funding for the latest BSE assistance package offered by the federal government, that's sessional paper 638.

A petition concerning repair and resurfacing of Highway 58, sessional paper 639.

A petition concerning individuals affected by TransGas' Asquith natural gas storage project, that's sessional paper 640.

An addendum to previously tabled sessional paper no. 180.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I presented some questions yesterday and I have more questions today. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order, please. I wonder if the member could be assisted by some other members so that he wouldn't be breaking the rule on props and displays. Perhaps other members could hold these petitions for him and we'll put the prop away. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 66 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Crown Management Board: what process has been undertaken to ensure Mr. Tom Waller is independent of his former law firm, Olive Waller Zinkhan & Waller, and has he or was he required to dispose of his partnership units in this firm prior to assuming his position as president and CEO of Crown Management Board; and if so, when did this occur?

To the Minister Responsible for Crown Management Board . . . Pardon me, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 66 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Crown Management Board: is Crown Management Board President Tom Waller still a partner in the law firm Olive Waller Zinkhan & Waller? If so, what percentage share does he own in this law firm? Does the value of Mr. Waller's partnerships in the law firm increase when the firm has retained earnings? If Mr. Waller is no longer a partner, when and under what terms was he bought out? Is Mr. Waller receiving any form of payment from Olive Waller Zinkhan & Waller in 2004?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on day no. 66 I shall ask the government the following question:

To the Premier: what members or former members of the law firm Oliver Waller Zinkhan & Waller have been appointed to any Saskatchewan government board agency, Crown advisory position, or any other government position?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on day no. 66 I shall ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Crown Management Board: how much money did Crown Management Board pay to the law firm Olive Waller Zinkhan & Waller for services in 2004? As well, what services and how many hours of services were provided to Crown Management Board by the law firm Olive Waller Zinkhan & Waller during 2004?

I have the same question, Mr. Speaker, for the years 2003, 2002, and the year 2000. And, Mr. Speaker, I can save my friends opposite some considerable time because I have the same set of questions which I won't read, which I will table, regarding every other Crown corporation for the years 2004, 2003, 2002, 2001, and 2000, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 66 ask the government the following question:

To the Premier: how much money did Executive Council pay to the law firm Oliver Waller Zinkhan & Waller for services in 2004-2005? As well, what services and how many hours of services were provided to Executive Council by the law firm Olive Waller Zinkhan & Waller during 2004-2005?

Mr. Speaker, I have the same questions for the years 2000-2001, for the years 2001-2002, for the years 2002-2003, and the years 2003-2004.

And, Mr. Speaker, once again the same question . . . to save time in the House I will have the same questions that I'm tabling today for all other government departments for the same years.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 66 ask the government the following question:

To the Health minister: how much money did the Five Hills Health Authority pay to the law firm Olive Waller Zinkhan & Waller for services in fiscal year 2003-2004? As well, what services and how many hours of services were provided to the Five Hills Health Authority by the law firm Olive Waller Zinkhan & Waller during the fiscal year 2003-2004?

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question about all of the health authorities in the province.

(13:45)

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the government's answers; and,

Mr. Speaker, for today that's all the questions I have.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a number of people in your gallery today. I would like to welcome our friends from the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. Joining us today, President Neal Hardy, Executive Director Ken Engel, and board member, Don Taylor. I also want to introduce and pleased to welcome today from the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, President Don Schlosser; vice-president for towns, the mayor of Dalmeny, Allan Earle; Executive Director Keith Schneider; and Andrew Rathwell, manager of communications services for SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association).

Mr. Speaker, Government Relations has had a very challenging number of issues to work on this year and we are extremely pleased to have developed a very good working relationship with our municipal partners. It is our intention to continue to work with them on these challenging issues and I thank them for their interest and in their attendance here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the minister today in welcoming Neal and Don, Don Taylor and all the officials from SUMA and SARM and staff that are here today. And the minister was right, Mr. Speaker. They have had a number of challenges with this government and I think they're hoping some of them will be resolved today. So I hope everyone would join with me in welcoming them also here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Meadow Lake.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to welcome to the legislature and introduce to my colleagues and members opposite and as well yourself, Mr. Speaker, four individuals from the constituency of Meadow Lake here representing the Meadow Lake School Division. I'd like to introduce in your gallery, first of all on your left, Mr. Speaker, is Edna Brander, Marilyn Wiklund, Barb Seymour, and Pam Dallyn. If you please join with me in welcoming them here to the legislature today, I would be most pleased. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all I would like to point out that in your gallery we have Winston McKay. Winston is well known in northern Saskatchewan, also

in Prince Albert and Saskatoon.

Winston was the Saskatchewan Party candidate in the Cumberland riding in the last election. And if Winston McKay . . . or if the Saskatchewan Party is able to increase its votes the way Winston increased the 2003 numbers over the 1999 numbers, it is an absolute certainty that the Saskatchewan Party will be represented in the Cumberland riding. And that is due to the fine reputation, character, and work of Winston McKay, and I'd like you to welcome him to the House here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — And if I might, Mr. Speaker, I'd also to welcome a number of students sitting in the gallery on the east side from the fine community of Plenty, Saskatchewan, from the North West Central School in Plenty. There are a delegation of 45 students from grades 9, 10, 11, and 12, and they are accompanied by teachers, Cindy Thomson, Rebecca Robertson, and Peter Filipowich.

And, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet with the students just prior to the opening of today's proceedings, and they had a lot of questions. Most of them had to do with numbers, and I guess that's appropriate for people coming from a community called Plenty. They wanted to know about BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) compensation. They wanted to know about school board amalgamation. They wanted to know about MLAs' (Member of the Legislative Assembly) salaries. And they even wanted to know how old their member was, and I assured them that there was quite a bit of tread left on the tires.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members to welcome this fine group of students from Plenty, Saskatchewan to our Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the Assembly, I would like to introduce a guest sitting in your gallery that is visiting us from the US (United States). This young lady is very involved with the Midwest Legislative Conference and I'm sure is here as part of those duties. Ms. Quinn Cheney — forgot your last name for a second there — works for the Canadian consulate in Minneapolis. And I ask everybody to welcome her here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — I just want to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Winston McKay. For sure he was my opposition and I'm glad I'm here; you're up there. But I still want to welcome you to the House and you visiting us.

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

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through the House I would like to introduce my uncle sitting in your gallery, Mr. Harvie Webster, from here in Regina. I hope that he enjoys the proceedings here today. I think he has been here a few times and he always finds it quite entertaining. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to all members, through you, a visitor to our legislature this afternoon — Mr. Wayne Harrison, who is here from Tisdale. He's visiting Executive Council today. And I want us all to welcome him here to the Chamber.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Dr. Rajendra Sharma Receives Saskatchewan Order of Merit

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to honour a special individual from my constituency, Dr. Rajendra Sharma. Dr. Sharma will be invested with the Saskatchewan Order of Merit this evening.

Dr. Sharma came to us from India in 1976 after making milestone discoveries at both the University of Manitoba and the University of Calgary. Dr. Sharma joined the department of pathology in the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan in 1991. He is also a research scientist in the cancer research centre at the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.

Dr. Sharma excels in the area of scientific innovation and original procedures. He is internationally recognized as a dedicated and outstanding scientist who conducts cutting-edge research. His work has been published in 162 journals and books.

One of the reasons that Dr. Sharma's work is so important is that he studies biochemical regulatory mechanisms in areas involving the cardiovascular system, certain brain tumours, and, more recently, colorectal cancer. His efforts in training and assisting other brilliant students may one day lead us to the cure for cancer.

Dr. Sharma was recognized this spring for his contribution to research and scholarly activities with an earned Doctor of Science degree from the University of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in thanking Dr. Rajendra Sharma for his contribution in the field of medicine and congratulate him on receiving the Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Anniversary of the Death of Louis Riel

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. One hundred and nineteen years ago today, Métis leader Louis Riel was executed for his role in the northwest resistance of 1885.

Métis people have played an integral role in the formation and the development of Western Canada and in Saskatchewan, and Riel played a key role in ensuring Métis people were heard and respected.

Mr. Speaker, Riel led the people in the Red River resistance of 1869 that resulted in the creation of the province of Manitoba, and is so recognized as a father of confederation. And when the Métis way of life was threatened once again in the Northwest, in what is now called Saskatchewan, he again responded to his call of his people.

Some say Riel was a man of controversy. And while we can argue about the man, we cannot deny the very significant place he holds in Western Canadian history.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's proud of the role Métis people played and continue to play in our history. We support Métis people's constitutional rights and we work with Métis people to see their success in the future.

Mr. Speaker, today, the anniversary of Riel's death, is a good day to reflect on the past and to chart a course for the future, to reflect on our relationships and the work that must be done to ensure that Métis people in Saskatchewan have the same wide open future that all Saskatchewan people enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, it is said that just before Riel was hanged, a guard asked him for a souvenir. And Riel replied, I have nothing but my heart and I've given it long ago to my country — and that he did, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Louis Riel Day

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the members opposite on recognition of Louis Riel Day. We recognize it was on this day in 1885 that Louis Riel was hanged for treason in Regina. In Saskatchewan the memory of Louis Riel is commemorated in many ways. These include events like Louis Riel relay races, the renaming of Highway 11 to Louis Riel Trail. Many streets and avenues bear his name. As well, there is a school division in Manitoba and Place Riel on the University of Saskatchewan campus.

Louis Riel Day has become a day of pride for members of the Métis nation as well as a day for all Saskatchewan citizens to reflect on our history, heritage, and culture. The tragic history

has been replaced with a sober reflection and a recognition of the need for all citizens to use our cultural heritage as a source of pride rather than a source of divisiveness. We also recognize the need, Mr. Speaker, to continue our efforts to address appropriately and deal with the rights of Métis citizens as well as all citizens.

I would ask all members to take some time this week to reflect on Louis Riel's life, past, and his history. And I would ask them now to, all members to join with me in recognizing Louis Riel Day.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Tommy Douglas Nominated Greatest Canadian

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, T.C. "Tommy" Douglas, church minister, great Scot, Member of Parliament, and Saskatchewan's longest-serving and best-loved premier has been nominated and could very well be voted the greatest Canadian on the television show of the same name, currently airing on CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation). I know it's just a television show, but I don't think anyone in this Assembly will be surprised when I emphatically state that he should win hands down, no question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCall: — Somebody once said that Tommy Douglas was a humanitarian first and a politician second, and I think that's right. His humanitarian values are reflected in public policies that the people of Saskatchewan and of Canada benefit from every day.

Many of the things that we take for granted — things like social welfare, universal medicare, family allowance, and public automobile insurance — were considered radical concepts in their day. And we would likely not have had them if Douglas hadn't been a leader in the fights to put those policies into action.

Tommy Douglas was humorous, compassionate, and as tough as nails. And it was that toughness mixed with a razor-sharp sense of right and wrong that enabled him, even in the face of powerful, at times almost overwhelming opposition, to pursue his political and humanitarian agenda on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan and of Canada.

The progress made by Tommy Douglas in putting humanity first made him a Canadian icon. And I'm very proud to be from a province and a tradition that can call him one of our own. I'd urge all members and the people of this province to vote what we already know — to make Tommy Douglas the greatest Canadian. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Suzanne Claire Receives Saskatchewan Order of Merit

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to talk to you about a remarkable achievement of one of my constituents, Suzanne Claire of Dundurn. Today Suzanne will receive the Saskatchewan Order of Merit for a long and distinguished record, volunteer of community social service.

Suzanne Claire began her commitment to helping others in need back in the 1960s as a freelance paralegal in Toronto. In 1967 she became the first female insurance underwriter with Mutual Life of Canada. At that time she also volunteered up to three nights a week at the pediatric ward of the Mount Sinai Hospital. She is a founder and president of the Community Alive, a non-profit group that has helped to donate food to over 1 million people in Saskatoon over the past eight-year period.

She is currently the administrator of the Cedar Lodge hotel and convention centre near Dundurn, overlooking Blackstrap Lake. The mandate of this facility is to generate funds to help people recover from substance abuse. Everyone who serves this hotel is a volunteer who is highly motivated by Suzanne's shining example of energetic community assistance.

Suzanne Claire is a most worthy recipient of the Saskatchewan Order of Merit. I would like to offer my personal congratulations and ask all members of the Assembly, join me in congratulating this noble Saskatchewan lady.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

(14:00)

Grand Opening of the Canadian Light Source Synchrotron

Mr. Adley: — Mr. Speaker, contrary to some reports, the bright and brilliant light that has recently been shining from the Saskatoon Sutherland constituency is not emanating from the MLA, but rather from the newly opened Canada light synchrotron.

Mr. Speaker, over the course of the month of October, a series of events were held to mark and to celebrate the official opening of the Canadian Light Source synchrotron located at the University of Saskatchewan in my Saskatoon Sutherland constituency.

The importance of this facility to the country, to the province, the city, and the University of Saskatchewan cannot be overemphasized. The synchrotron is one of the premier research facilities in the world, and new applications are being found for it all the time. It has projected uses in diverse fields such as nano-technology, protein crystallography, bio-medical imaging, and heavy metal contaminant control. Even forensic scientists and historians will have uses for it.

Mr. Speaker, the synchrotron provides a focus for scientific activity and applied economics that without doubt is going to have an extraordinary impact on this province. Not only will it

attract scientists, industry, and researchers to Saskatchewan, but it will also help provide a stimulus for Saskatchewan young people who choose to pursue careers in science right here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating all those involved in the development of this extraordinary national science project. I'm proud to represent the constituency that some have begun to call Saskatoon synchrotron. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Recognition of Kindersley Sports Legend

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to recognize a Kindersley sports legend, Mr. Chuck Newmeyer. Mr. Newmeyer joined the Kindersley Klippers hockey team in 1955 as their goalie, and in his time with the Klippers he backed them through four league championships and seven provincial titles.

At the Klippers season opener a few weeks ago, they retired the number 1 jersey worn by the former goaltender. This was a first for the hockey club, and they marked the occasion with a ceremony prior to the opening faceoff, and consequently the Klippers won the game that evening against Oyen, 6-1.

The MC (master of ceremonies) for the event said that Mr. Newmeyer set and maintained the standard to which goaltenders are measured by even today in Kindersley. And that is not only his goaltending abilities and achievements that he is admired for, but also because of his commitment to his family and community. Saskatchewan has raised many great athletes and Mr. Newmeyer is proof of this. We have a strong tradition of sportsmanship, coupled with team spirit, that we are very proud to boast of in this province.

Please join with me in congratulating Mr. Newmeyer on this momentous occasion, and in doing so we applaud all of Saskatchewan's athletes, past and present, for their determination, hard work, and effort in maintaining a high standard of sportsmanship in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Commitments Made During Election Campaign

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this spring, the people of the province, we in this Assembly watched the Premier of Saskatchewan break every single promise he made in the election campaign last year. He promised to cut taxes, Mr. Speaker, and he raised taxes. He promised to index income tax, and in the budget, he de-indexed income tax. He promised the lowest utility rates in Canada and, Mr. Speaker, he increased SaskPower rates.

He asked for changes to the farm safety net, to the CAIS program. We supported the government in their request for

those changes. He received those changes from the federal government, and he refuses to fund those changes for Saskatchewan farm families, Mr. Speaker.

We now know, Mr. Speaker, that this government, through no effort of its own, has received some windfall revenue. They've got perhaps some hundreds of millions in resource revenue, and because of the federal government, they're going to get equalization revenue, Mr. Speaker.

So the question to the Premier is this. Without any excuses, can Saskatchewan people now expect the Premier to be taken for his word?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, those who watch political affairs in this province find it very interesting because, during the spring Assembly, we all remember the Leader of the Opposition accusing myself and the government of breaking promises. Then he walks into the fall sitting of the session and says to me, Mr. Premier, he says to me, you should break your promises. He says we should break our promises on the lowest cost bundle utility.

Well let me say this, Mr. Speaker, on that promise — on the promise of the lowest cost bundle of utilities — we will keep that promise, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, in terms of the income tax issue that he raises, he should just . . . ought to stand by for the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, we promised to the people of Saskatchewan four major promises in the election. We promised to build a prosperous and a green economy. Mr. Speaker, as a result of this government's planning over the last number of years, as a result of the partnership of Saskatchewan people and the labours of Saskatchewan people, we today enjoy a prosperous economy — a prosperous economy that has made Saskatchewan a have province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you'll remember that every time this spring when we ask the Premier why he was unable to keep his promises, why he would refuse to keep the promises he made to get elected last November, he blamed equalization. He blamed everything on equalization. He said, Mr. Speaker, that he had to increase the PST even though he campaigned on lower taxes because of equalization.

He said he couldn't support farm families through CAIS. He couldn't live up to his commitment to CAIS, the farm safety net, because of equalization. He levied a wiener roast tax in the province of Saskatchewan. He blamed equalization for that.

Well now the equalization situation has been addressed. It's been addressed by the federal government. He is out of excuses for these promises. On the question of the PST, for example, on the question of CAIS, is the Premier now prepared to keep his promises to the people of the province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, during the spring session to which the Leader of the Opposition so often wants to refer now, during this spring session — in fact on Wednesday, June 2004; Wednesday, June 9, 2004 — the Leader of the Opposition published a press release, and this is what he said:

Saskatchewan could . . . (become) a "have province" if . . . (we) cut taxes, stopped competing with the private sector and reformed its restrictive labour laws, says . . . Party Leader Brad Wall.

That's what he said.

Well I'll tell you what. I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker. We didn't have to have massive tax giveaways to the rich. We didn't have to destroy the rights of working people in this province to become a have . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. If . . . Order, please. If members, if members find it difficult to hear, it's probably because everybody's talking at once. Now order, please. I recognize the Premier. Thirty seconds.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition's prescription for becoming a have province was tax giveaways to the rich, destroy the protections for working men and women, and stop investing in the Saskatchewan economy. That was his prescription. He said we'd become a have province.

Well I want to inform the Leader of the Opposition today, we are a have province today. We were a have province last year. We were a have province the year before that because of the planning and the building of this government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the Premier, the Premier has to admit to the people of the province that his plan to become a have province is based on the price of oil — and only on the price of oil — because when he came back from Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, when that Premier came back from Ottawa and was asked this question about our have status or . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please, members. Once again, let's allow the question to be put. The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — He came back, Mr. Speaker, from his trip to Ottawa and was asked about equalization. Do you know what he was reported in the *Leader-Post* as saying? He said . . . well

he tried to lower expectations, as he always does about our great province. He said Saskatchewan will always be in and out of equalization. That's what the Premier said. He said we'll always need assistance from Ottawa. We'll always need federal welfare.

This party takes the view that this province, with all its potential, should be a permanent member of the have province club because . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Because there is a vision for a growing and enterprising entrepreneurial economy in Saskatchewan.

Soon and very soon, that Premier's going to find out that all of the windfall money, all the lottery winnings in the world can't buy the trust of Saskatchewan people. He has broken the trust of the people of the province, broken faith with them. He's got a chance to keep the promise on the PST, on CAIS. Will he do it today, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it's obvious I think to those who observe this Assembly that we have an opposition in Saskatchewan who simply cannot stand good news. They simply can't stand good news.

Now I remind the Leader of the Opposition that well before the price of oil reached the dollar value that it is today, around \$50, well before that, now documented by federal finance officials, now documented by our mid-term financial report, in 2003-04, in 2004-05, in 2002-03, this province enjoyed the status of have province. Now why is that? Why is that, Mr. Speaker?

It's not by tax giveaways that they would promote. It's not by destroying the rights of working men and women, and it's not by pulling out of the economy. It's by partnering with Saskatchewan people. It's by building according to a sustainable plan, Mr. Speaker. It's working together that brings you into the state of a have province. That's where we are today, and that's where we intend to remain.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Funding for the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization Program

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know a perfect storm was unleashed on rural Saskatchewan this year. The family farm has faced BSE, killing frost, late harvest, and poor crops. This year has been a freak of nature, a one-time disaster. Some say the NDP are expecting increased revenues this year of close to \$1 billion. A good choice of where to spend some of this money would be for the NDP to fulfill its commitment to Canadian agricultural income stabilization program.

Can the Agriculture minister tell us if his government has its priorities straight and that he will be announcing that he will keep his word and fully fund CAIS?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there has been deep difficulty throughout rural Saskatchewan. And as a result of that, we have already put \$40 million over budget into the BSE program to make sure that those people who are in the cattle industry who are hurt by the trade issue will be actually supported.

Mr. Speaker, that \$40 million was not easy to come by, but I will thank the Premier and I'll thank the Deputy Premier for a lot of hard work in enabling that to happen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, we know that that there are also issues around crop insurance and we know that the opposition has been inciting a whole lot of fear in people that is absolutely unnecessary. Mr. Speaker, those people were irresponsibly saying that crop insurance claims might not be paid; unbelievable that they would go out and incite that kind of fear amongst people who are already hurting.

Mr. Speaker, every legitimate crop insurance claim will be paid. Mr. Speaker, we are doing everything in our power to make sure that the CAIS will be paid as well. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's agricultural producers are sick and tired of hearing the NDP's flimsy excuses for not stepping up to the plate. When they negotiated and finally agreed to the CAIS program, the NDP knew how it worked and how it would be funded. But when they actually got what they bargained for, they copped out.

Mr. Speaker, producers qualify for CAIS because they already face a shortfall in their income. By refusing to pay its share of CAIS, the NDP is pushing farm families into an even worse position. For example, Neil and Jane Campbell of Wynyard have written to the Premier, and I quote:

Mr. Calvert . . . the difference between the province paying their full share of forty per cent versus the ten per cent at present, will amount to a reduction of \$28,000.00 from CAIS.

Again to the minister. Thousands of farm families are losing money and will be watching very closely today to see if the NDP will honour their commitment to CAIS. Can our producers expect such an announcement today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the CAIS program was put together I think a lot of very good, hard work was done in getting the parameters right in setting a program that would really help with business-risk management. We worked very hard to make sure that all the range of agricultural producers in this province would be covered by CAIS.

And, Mr. Speaker, when we started to get the numbers, the numbers were far different from what they were in the first discussions with the federal government, where we were assured that \$100 million a year each year over the five years would cover the costs of CAIS.

Mr. Speaker, that was not the set of numbers that we started to get early in the year. What we started to get from the federal government were numbers that were somewhere between 250 and 360 million, not 100 million. Mr. Speaker, that clearly is not fair; it . . .

(14:15)

The Speaker: — Order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. I just wanted to call the members to order because it was impossible to hear the last 10 seconds of the response. The Minister of Agriculture, 20 seconds.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the numbers came from the federal government, they were far beyond what they initially assured us that they would be. Those numbers were up as high as \$360 million, far beyond what they had assured us they would be. Mr. Speaker, that is not just. It is not affordable for the people of Saskatchewan. That's where the problem is, Mr. Speaker. It's not right for the people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, every other province in this country is fully funding the CAIS program. And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP can claim that they've been duped by the federal government all they like, and they can disagree with the funding formula all they like. But that doesn't change the fact that they still are not living up to their word. Producers are fed up with the excuses, Mr. Speaker. If the NDP wants the support of the Saskatchewan Party in terms of renegotiating a funding formula, perhaps the NDP should first pony up its promised share of the CAIS program.

Neil and Jane Campbell of Wynyard have written to the Premier, and I quote: "Your determinant of priorities is perplexing." I couldn't agree more.

Will the NDP use their windfall to ensure our farm families actually have an income this year, and fully fund the CAIS program?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that the costs of CAIS program to Saskatchewan are far disproportionate from any of the other provinces — five and six times more than the provincial per capita average, Mr. Speaker — five or six times more. Where we are looking at 155 to \$260 per capita, other provinces, the average there for them is \$35, Mr. Speaker; \$30 for the federal government, Mr. Speaker. And if we put a cap in place and we divide that across the nation, the difference is 5, \$6, somewhere in that range, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we'll pay our 5 or \$6. We'll make sure that we have covered up to that cap, \$100 million, and we'll pay the 5 or \$6 that the citizens all across this nation need to pay to help support this industry, Mr. Speaker. That's fair. That's just. And we will be there to support our producers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Provincial Sales and Income Taxes

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, back in March, the Finance minister introduced the spring budget. He jacked up the provincial sales tax from 6 to 7 per cent. The minister justified this \$135 million tax grab by saying he had to keep the province in the black. Now we're seeing considerably more money coming into this province, not because of the minister's prudence or good management, but because of higher than expected resource revenues.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister. Given all that has changed since his March budget, is he now willing to return the PST to its previous rate of 6 per cent?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from the member. As I understand it, from the opposition's comments so far today, that if something good happens in Saskatchewan then it's not the responsibility of the provincial government. But if something bad happens in Saskatchewan, then of course you should blame the provincial government. That's how I understand it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we had been fortunate, we had been fortunate this year to have received a number of one-time revenues, and I underline the word, one-time. Let me underline that again — one-time revenues that are peculiar to this particular year. And we have put forward a plan, Mr. Speaker, as to how to deal with one-time revenues. The details of that will be provided shortly after question period.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, when I take a look at what the province of Saskatchewan, the conditions in the province of Saskatchewan in comparison to the rest of the nation, I want to reflect on the fact that the NDP says it cares deeply about the less fortunate.

Saskatchewan's marginal tax rate, that is the rate paid by those people earning between 8 and \$35,000 a year, is just over 25 per cent.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are other taxes. Let's not forget about the millions in extra money the minister has to spend that comes from all of us paying more at the gas pumps, paying more PST which is paid by every man, woman, and child who pays for something, including those on low and fixed incomes. The NDP is happy to see people pay out money, so it can spend it. But will it ever pay us back?

Can the minister tell us when he will take the simple, uncomplicated, completely fair step of reducing the PST, a measure that would help every consumer in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize, in case the members opposite missed it, I want to emphasize and again underline that what we have received this year is one-time revenues, one-time revenues, one-time revenues. There is no suggestion and there is no prediction that we will be able to repeat what has happened in the last number of months again next year.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about one-time revenues, we talk about how to deal with those on a one-time basis. And the plan that we're putting forward, Mr. Speaker, speaks to that, and the details of that will be forthcoming in a few minutes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — You know, Mr. Speaker, I can see why the minister expects that this is only going to be one-time resource revenue because in his spring document he indicated that there in fact would be less oil wells drilled. There would be less natural gas wells drilled. He's expecting the province of Saskatchewan to actually go backwards, Mr. Speaker, so obviously he's expecting it to produce less revenue.

Mr. Speaker, restoring the PST to 6 per cent would create enthusiasm. It would help businesses create jobs. It would put spending money back into the pockets of every Saskatchewan consumer.

Another way to increase confidence would be for the NDP to start keeping their own promises. In his budget address, the Minister of Finance announced that beginning in 2005 he would start backing away from the promise to index personal income tax brackets and credits. So far the minister's proven you don't have to be good to be lucky. Despite his best efforts, he's got

some extra money now.

My question to the minister is this: will he work toward keeping his promise of indexing personal income tax brackets and credits, a move that would protect every taxpayer in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, the member has raised a number of issues in his questions. First maybe I could just explain that we have had fewer drilling, and drilling is also affected and was affected by the weather conditions this spring, but we expect that given the price oil and natural gas that we can see an upsurge next year. I fully expect that, Mr. Speaker.

Also again, Mr. Speaker, I just want to underline that what we have is a one-time windfall in revenues, and we are putting forward a plan as to how to deal with one-time revenues. I think it's positive news for the people of Saskatchewan.

I worry a little bit, Mr. Speaker, when I read between the lines and I listen to what it is the members have to say about, that you ought not to treat one-time revenues in a one-time fashion but that you should make ongoing commitments, Mr. Speaker. Then I am very worried that what we're doing is in fact going back to the 1980s where the rule seemed to be, don't worry about what the long-term impacts are; just do it. Worry about the money tomorrow. That's not what we're going to do, Mr. Speaker; we have a plan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Utility Rates

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has talked a lot recently about the utility rates, promises, and possible rebates. Today, the Finance minister will be tabling his mid-year report and budget update. Mr. Speaker, the question is, can the minister assure us that any rebate proposal will equal or exceed what's been taken away in higher utility costs? Is this NDP government going to give back as much as it has recently taken from the consumers in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister for the Crown Management Board.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, more than a year ago, the Premier of Saskatchewan made a commitment to the people of this province that Saskatchewan citizens would have the lowest bundle of utility costs in the country. And Mr. Speaker, I will meet that commitment tomorrow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, in the election that was held a year ago, the people of Saskatchewan voted in favour of a party that supports public ownership of our Crown utilities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — And in that election campaign, the Premier of Saskatchewan said that we would have the lowest bundle of utility rates in the country because of that public ownership. And tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, there will be an announcement that meets that commitment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in its application for a rate increase, SaskPower said it would generate about an addition \$34 million of revenue this year, and another \$110 million in revenue next year. Now this NDP government has suggested that it made back some of that money into the consumers' pockets, but that's really a means of meeting a political promise. That promise of the lowest utility rate bundle in the country could put at risk the financial viability of the Crowns.

My question to the minister is simple. Instead of picking our pockets and then giving us our own money back, why not just keep utility rate increases low?

The Speaker: — Order. I just found it difficult to hear the question. Would the member care to restate the question?

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. My question to the Minister of Finance is simple: instead of picking the pockets of the consumers and then giving us our own money back, why not just keep utility rates as low as possible?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Crown Management Board.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, earlier today we heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about the NDP's record on commitments, Mr. Speaker. Now let me talk about the Leader of the Opposition. On Monday, November 15, that Leader of the Opposition, within a three-minute period, went from saying the NDP absolutely has to keep that promise. Three minutes later, and I quote:

No they shouldn't keep this promise . . . We wouldn't do this if we were the government (Mr. Speaker.)

I listened to the Finance critic, the member from Canora, and what does he say? He says that the government will use . . . they will borrow money to meet this commitment, Mr. Speaker. Well I want to assure the people of Saskatchewan, the NDP government, tomorrow at approximately 10 o'clock in the morning — or is it 10:30? — will meet the commitment of having the lowest bundle of utility rates in the country, and we won't have borrowed a nickel, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, please.

TABLING OF SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, before Orders of the Day it is my pleasure to submit supplementary estimates accompanied by a message from Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor.

The Speaker: — Would all members please rise for the message from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor. The message is as follows:

The Lieutenant Governor transmits the supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 2005, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly. (Signed), Lynda Haverstock, Lieutenant Governor, province of Saskatchewan.

Please be seated.

I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:30)

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, today I am tabling supplementary estimates to reflect the additional expenditures for the 2004-05 fiscal year, that is to say the current budget year, made possible by the additional revenue available in the current fiscal year.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I am also tabling the mid-year report on the province's fiscal and economic situation, and provides as an update on the current year budget. The mid-year report, Mr. Speaker, reveals there has been considerable improvement in the province's finances. The General Revenue Fund financial position improved by almost \$900 million relative to the budget — \$900 million relative to the budget.

About two-thirds of this improvement derives directly from much higher non-renewable resource revenue, predominantly oil revenue, but also natural gas and potash revenue. Oil prices, which were estimated at US \$25 per barrel in the budget, are currently expected to average slightly more than US \$40 per barrel for the fiscal year. And most of the remaining third is attributable to the recent federal transfer to address previous equalization clawbacks. We netted \$367 million, Mr. Speaker, from this deal, plus we have received an additional \$66 million in health transfers from the federal government.

Operating spending before the new spending initiatives, which I will get to in a moment, is down slightly, about \$5 million from budget. Debt servicing costs are down about \$24 million from budget. Mr. Speaker, the level of in-year improvement is unprecedented, but much of it relates to extraordinary circumstances, largely record high oil and natural gas prices and one-time payments related to federal corrections for what has been a patently unfair equalization program. We cannot and do not expect oil prices to remain at historically high levels forever, and we cannot anticipate similar one-time federal

repayments in the future.

Volatility, Mr. Speaker, is a word that comes up a lot when we explain Saskatchewan's resource revenues, and we have a plan for that volatility. We can't entertain large swings in spending or belt tightening. A path of careful planning and balance is the right approach, a path of funding priorities and at the same time managing our debt loads. This is a good plan, a sound plan, the plan a good fiscal manager must follow.

And that is the approach we took when deciding how to manage this large in-year improvement. Clearly, for the reasons I outlined previously, much of the improvement must be viewed as one-time in nature. Several hundred million dollars alone is one-time federal payments. Correspondingly the windfall will be allocated primarily to one-time initiatives — and let me underline one-time, Mr. Speaker — but, as importantly, to initiatives that address some of our government's outstanding commitments. We have a plan, Mr. Speaker. We are keeping our promises.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — First, Mr. Speaker, \$110.1 million will be set aside to meet our commitment for education property tax relief.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Secondly, this year about \$54 million will be provided through reduced CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) dividends to address the utility rate bundle commitment.

Thirdly, the \$40 million BSE top-up and the \$66 million in new health funding announced November 3 will be funded from the forecasted improvement.

Fourth, about \$80 million will be provided to address third party capital and infrastructure commitments over the next several years, notably outstanding municipal infrastructure commitments and some of Learning's outstanding post-secondary capital commitments.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Fifth, about \$110 million will be allocated to government-owned capital acquisitions, including replacement of the 1913 section of the Regina jail, the provincial lab building, and starting renewal of the forest fire fighting aircraft fleet, Mr. Speaker. Our public infrastructure needs to be addressed to forestall future increased costs and financial pressures. It's preventative maintenance on aging capital and, Mr. Speaker, it's good management.

Sixth, about \$75 million will be set aside to offset projected revenue losses associated with the smoking ban over the next three years.

Seventh, there will be an allocation for current year and ongoing operating spending items, including funding for the province's share of the northern uranium mine cleanup and transition funding for the Information Technology Office.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, about \$179 million will be used to permanently reduce government debt and saving the taxpayers about \$11 million per year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Combining the forecast improvements and the new measures, many of which are expected to occur over the next three years, will show a current budget year situation that includes close to \$900 million in improvement relative to budget, about \$170 million in higher operating spending. And were it not for the new initiative, Mr. Speaker, we would actually be \$5 million under in operating spending, and I want to emphasize that much of this higher operating spending is for one-time capital, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we also have a budget that is balanced without reliance on the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and a transfer into the fund of about \$210 million to help fund some of the initiatives I've previously mentioned and to absorb any revenue shocks in the medium term.

Also, very importantly, we are confirming we have been a have province for three years. We will have a surplus on a GRF (General Revenue Fund) basis this fiscal year. We will have a surplus on a summary financial basis this fiscal year. And, Mr. Speaker, government debt is being reduced permanently, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to move, and seconded by the member for The Battlefords:

That Her Honour's message and the supplementary estimates be referred to the Committee of Finance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Douglas Park, the Minister of Finance, and seconded by the member for The Battlefords:

That Her Honour's message and the supplementary estimates be referred to the Committee of Finance.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to second the motion brought forward by the Minister of Finance.

The Speaker: — Order, please. Why is the member from Humboldt on her feet?

Ms. Harpauer: — For leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member for Humboldt is requesting leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the member for Humboldt.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce a constituent of mine who's sitting in the gallery across, Ms. Cathy Taylor. Cathy is a tireless worker within her community and someone that I'm truly honoured to be able to call my friend. So I would like everyone to welcome Cathy here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations, the member for The Battlefords.

TABLING OF SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (continued)

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And with leave of the Assembly I would ask that the Finance critic for the opposition take this second spot in the debate and that I would follow him, if that is okay with the Assembly.

The Speaker: — As members have heard the request, is there agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. I recognize then the member for Canora-Pelly, the critic for Finance.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to extend my appreciation to the Minister of Finance and to the member from North Battleford for allowing me to take part in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, I think the very first question that the people of Saskatchewan will ask as soon as they see today's amended budget is — the question will be this — where has the additional money come from that the minister talks about?

Mr. Speaker, the minister has outlined what he sees as the changes since budget. I want to point out to the people of Saskatchewan and to this House, Mr. Speaker, that the minister provided to the Assembly and to all MLAs a quarterly report back at the conclusion of the first three months of the current fiscal year. And at that time, Mr. Speaker, the changes that were projected were drastic and we recognized that, the opposition recognized that the equalization payments and treatment to the province of Saskatchewan was not fair, it was not equitable.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to state for the record that the first quarter projection, the expected revenue from the Government of Canada for various components, including equalization, was expected to be \$1.032 billion. That was the first quarter projection.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has tabled a document today that indicates the mid-year projection, which is of course based on an annual number. That number for federal transfers is now expected to be 1.548 billion — a difference of \$515 million. That is equalization changes, Mr. Speaker; those are dollars that

the federal government has seen fit to move. As the minister has stated, some of them may be one-time dollars. And I say some of them because this government expects the province of Saskatchewan to be a have-not province and will continue to receive equalization dollars in the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, while I know that the Minister of Finance for the province of Saskatchewan has done an admirable job, the Finance minister that should be thanked for this change in the province of Saskatchewan is the federal Finance minister, Mr. Ralph Goodale. Because, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the province of Saskatchewan, according to the first quarter report, was only going to receive \$1.032 billion of federal transfers. Today we're receiving additional 500 million beyond that.

That's a recognition, and I hope it's because Mr. Goodale comes from the province of Saskatchewan and I'm sure he has a soft spot in his heart for all of Saskatchewan. And he recognizes that the equalization formula was not fair, and indeed there was a need to address some of these concerns.

As the minister indicated back in the March budget, there was going to be an additional \$120 million that was going to come in a one-time payment because of the problems that had occurred in the Crown leases. So that has been recognized. So today we're thankful to the federal government that we're receiving over a half a billion dollars more than what was projected in the first quarterly report.

Now let's take a look at the second component, Mr. Speaker. The second component is of course the non-renewable resource sector. In the non-renewable resource sector, the spring budget, the minister indicated that we were expecting \$707 million worth of revenue. That was adjusted at the first quarter report to a billion and sixty-two because the price of a barrel of oil was increasing, the price of a gigajoule of gas was increasing, the price of a tonne of potash was increasing.

And today, Mr. Speaker, the minister indicates that he expects that the non-renewable resource sector revenue will be 1.347 billion. That's a change from the budget, Mr. Speaker, of \$640 million.

(14:45)

Now I know the minister and the members opposite would like to take credit for changing the price of a barrel of oil, but they didn't have a thing to do with that. They didn't have a thing to do with the change in the price of a tonne of potash or for the price of a gigajoule of gas. This is a windfall of huge proportion. There's a lot of dollars here, Mr. Speaker, that has come into the hands of the government from two sources — from the federal government and from non-renewable resources.

Now let's take a look at what else happened here. Not very much. The fact is that the province of Saskatchewan has not grown. We don't see an economy that now has thousands of additional taxpayers because there are greater numbers of jobs. We don't see a population growth of 15, 20, 30,000 people that's now going to produce more taxpayers. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the only two sources that have contributed to the approximately \$900 million net of revenue is the federal

government and non-renewable resources.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have to look at then . . . The second question that I'm sure the people are going to ask is, with this new found money what has happened to myself as an everyday taxpayer in the province of Saskatchewan? That's the question the people will ask.

Well let's take a look at what occurred. Back in March we were told the province is in dire financial straits and we need another \$135 million. That's what the NDP said. We must have an increase in the PST from 6 to 7 per cent. They also said, no, we can't keep up with the rest of the provinces, especially Alberta who has put in indexation of exemptions. We can't afford to put in exemptions in place that are indexed so we're stopping that. We're not going to have indexing. So now the current \$8,264 that Saskatchewan residents have for this year based on a 3.3 per cent increase on last year's numbers, that's going to remain.

So what happened this year when the province now, as a mid-term report, says we have \$900 million? Did they say to the people of Saskatchewan, the fact that the PST was raised and it slowed the economy . . . You can take a look at the minister's numbers. In fact he is expecting less money from sales for this current year than what was projected back in March. No change made to the PST. No change made to the exemptions in terms of indexation, Mr. Speaker.

Now let's take a look at job creators. The job creators in this province of course are business, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, a book called *Tax Facts* produces numbers that indicate where the province of Saskatchewan sits. And we take a look at the general active business account for the . . . once you've cleared the 300,000 threshold. Saskatchewan's rate is 39.1 per cent. Nine other provinces are all below that rate, Mr. Speaker. We are the worst in Canada as far as a general active business tax rate. What did this budget do today to those . . . to businesses, to promote business? Absolutely nothing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to the fact that we want to look at the corporate capital tax rate. And I'm sure the Minister of Finance and the Premier, along with the opposition, we've heard from a lot of people about the criticism of the corporate capital tax in Saskatchewan. It is a tax that prohibits development. It prohibits growth. It in fact taxes businesses on capital rather than on profit.

Yesterday's tax rate, Mr. Speaker, was point six per cent in Saskatchewan; that ties us for the worst in Canada. It didn't change today.

So, Mr. Speaker, when you take a look at what did this budget do for the people of Saskatchewan, what did it do for individuals? It didn't change the PST rate back to 6 per cent. It didn't put indexation back into place. It didn't help businesses to look at reducing the tax so that they can become more competitive. It didn't do any of those things. What it has done is taken a look at government and made it easier for government.

You know, we look at the shell game that the government has played with the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. The Fiscal Stabilization Fund did not contain any money. It never has. And as a result of today's budget it will not contain any money

because the minister has indicated that there will transfers made to debt. And I'm not saying that that's a bad thing, Mr. Speaker, because we know what debt can do.

But I do want to point out, I do want to point out to the minister who comments on the fact that the Saskatchewan government has been a have province for three years, well then he is contradicting the work of the Provincial Auditor. Because, Mr. Speaker, in the 2004 report volume no. 2, the auditor stated very clearly that for the year ended March 31, 2004 the net position in supplementary expenditures versus revenue, that the expenditures were \$7.7 billion and revenue was \$7.6 billion for all facets of the province's economy.

Well the minister said this last year. He said, if expenses exceed revenue you have a deficit. Mr. Speaker, the auditor has indicated that the deficit for last year was \$147 million and yes we did receive, we did receive equalization payments. So that clearly said we were not a have province.

Let's back that up one year. Expenses exceeded revenue by the amount of \$654 million for the year ended March 31, 2003. For the year ended March 31, 2002, expenses exceeded revenue by \$483 million.

Mr. Speaker, three years, up to March 31, 2004, the total amount of deficits, if you add that up, debt has increased by \$1.3 billion. So for the minister to stand in this Assembly and say we are a have province for the third consecutive year, he contradicts the auditor's report. I'll take the auditor's report over the minister's comments.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, this document that we see presented today . . . this government, this government recognizes one thing, Mr. Speaker, and we've been saying this all along on behalf of many people in this province who are concerned about the smoking ban. This province recognizes that for the next three years they're setting aside \$25 million per year to offset lost revenue.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if the government is anticipating that they're going to lose \$25 million per year based on the current revenue projections, what does that mean for the local hotelier? What does that mean for the local restaurant? What does that mean for all of those businesses in rural Saskatchewan who have been telling the cabinet ministers, this is going to create a problem for us?

Well we recognize that there are health concerns. But what are you going to do about the financial implications that this has? Well today the minister says, I recognize, I do recognize that there's a financial loss to government of \$75 million. But did he do anything for businesses? Absolutely not. So here we have a situation where government said, we're going to change things to be good for government, but the people of Saskatchewan, uh-uh, we're not doing a thing for you; we're not doing a thing for you.

Mr. Speaker, when you start to look at the reality of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund — and the minister has indicated that instead of using the Fiscal Stabilization Fund we're in fact not going to

use it but we're going to put more money into the fund and the net result will be we'll be able to do three- and four-year projects — the reality is, Mr. Speaker, that the monies that the minister talks about are in fact a line of credit. Whatever money is additional in the way of a surplus is being used to pay down debt, and that's a good thing.

But the other situation is, Mr. Speaker, is that when the minister will access that money — a year from now, two years from now, three years from now — that money that will be accessed out of the so-called Fiscal Stabilization Fund will really mean that you have taken a larger debt, because you are borrowing the money.

So, Mr. Speaker, while the auditor has indicated in his March 31, 2004 report that the debt of the province has grown to \$11.9 billion, there may be, there may be some change to that total number as a result of this new-found wealth. But, Mr. Speaker, as soon as we start to access those amounts of dollars for all of the capital projects, all of the infrastructure promises that the minister has made to municipalities, we will be going further into debt.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude my remarks by indicating that this mini-budget, these revisions of estimates have done little for the people of Saskatchewan. They have done a lot to put the government in a position where it is going to announce and reannounce and announce again the projects two years from now and three years from now. Coincidentally, as one of my colleagues points out, that will probably be very close to election time, Mr. Speaker.

This opportunity today that was presented to government was missed. It was an opportunity for government to say, we are going to put Saskatchewan back into a much more competitive position by, in fact, reducing the PST from 7 per cent down to 6 per cent. It would have allowed the government the opportunity to fully fund the CAIS program. That is an investment in our agriculture producers, and I know my colleague, the critic for Agriculture, the member for Thunder Creek, will have a lot more to say on this.

But, Mr. Speaker, this government and this minister have missed the opportunities that were presented to it by all of this new-found money from the federal government and from non-renewable resources.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the . . . Why is the member from Swift Current on his feet?

Mr. Wall: — I ask leave to introduce a guest, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member for Swift Current has asked leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We appreciate the patience of the member from North Battleford who's waiting to enter this debate. But through you, Mr. Speaker, to all the members of the Assembly, and to you, it's a pleasure to introduce a good friend and a constituent who has joined us in the gallery across the way. Ken Carleton is now residing in Swift Current, but for some time has contributed to the farm economy of this province. And he's here in Regina today and of course at the Legislative Assembly to watch the proceedings. I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming Ken to his Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords, the Minister for Government Relations.

TABLING OF SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (continued)

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the opportunity to enter the debate today and to second the motion of the Minister of Finance today on supplementary estimates.

One of the things that I noticed today very, very clearly both through question period and now through the debate and the intervention by the Minister of Finance is that it appears that the only thing worse for the members of the opposition these days, the only thing worse than good news for the province of Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatchewan is when the government announces that it's keeping another one of its promises, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have . . . Mr. Speaker, see, it's just very difficult, very difficult for the opposition to accept the fact that this government is being . . . is managing the resources of this province to the benefit of the Saskatchewan people, and in doing so, is being able to prove to the people of Saskatchewan that when they elected this government to this side, or these members to this side of the House, they were doing the province of Saskatchewan a very, very good turn, Mr. Speaker.

There's a number of things I will say in this regard as I work through my remarks today, Mr. Speaker, but I just wanted to indicate as I got started that the words of the opposition critic simply highlighted the fact that there's no good news for that side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Now I realize there are some challenges in the Saskatchewan economy, Mr. Speaker, some challenges that are affecting quite a large number of Saskatchewan citizens. And I will address some of that as well in my remarks today. But first and foremost, Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize the good news that has been brought forward by the Minister of Finance today. We have recognized some revenues for the province of Saskatchewan at almost the halfway point in the budget year for the province — some new revenues that six months ago, Mr. Speaker, could not have been anticipated when the budget of the province was drafted.

The Minister of Finance assessed circumstances in the province that were challenging, and he addressed them in a way that met the needs of the Saskatchewan people. And, Mr. Speaker, we don't have to go back very far to budget day to remember the challenges that were presented by health care and the needs to ensure that what worked out to be \$173 million of brand new money went into ensuring that our health care system was meeting the needs of the people of Saskatchewan. And of course, we recognize, Mr. Speaker, that not all of the needs have been met, that the challenges in health care continue, and we have to address those needs as we go forward.

(15:00)

But, Mr. Speaker, when we take a look at what's happened over the course of the last six months with indeed the oil revenues rising and the fantastic negotiations that took place between the province of Saskatchewan and the federal government on equalization, negotiations that involved support from some of our partners in the municipal sector like the representatives of SUMA and SARM, Mr. Speaker — and again, I want to more formally thank them in a few moments — but the province has enjoyed some very good success.

Retail sales are up. Job numbers are up, Mr. Speaker. The credit ratings for the province have been increased on two occasions through the course of the last six months. Obviously when outsiders look at what the Minister of Finance and the New Democratic Party government is doing in Saskatchewan, they're giving us full marks for the steps forward that we're making. But, Mr. Speaker, we realize that, of course, not all residents of the province of Saskatchewan are able to participate in the good news.

And, Mr. Speaker, because I represent the riding of North Battleford — a riding that is considerably rural in nature, a riding where the business people rely heavily on money earned on the farm to ensure that the businesses remain operating — I talk frequently with the residents in the city of North Battleford about the stresses that are occurring in the agricultural economy, almost four years of poor prices in the farm economy, Mr. Speaker, and then this last year the impact of BSE on the cattle producers. Mr. Speaker, these are very stressful times on the farm and in rural Saskatchewan.

And I think we have to ensure that we are all aware that, despite the fact that the province, because of the mining sector, the oil and gas sector, the retail sector, innovation, science, — the other sectors of the province that are performing so well — that we can't forget that the agriculture sector out there is undergoing some very stressful and difficult times. And it's being felt individually and collectively in some of our communities.

But that's why, Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to be able to work with the Minister of Agriculture and the negotiations that he's undertaking to ensure that the CAIS program is recognized by Ottawa as being unfair to the people of Saskatchewan and at the same time to be able to recognize the extra value that the minister is placing on BSE response.

And in the minister's answers in question period today, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the province — even before we knew

we had new money coming under equalization or out of oil and gas — the province committed an extra \$40 million to ensure that the federal program dealing with calf set-aside was fully funded by this government. Forty million dollars, that was not easy to come by, Mr. Speaker, but the Minister of Agriculture stood up and fought for that, and by golly, he was able to deliver. And I'm very, very proud to be working with him on this side of the House.

Also, Mr. Speaker, as minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, I'm very pleased with the work that's being done to support the inequity fight on the CAIS program.

Mr. Speaker, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, Saskatchewan's estimated share of the national APF (agricultural policy framework) programming is significantly higher than any other province. The minister outlined in question period on a per capita basis every person in Saskatchewan is being asked to contribute \$341 to fund the provincial portion of the APF in 2003-04. It's more than five times the provincial average per capita expenditure and six times more than the Canadian taxpayer is asked to contribute.

Mr. Speaker, this \$341 per capita in the province of Saskatchewan compares to less than \$100 in the province of Alberta, Mr. Speaker, and less than \$100 in the province of Manitoba. Just by comparing to our neighbours, Mr. Speaker, we can see how unfair this circumstance is. We will continue to fight for fairness in the CAIS program, and we will continue to address the ongoing challenges and stresses that exist in our farm economy.

But, Mr. Speaker, on the good news side, because we all know that there is some very good news in front of us announced today, as Minister Responsible for Government Relations, as minister who works with the municipal stakeholders across the province, I'm very, very pleased to be able to say that the supplementary estimates today confirm and commit the promise of this government to put 30 per cent of new and ongoing equalization money to the relief of education property tax throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

There were members of the opposition who said we will support the government on its fight on equalization but who also said, but what's 30 per cent — when we made that commitment, Mr. Speaker — 30 per cent of nothing is still going to be nothing.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they underestimated the potential and the power of the Premier of Saskatchewan and the Minister of Finance who were dedicated and determined to win this equalization fight despite the pessimism that existed across the way and in some coffee shops across the province.

The Premier went to those meetings. Difficult circumstances, other provinces got up and walked out of the room, our Premier sat down and stayed and made sure that Saskatchewan was treated fairly. As a result of that, there's \$367 million of brand new money on the table for the province of Saskatchewan. And we were able to meet our commitment of 30 per cent of that for education property tax relief, \$110 million today thanks to the negotiating skills of the Premier of the province of

Saskatchewan, the Minister of Finance, and the officials that supported them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — And on that note, Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased that we had the support going into those meetings of the representatives of the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. And, Mr. Speaker, they have participated in a working group that is designing a delivery mechanism that will put that money in the hands of Saskatchewan education property taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the hard-working efforts of the representatives of SUMA and SARM for being able to put some options on the table for consideration. And, Mr. Speaker, we are now working with them to reach a consensus on those options to ensure that we can deliver that money as quickly as possible to the education property taxpayers throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance indicated that through the supplementary estimates here, the province of Saskatchewan is going to meet our obligations in the new federal programs for infrastructure, the new MRIF which we are close to reaching an agreement with the federal government on. MRIF, Mr. Speaker, stands for Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, new monies from Ottawa requiring provincial contributions. The province of Saskatchewan will fully commit itself to ensuring that MRIF is delivered to our municipal partners throughout the province of Saskatchewan — urban, small urban, and rural, Mr. Speaker.

We are also going to flow through the gas tax federal money coming to the province of Saskatchewan. I was recently in Toronto as Chair of the provincial and territorial ministers of local governments meeting, Mr. Speaker. At that meeting we reached an agreement amongst ourselves and with the federal government that the money from the gas tax would flow through the provinces to the municipalities throughout this province and others. We reached an agreement, Mr. Speaker, and we as a province of Saskatchewan, our officials are now working with federal officials to reach agreements not just on the infrastructure issue, but on the gas tax issue as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very, very pleased to be able to second this motion today, to be able to support the Minister of Finance and the officials that support him in bringing forward the good news and the efforts that are going forward. And more importantly, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate the leadership shown by the Premier of this province in being able to go out, work with the federal Minister of Finance and bring home to Saskatchewan a deal that recognizes past inequalities and gives us an opportunity to move forward, reducing some of the stresses felt by some of our departments, reducing some of the stresses that we're feeling throughout our communities, reducing some of the stresses that exist in the way in which we communicate information, Mr. Speaker, and ensuring, ensuring that we are in a position not only to do what's right for the province of Saskatchewan, but to meet the commitments that we made to ensure that the promises that we made are promises that we can keep. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to enter this debate on the Minister of Finance's statement earlier this day.

You know, I think it's very important that when an announcement like this is made that we boil it down in terms of what it means for Saskatchewan families, for Saskatchewan businesses, for those that make up the fabric of our province. And in this particular case, Mr. Speaker, it's a very interesting exercise to undertake.

We know that the government has received about almost \$1 billion that it didn't budget for, that it didn't plan for. The budget prior, the budget this spring, Mr. Speaker, took a heavy toll on Saskatchewan people.

Even though this Premier went around the province and promised to continue to lower taxes in the provincial election, he increased the PST in that budget. He didn't breathe a word of that, Mr. Speaker, during the campaign, never gave any indication to anybody that was thinking about voting for him or any of his MLAs, his candidates, that what they were going to get was a PST increase, a \$130 million tax grab. But that's what he got; that's what the people of the province got in the budget. I think the direct line from his platform was that he would continue to lower taxes.

The PST went up a point — \$135 million for Saskatchewan families, for people who can't afford it, who can least afford it, Mr. Speaker. Of course we all know that a sales tax is much more punishing on those in lower income brackets. And yet that's exactly what we got from the Premier.

We know that shortly thereafter, the Premier and his government — even though they campaigned on the lowest utility rates in the country, offering that to Saskatchewan people — increased SaskPower rates. They didn't even wait for the rate review panel that they set up to do it. They just made the increase, announced it for September 1, and said well we'll get the approval that we need at some later date. We know what the costs of that will be to Saskatchewan families, to Saskatchewan businesses, to the co-operative sector, to anyone who wants to turn on a light switch or plug in a toaster. We know that it's in excess of \$30 million for the last quarter of this year. It's going to be well over 100 million more dollars in a full year.

Those are just two examples of the government putting it to Saskatchewan families and businesses in their budget and in their actions following the budget, even though what they said during the campaign was something markedly different to be sure.

There are other taxes we could talk about. There's the wiener roast tax; he never mentioned that in the campaign, Mr. Speaker. There are all the fee increases we saw in the Department of Environment. Never commented about that during the campaign, never breathed a word of it when he wanted people to vote for him. Waited until he won with a

narrow, razor-thin majority and then systematically went about breaking promises and implementing these tax hikes and fee increases that he never told anybody about during a 28-day election campaign, or certainly any time before that.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting then to look at what the Minister of Finance has announced today in view of that because the minister, even though he's gotten this billion dollar windfall — he's won, the government's won the lottery — even though that's happened, even though we understand that to be the case today, we know, Mr. Speaker, when we add up the amount of money that they are prepared to give back to Saskatchewan families, we get to a really interesting bottom line.

We hear the government's going to do something on rebates on utility rates. He has announced what that figure is. We know they're going to do something on the property tax over two years — woefully inadequate, we would point out — but we know the number.

(15:15)

When you add up all of those numbers, you know what the bottom line is, Mr. Speaker? Here it is, from this Premier to the people of Saskatchewan. After the election, when he's safely back in power, after having said what it took to get elected, doing what it took to get elected, he took a dollar — this is the ratio — he took a dollar from Saskatchewan people.

And now that the government has record windfall revenue, windfall revenue the likes of which this province has never seen, what is he giving back? Thirty cents, Mr. Speaker. He picked the pockets of Saskatchewan people for a dollar, got a dollar, gave them back 30 cents, Mr. Speaker — 30 cents. Seventy cents he kept for himself; 70 cents they kept for the government's own purposes, to put away in election funds, be able to make announcements, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has talked about, as we get closer to an election campaign.

And nowhere is this government's self-serving attitude more evident than in the whole area of the impact of the smoking ban. The government has recognized that there will be a loss in revenue caused by the smoking ban, in terms of our hospitality industry. They're going to lose VLT (video lottery terminal) revenue and they're going to lose tax revenue. They've recognized that fact. They should recognize that fact. The small-business men and women of the province who are in that industry have said it loud and clear. And it's a serious issue. Many are worried about whether or not those businesses — many of them in rural Saskatchewan, many of them integral to the survival of rural centres in Saskatchewan — are worried about whether their business will survive the impact of this.

So when the government has this windfall revenue, they have an opportunity then to say, the smoking ban's going to cause this hurt to you — to the businesses, to the people that are creating the jobs that will sustain health care and education and a social safety net — to those very men and women that are creating the jobs, we know that the smoking ban is going to have an impact. We know that it might endanger the survival of many of these businesses, and certainly the government must

know it.

So they have a choice. They can use this windfall, this lottery win, and in part they can stand with those businesses because of the hurt they're going to face. There would be options to be sure, Mr. Speaker, this government could look at. What do they choose to do instead, Mr. Speaker? What did they choose to do in this budget? Oh, they're going to address the hurt that's caused by the smoking ban, but only for the government, Mr. Speaker. They're only going to address the hurt that it will visit on the government, on their coffers. They care more about their own coffers, about the Department of Finance, than they do about the future of rural Saskatchewan. They care more about their own political future than the future of men and women who are creating jobs today in rural and urban Saskatchewan.

That's the message from this statement, among others. That's the message that we're getting.

What about with respect to agriculture . . . and the Deputy Premier is chirping from his seat, the former minister of Agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan, who went around this province and told farm families that this government cared about them. In fact, he cared so much that he wasn't prepared to accept CAIS as it was. He wanted to negotiate changes to CAIS. He knew it was a 60/40 program. He wasn't talking about that when he negotiated those changes. He was talking about negative margins. He was talking about the cap and in the changes he requested, we supported him. We in the opposition said, that's the right thing and we'll support him.

You know what happened, Mr. Speaker? The federal government of the land said, we agree as well. We're going to give you the changes you asked for, and the Agriculture critic for the opposition, the member for Thunder Creek, went in front of the media and said, that's the right thing to do. He said the minister made the right case and the federal government's response was correct.

They got the changes they wanted and refused to fund the changes they asked for. They made that commitment to Saskatchewan families when they knew that this was a 60/40 program and they were negotiating in good faith for changes, not on the funding formula, but on these other issues. They got the changes they wanted and then when it came time to help, when it came time to be there for Saskatchewan farm families, really for all of the province — because as goes agriculture so goes the economy of so much of our province — when they had the chance to be there for them and keep a commitment they made on CAIS, on the farm safety net, what did they say? They said, forget it.

They said, we don't have the money. And why don't we have the money? They said, because of equalization. That's what that minister stood up and said. That's what the Premier said: well we can't be there for farm families because the equalization formula is unfair. And they were right on that one too. And we supported them as they sought the changes and they got those changes as well; 500-plus million dollars from the federal minister, from Mr. Goodale, so that excuse was gone. That excuse on that farm safety net is gone.

And that Agriculture minister can grumble all he wants from his

seat. I don't blame him for grumbling. He should, Mr. Speaker, he should be depressed. I hope he's depressed and disappointed because he's let down the farm families of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — He has no more excuse. He said, I don't have the money because the equalization formula's not right. Well the equalization issue's been addressed; the money is there. And what do they say today when that member for Thunder Creek asks them a question? No. No. We'd rather make sure, we'd rather make sure that our VLT revenue losses, and our liquor and gaming revenue losses, and our tax revenue losses from our own smoking ban . . . we'd rather take care of ourselves, of the Government of Saskatchewan. That's what they said, that's what the NDP said, that's what the Premier's saying. We'd rather take care of our own interests, of our own coffers. We're not worried about farm families; we don't care about them and we're not . . . we don't care about the businesses that are going to have to deal with the smoking ban in the province of Saskatchewan.

And then the Premier wonders why, and we know that this is bothering them because in every single press release they issue — whether it's on the centennial, it doesn't matter — they talk about how they're keeping promises. Well saying doesn't make it so, Mr. Speaker. Saying doesn't make it so. The facts are here. On the PST and on CAIS, and on so many other issues, on tuition fee increases, the facts are in.

But the Premier wonders, well why doesn't anybody trust me in Saskatchewan? Why doesn't anybody trust me, the Premier wonders. Well it's pretty simple. You know, Mr. Speaker, you've got to earn trust; you've got to give people a reason to trust you. You've got to keep your promises, Mr. Speaker, for people to trust you. And you have an opportunity on CAIS, and you have an opportunity on the PST, and you have an opportunity on the question of indexing income tax. And they've let them all slip by.

And the Premier, as I said in question period, is going to be very disappointed to realize that all of the money in the world, all of the money in the world, doesn't buy people's trust. All the equalization money, all this windfall resource revenue, it won't buy him the trust of the people of the province. You have to earn it, Mr. Speaker. You have to earn it by keeping your word. And what we understand in this budget statement is that the Premier has yet to learn that lesson. I have this feeling, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this province are waiting, maybe not so patiently, to teach the Premier that very lesson, Mr. Speaker.

You know, when this Premier came to office, when this Premier came to office, he had a similar windfall. You remember that, Mr. Speaker? Remember what the Provincial Auditor reported? When the Premier came to his office, his current office, the Provincial Auditor confirmed for anybody that wanted to ask him that the previous premier, Mr. Romanow, had left him about a half billion dollars — about a half billion dollars. What did the Premier do with that half billion dollar surplus that his predecessor had left him? In two short years he increased the province's debt by a billion and a half, and that surplus, that half billion was gone, Mr. Speaker. That's his track record.

It reminds me of a story that the Premier will know well. It's a little like the prodigal son. We have a prodigal Premier in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. He wanted his inheritance, Mr. Speaker, and he got it. His predecessor gave him his inheritance — a large surplus, Mr. Speaker. And what did he do with that inheritance? Did he invest it wisely? Did he do the right things with that inheritance?

Well, Mr. Speaker, no. The minister went on . . . or the Premier and his government, they went travelling around — as is the case in the story of the prodigal son — he went travelling around. Where did he go, Mr. Speaker? What did he do with this inheritance? Well he went to BC; he went to British Columbia and he lost 13.5 million of it in Navigata. And then he went to Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and he lost another \$10 million. That's what happened to the prodigal Premier. He went to Ontario and in an insurance company he lost \$17.2 million.

He went down to Australia and lost millions more on a stock market play, and actually lost half a million more trying to invest and bring cellular service to rural Australia. Do you remember that? So the prodigal Premier spent some time in Australia. But the results were the same.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the prodigal Premier and the rest of his caucus, they even went down to Colombia and they got involved in a Colombian Internet scam. You remember that? They didn't lose as much there, mercifully. They only lost \$3,000 in that.

And now . . . And, Mr. Speaker, he finally, he finally has come home. And like the story, Mr. Speaker, like the story of the prodigal son, he's come back with nothing. He's come back with nothing. He has no plan for the future of the province of Saskatchewan. He has no long-term view for our future in this great province. He's come back, having blown his inheritance, and now what we're worried about in the province of Saskatchewan is that he's got another windfall. And now, Mr. Speaker, now we risk the spectre of the prodigal Premier again blowing the inheritance, but this time of the people of the province and of the children in Saskatchewan, of future generations, Mr. Speaker.

The evidence, Mr. Speaker, of the fact that the prodigal Premier has blown his first inheritance and now may be on his way to blowing his second one.

The fact that the Premier apparently has no plan to offer for the future of the province is found in the words that he chose when he came back from Ottawa when he received the equalization payment. It's reflected in an editorial in the *Leader-Post*. Let me read it into the record, Mr. Speaker. It says, "However, it could be . . ." And I'm quoting:

However, it could be a brief membership in that exclusive club . . .

And the editorial is referring to the club of the have provinces.

However, it could be a brief membership in that exclusive club — Premier Lorne Calvert says the volatility of the province's resource-dependent economy means (and get this) Saskatchewan will always (quote) "be in and out" of

equalization.

That is the Premier's view of our future. We'll always need assistance. We're just a wee province on the Prairies. We're just a wee . . . And we'll always need welfare. We'll always need the assistance of the federal government. You know what, Mr. Speaker? This side of the House, this party, and the people of the province reject that kind of doom and gloom attitude from that Premier. They reject that defeatist attitude, Mr. Speaker. He says, we'll always be in and out of equalization; we'll always need assistance.

That doesn't sound like our Saskatchewan. That doesn't sound like a province that is Canada's second largest producer of oil and third largest producer of natural gas. It doesn't sound to me like a province that's a home to a third of the world's potash or a third of the world's uranium. Doesn't sound like the province in Canada that has more arable acres than anywhere else in the dominion. It doesn't sound like the province that now has the foundation, the underpinnings to take advantage of the new economy when he says that we'll always need welfare.

Maybe on his watch, Mr. Speaker, that's what we can expect — a government that's more interested in blowing money around the world, a government that's prepared to break promises, be irresponsible with taxpayers' money and believe that we'll always need assistance. Maybe that's his view, but it is not our view, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to be continuing to press the government on this issue of the promises that it isn't keeping. Very . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the Premier says, what happened to SPUDCO? Let's talk about SPUDCO then. The Premier says what happened to . . . You know what? You know what? That's actually, that's a fair question. It is a question that we hear around the province, you know, from Saskatchewan taxpayers who know that SPUDCO is about 35 million taxpayers' dollars lost and a government that wouldn't tell the truth about it for six long years. That's the question that people of province are asking, what about SPUDCO, Mr. Speaker? What about SPUDCO?

(15:30)

Yesterday in this House the Premier stood up and defended it and said well no it's an investment, that's what SPUDCO is. It's an investment in the industry. And then just a few minutes later the Minister for SaskWater is out pleading, pleading for forgiveness in a scrum, saying sorry as often as the media would report it for the loss of SPUDCO.

Well which is it over there? Is it a loss to be contrite about? Is it a loss to say that we're sorry that we did that? That's what that minister said. This Premier and the Deputy Premier, remember that, talking about what a good deal it is, what a good investment it is.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, in fact, Mr. Speaker, SPUDCO may be the absolute worst stop in the prodigal Premier's travels around the world, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — The unfortunate part, the unfortunate part is that it happened in our . . . right here in Saskatchewan. It has greatly damaged an industry with great potential. It's ruined families, Mr. Speaker. That is what about SPUDCO. That's the answer to the Premier's question. And there are more questions to come. There are many more questions to come on that particular issue.

With respect to what the minister has said today, let me just say this. We're long past due in Saskatchewan for a government that has a long-term view of the economy. We're long past due for a government that understands that if we don't create jobs, if we don't have the right atmosphere, the right environment for men and women, for the co-operative sector to create sustainable jobs so that we can bring taxes to the treasury to fund health care, education and social safety net, if we don't get that soon, Mr. Speaker, the health care, the education, the social safety net that we all prize in the province is at risk. It's at risk.

And the Minister of Finance had a chance to stand up and say he understood that today with his windfall, with this lottery win, but they chose to take care of themselves. They chose to take care of themselves instead of the people of the province and, Mr. Speaker, we will oppose that every single time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll speak to it in a minute.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — You know, Mr. Speaker, it is so very clear, so very apparent to anyone who would follow legislative debate that the Leader of the Opposition in particular and his caucus in general are about the only people in Saskatchewan who cannot stand good news.

This day, Mr. Speaker, is a day that the people of Saskatchewan can rejoice, can rejoice. Because we have come to this day through no assistance of members of the Saskatchewan Party. In fact, through no assistance from the Leader of the Opposition. In fact, we've had a decade and more of coming to this day picking up the pieces they left behind when they occupied the government benches, Mr. Speaker.

Today, Mr. Speaker, for the first time since the early '80s — since the first time that party inherited from the New Democratic Party government of the 1970s and the fiscal stewardship of Premier Allan Blakeney — not since those days have the people of Saskatchewan been able to say on a sustained basis that we are a have province. Not since those days.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — This is a day to mark, Mr. Speaker, a day that we can mark now with the authority of the federal Department of Finance and the authority of the Minister of Finance of Saskatchewan today in his mid-term statement and in the summary . . . the supplemental budget estimates that are

under debate, that this province has been in the years 2000-2003, 2003-2004 and now 2004-2005, a have province in the nation of Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the question is, the question is how did we come from the circumstance that we inherited in the early '90s, to a day when we can stand and declare Saskatchewan to be a have province? How can we come after the devastation that was racked on this economy, on this province by the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues when they were in government? How have we come to a day when we can celebrate being a have province; a day when we can celebrate having received yet further credit rating upgrades in this year? How have we come to this day?

Well, I'll tell you we didn't get here easily. We didn't get here easily. It took a decade. A decade of very hard work, of very careful fiscal management. It took a decade, in some cases, of sacrifice and it has taken a decade of building to bring us to where we are today. And that decade was given leadership by the former Premier Roy Romanow and the caucus of that time, who inherited from the current Leader of the Opposition and the Saskatchewan Party, the worst fiscal circumstance ever handed to a government in the history of Canada. There is no doubt about that. And it has taken a tremendous amount of work and sacrifice on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to bring us to a day like today when we can celebrate.

In addition to the fiscal management of the province, this government has worked with the people of Saskatchewan, has partnered with communities, has partnered with the investment and business community, has partnered with working people to build a plan to strengthen the economy. We've given that plan the title, the partnership for progress. Now that plan having been implemented over these years is bearing its fruit. It's bearing its fruit as late as just a week ago or thereabouts, when the October job numbers came in — again job totals up highest ever for the month of October in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And what is extremely important about these most recent job numbers, within those jobs Saskatchewan now enjoys the second lowest unemployment or the second highest employment rate for young people in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — That's 3,800 new jobs in the month of October for young people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, that doesn't happen by accident. It doesn't happen by flights of rhetoric, the kind of which we've been treated to today by the Leader of the Opposition. It's built on hard work, careful planning, and conviction. That's what it's built on and that's what's been occurring in Saskatchewan; that's why today we are a have province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now the Leader of the Opposition in his comments talks about the revenues that the Minister of Finance has talked about this afternoon as a lottery win. He talks about it

as a lottery win. I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth; nothing could be further from the truth. The dollars that are reflected in the good news of the Minister of Finance today are not won, they're earned; they're earned dollars. That's what they are, Mr. Speaker. They have been earned from a strengthening economy.

I remind the Leader of the Opposition we didn't become a have province since the price of oil went to \$50. We have been a have province now for three years. We have seen, we have seen this growth in the resource base of Saskatchewan, particularly in the oil and gas field — why? — because of measures taken by this government, measures taken to encourage investment. We've seen record levels of drilling in oil and gas over the last number of years. That is all now bearing fruit.

It is bearing fruit in the investments this government has made in partnership for instance with the forestry, with the forest industry, where I have been in this last year at two of the world's largest oriented strand board plants located in Saskatchewan, partnership private sector investment in our forestry.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — It has resulted because of this government's leadership, leadership if I may say, in the film and video industry.

Now that opposition, they have criticized us for our investment in the film and video industry. They've criticized our investment in the sound stage here, in the province's capital of Regina. But they don't criticize when *Corner Gas* is now nominated for significant international awards, when *Corner Gas* is now leading the charts in Canada.

They have complained about our investment and our partnerships with the private sector in IT (information technology), in research and development. Well, Mr. Speaker, we've just recently cut the ribbon on the largest scientific project in the nation of Canada, the Canadian Light Source synchrotron in Saskatoon . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — . . . which, Mr. Speaker, has already, has already begun to draw to our province some of the best and brightest research minds in the world and significant private sector investment.

How did we get here, Mr. Speaker? With hard work, with careful fiscal planning, and with partnerships with Saskatchewan communities, Saskatchewan investors, and Saskatchewan workers. That's how we got here; that's how we got here.

And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the dollars that are described today by the Minister of Finance; 66 million of those dollars are new health dollars, hard fought and won in the nation's capital in negotiations with the federal government.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when we went into the negotiations with the federal government around a new health deal for

Canadians, you know what the federal government had on the table? Nine billion dollars for Canadians — new dollars. When we came out of those negotiations you know what was on the table? Eighteen billion dollars for Canadians. What was on the table when we went into those negotiations for the people of Saskatchewan was \$33 million. Today the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health have announced it's \$66 million. Those are earned dollars, Mr. Speaker, through tough negotiations between the provinces, the territories, and the federal government.

Now I hesitate to guess what it would be if the Leader of the Opposition had been sitting at that table in Ottawa. He'd have negotiated them, he'd have negotiated them right down from nine billion to six billion I bet. That's the approach of the opposition. If the national government says that's what it's going to be, they say, just take it, just take it and make up the difference from Saskatchewan taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, a year ago — not even a year ago — we began to point out with earnest to the people of Saskatchewan, and the people of Canada, to the national government, the inequities under which Saskatchewan people had been treated with the equalization program. That's not only a year ago; not a year ago did we in earnest begin this campaign. The result, today the Minister of Finance can announce the expenditures of another \$367 million in equalization.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now I hesitate, I hesitate to speculate what the Leader of the Opposition would have got if he sat at the equalization table. Well I think he'd say, oh well, I'm sorry I interrupted the progress of the federal government in this file, I guess they're right. Because that's the approach they're taking right now, right now on CAIS. That's the approach they're taking. They're saying don't stand up for Saskatchewan people, don't stand up for the province, just pay the bills. No matter what Ottawa asks, just pay the bills. Well we don't need that kind of assistance when we're negotiating with the national government.

So we have earned, the people of Saskatchewan have earned this day. They have earned a day when we can celebrate now joining the province of Ontario, the province of Alberta, and I expect soon the province of British Columbia, as the have provinces of Canada. We can celebrate an economy that has grown and strengthened to such an extent that we have reached this level of being a have province. We can celebrate the outside investment, the outside advisors who tell us that our growth rate is going to continue to be strong. We can celebrate the credit rating upgrades. Why do we celebrate? Because of the work, the labour of the people of Saskatchewan, and the leadership of the New Democratic Party government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Get this. The Leader of the Opposition stands up in this House today after I expect he listened to the Minister of Finance — perhaps he didn't, perhaps he has his canned remarks all ready to go — but he says somehow that this windfall as he calls it, I call it hard-earned victories, he says that somehow this windfall is going into the pockets of the

government. That's what he said. It's going into the pockets of the government.

Well let me tell you where some of it's going. I listened to the Minister of Finance. I'll tell you where some of it's going. Well it's going to do a significant important piece of work and that's in the replacement of the 1913 section of the Regina jail here. I believe they've called us to do that, maybe they haven't. Well I'll tell you where it's going, as the Minister of Finance announced, it's going into a new provincial lab building to serve the people of Saskatchewan, that's where it's going. It's going into municipal infrastructure funding, that's where it's going, to serve the people of our municipalities, our municipal levels of government. It's going into a renewal of our forest fighting aircraft fleet to serve not only the people of the North but the industry of the North, that's where the money's going. It's going, Mr. Speaker, into property tax relief for the families of Saskatchewan, \$110 million into property tax relief.

I guess the Leader of the Opposition doesn't like that. He doesn't like that because he can't stand good news. He and his party cannot stand good news. Where is it going? Mr. Speaker, if he'd have listened to the Minister of Finance he'd know that some of these dollars are going into capital . . . will go into learning, post-secondary learning, investing in the future of our young people, that's where the money is going. It's going into, as the Minister of Finance said earlier, into clean up of northern uranium mines to protect the environment of the North, and the communities of the North to provide employment.

Mr. Speaker, these dollars, as the Minister of Finance has so correctly pointed out, many of them are one-time dollars. Many of them are one-time dollars and a government that is making wise choices for the future will invest those one-time dollars into important investments that are one-time capital. Forty million dollars to support our cattle producers and their families and the BSE top-up — that's where the dollars are going, Mr. Speaker. They're going to the people of Saskatchewan who have earned, who have earned these dollars.

(15:45)

Mr. Speaker, today is a day for the people of Saskatchewan to rejoice. We know the hurt that many of our families have felt, particularly the farming community with this early frost, delayed harvest, and the hurt that they have felt over a number of years of drought and international subsidies and insensitive national governments. Mr. Speaker, even those, even those farm families recognize a province that has turned the corner significantly, a province that is on a roll, a province today that stands in the Canadian federation as a have province.

I give full credit, Mr. Speaker, I give full credit for this day to the people of Saskatchewan, to the business people, the working people, the farming people, and those from outside our province who are coming to Saskatchewan, who are investing in Saskatchewan. I give full credit to this, to the leadership and the partnership that we've engaged in as a New Democratic Party government. Mr. Speaker, there is very little or no credit can be given to an opposition who all they can do is complain and complain and complain.

And I invite the Leader of the Opposition to change that kind of

attitude. He said he's going to bring about a change over there. Well I tell you he's been the leader, I don't know how long now, the unelected leader over there, the unelected leader. It's the same old thing. It's the same old thing we've heard from the Saskatchewan Party for months now, for years. And it's the very reason, Mr. Speaker, they sit in the opposition benches, and they will continue to sit in the opposition benches for a long time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is a day, this is a day for the people of Saskatchewan to rejoice, to rejoice in the report that the Minister of Finance has brought here. This province is on a roll. And under the leadership of a New Democratic Party government, this province is staying on a roll, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves debating the merits of a budget update released today by the Minister of Finance. This budget update comes as the result of a unexpected and very fortunate combination of events that have provided nearly \$1 billion to the Government of Saskatchewan over and above what it budgeted last March.

Mr. Speaker, let me outline some of the stratagems of strong fiscal management on behalf of this NDP government that brought us to this point, and I will round off some of the numbers. Mr. Speaker, 500 million in increased oil and gas revenues because the world price of oil is nearly double what was budgeted last March. Mr. Speaker, \$83 million in increased potash revenue because — you guessed it — increased world prices for potash. Mr. Speaker, \$272 million in federal transfers over and above what appeared to be available last March. Mr. Speaker, \$23 million in increased tax revenue; no surprise since, in the budget last March, they raised the PST 1 per cent.

And what have these fiscal prudes been able to achieve on the expense side of the ledger, Mr. Speaker? \$24 million saved in forest fire fighting budget, although they somehow managed to spend \$42 million fighting forest fires this last summer when there were no major fires to fight and very few fires of any size. \$24 million saved, Mr. Speaker, because the Canadian dollar gained strength against the US dollar and we experienced low interest rates.

Mr. Speaker, this all adds up to just about \$1 billion of either one-time windfall revenue or savings to the provincial treasury that are not structural or permanent in nature.

Mr. Speaker, with the windfall that this government is sitting on, they won't have to take \$171.1 million out of their imaginary Fiscal Stabilization Fund as budgeted last March. And not only will they not have to draw down that 171.1 million imaginary dollars, but they will be able to add 179.3 million new imaginary dollars to this imaginary Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Good news indeed for anyone that is gullible enough to accept that assertion at face value.

Mr. Speaker, every time this government draws down their phony Fiscal Stabilization Fund, they have to borrow the money to do it and thereby increase the debt of this province. Because,

Mr. Speaker, as we all know in this room, the Fiscal Stabilization Fund is nothing but an accounting entry.

Mr. Speaker, this windfall has allowed the government to pay down some debt, and that is positive, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure that they will make much of their meagre debt reduction efforts, an attempt to spin their one-time windfall into some feat of shrewd fiscal management, a long-term plan with a vision to the future. I can see it all now, Mr. Speaker. But let's put their debt reduction efforts into perspective.

With this nearly \$1 billion windfall, Mr. Speaker, this NDP government will be paying our provincial debt down to about the level it was when this Premier assumed office three and a half years ago. And, Mr. Speaker, if my memory serves me correctly, there was about a half billion dollar surplus that year that this Premier and his government inherited from former Premier Roy Romanow. They blew that half billion, Mr. Speaker, and they'll blow this billion.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture in this province — agriculture, the members on that side of the room seems to think that's a four-letter word — but agriculture in this province has experienced the perfect storm this year, to borrow a quote from the Leader of the Opposition.

Following at least two and as many as six years of drought, depending on location, producers have seen a late spring, cold summer, and a very early and severe killing frost that finished the crop in about two-thirds of the grain belt on August 20, combined with the lingering effects of the BSE crisis that has now continued long enough to affect the bottom line of every cattle producer, and a new and very punitive export tariff on our hogs.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget update the government reannounces the \$40 million that it has committed to the fed and feeder cattle set-aside program which it committed to back in September. Although this program is fraught with difficulties and shortcomings, we commended the government for taking part in it like every other cattle producing province in the country.

Mr. Speaker, producers in this province have been brought to their knees this year because of the circumstances that I have related and because of the actions of this NDP government. In their last full budget last March, this government launched an all-out attack on rural Saskatchewan by increasing the PST without any corresponding property tax relief; by closing 22 of the province's 31 rural service centres; by closing nine Saskatchewan Environment offices, all in rural Saskatchewan; by closing several rural health facilities; by reducing the number of long-term care beds in rural Saskatchewan; by eliminating the farm fuel tax rebate on retail purchases; by cancelling the livestock and horticultural facilities incentive program; by cancelling the farm families opportunities initiative and the Conservation Cover Program; by reducing the funding to Prairie Diagnostic's laboratories by \$700,000; by eliminating the short-term hog term . . . hog loan program and livestock drought program; by closing the extension services branch; and by increasing water testing fees in rural Saskatchewan.

In this budget update, this NDP government commits 55 billion . . . or million dollars a year for two years for property tax

relief, and that's both rural and urban, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and for two years only. No commitment to any kind of permanent property tax relief in this province where we pay the highest property taxes in the country across the board and by far the highest property taxes on farm land, on farm land based on value.

Mr. Speaker, even though this government has admitted today that they are sitting on a windfall of about \$1 billion over and above what was budgeted last March, they insist on slipping one more knife into the ribs of our farm families by still refusing to fully fund the CAIS program, Mr. Speaker, just as they refused to fully fund CFIP (Canadian farm income program) before it. Mr. Speaker, agricultural producers in this province are facing a very dismal winter and a very dismal future, thanks to the vindictiveness of this government — yes, Mr. Speaker, vindictiveness.

Farm people did not support this NDP government in the last election, and they have been punished ever since for it. This failure to fund the CAIS program, which would have enabled many producers to continue farming, is unconscionable and cynical. This tired, old, vindictive, cynical government is prepared to sit on its windfall and watch thousands of productive farm people be driven from the land this winter through no fault of their own. I ask them, I ask this government, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of agricultural producers, at least please reconsider funding the CAIS program. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy for an opportunity to stand up and speak in support of the supplementary estimates.

I think there has been a tremendous amount of work gone into increasing the revenues in Saskatchewan. The Premier went through this in detail, pointing out the kind of hard work that has gone on to bring these dollars into Saskatchewan. The truth is that many of these dollars are one-time dollars and have to be dealt with very prudently. We cannot do the kind of thing that the government of the '80s was doing — the counterpart of the folks opposite here. We cannot just go out and spend, spend, and drive the province into debt. That's the record that they have, Mr. Speaker, and that's not the direction that we're going to go.

We believe that we are part of a nation that is built upon equity, a nation that has within its very constitution principles that call for fairness across this nation, that you should not be disadvantaged if you're living in one province as opposed to another. Mr. Speaker, this is vital to the very fabric of the nation of Canada. And it is also there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the equalization formula for the nation and in the social union agreement. Clearly this nation is to be built upon fairness and equity. When we got the numbers from the federal government that spoke about the kind of dollars that would have to go into the CAIS program in this province, it did not fit with that very basic spirit of the nation of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite would have us just bow to that unfairness, that injustice, and throw the money away.

Throw it away. Mr. Speaker, this does not make sense in this province. They did that in the '80s. They did that in the '80s. That's their record — get billions, throw it away, and nothing comes back.

Mr. Speaker, we have commitment to work for the people of Saskatchewan — the rural people and the urban people — to make sure that we get the very best possible deals. We've seen that now in equalization. We've seen that in health care with significant dollars coming in. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will see that in agriculture as well.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow the kind of injustice that is inherent in this program to continue. We have to speak out against it. We have to do everything possible so that we can provide for the needs of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we're very clear that the people of Saskatchewan, the people who are farming in this province, many of them have faced a devastating year. Many of them have faced several years of devastation because of drought, because of BSE, because of frost this fall. And, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to providing support. We have shown that in the past and we will show it in the future and we are showing it today. With these new dollars that came in, we were able to put together the \$40 million that was needed to back up the federal government on the BSE program.

(16:00)

And I will remind members of this House that that program is a trade issue, which is clearly in the jurisdictional area of the federal government. Despite that, we could not allow our producers to suffer through this period. We've committed to making sure that we would have dollars in place to back these programs, despite the fact it was a federal responsibility. We cannot, we cannot allow the federal government to roll over us again. We must stand up as firmly as we can on these programs and try and get a just and a fair deal for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen tremendous advances here. We have seen changes to the royalty structure, which has meant that we have got new dollars coming in around oil and gas. And those aren't just because the price of oil and gas have gone up. It's because there is more activity happening in this province as well. And it's happening because of the work of this government.

We will continue to work with industry to make sure that this province continues to prosper and we will make sure, through our planning and through our work, that all the people of this province benefit. Whether it's through the changes in the tax structure that will allow support for the municipalities, whether it's putting more money into health, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will do everything that we can to make sure that all the people of this province enjoy the windfalls that were happening this year and the ongoing returns that will come because of the hard work this government has been doing. We will make sure that all the people of this province benefit.

Mr. Speaker, over and over again I hear from the members opposite that we should just go in and fund these programs; we

should put all the money into the programs. The next day, Mr. Speaker, they're talking about how we're spending way too much; we should stop our spending; we shouldn't be spending the way we're spending. And the next day they're back in saying you've got to spend more, you've got to spend more.

Mr. Speaker, there just is no sense in that. They flip, they flop each day. And there is no consistency to what the Sask Party is saying. They cannot, they cannot take good news that this province is doing well. They simply can't take it.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province deserve a better opposition. They deserve a better attitude by their opposition — an attitude that respects the gains that we make in this province; an attitude that is encouraging, not always defeatist and negative. But, Mr. Speaker, we hear the conversations coming from the other side — negative, negative, negative. That's all we hear from the Sask Party.

Mr. Speaker, today really should be a day for celebration. Today is a day when we can celebrate gains that have been made by committed, hard work by our Premier, by our Finance minister, by our Health minister — work that really has been productive; work by our Industry and Resources minister that has changed the resource picture for us around oil and gas and mining and minerals.

Mr. Speaker, we have so much that is good and solid in this province. We have a synchrotron that is going to bring tremendous new business into this province. Hard, hard work has gone into bringing that project forward, bringing it to a successful opening this fall.

Mr. Speaker, there is much good about this province. Finally we are a have province. We have been a have province now, this is our third year. Mr. Speaker, I count on the fact that we will be able to celebrate being a have province into the far future. Mr. Speaker, it's because of hard work; it is because of commitment to the people of Saskatchewan. It is because we won't roll over and play dead with the federal government. If there are issues that need to be dealt with, we will stand up for the people of Saskatchewan; we will deal with those issues. And, Mr. Speaker, when we can, we will be successful and we will bring all the prosperity to the people of the province. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to be able to stand in the House today and participate in the debate today on the budget or the mini-budget brought forward, the Minister of Finance presented a little earlier today.

We have heard much from the government side about all the good news and how important it is for the people of Saskatchewan to rejoice. The Premier gave, the Premier gave the people full credit for the benefits and for the effort that they put into making this whole thing possible. Mr. Speaker, the Premier did the right thing by saying that, because I'm looking at some figures here. Mr. Speaker, not only should the people get credit for this, let me enunciate the figures that have been

presented to me today that gives credence to that particular point of view.

The new measures for Saskatchewan residents have been enunciated by the Minister of Finance today, including property tax relief of \$55 million and utility rate rebates of \$54.1 million. That's a total, Mr. Speaker, of \$109.15 million.

Now that sounds like a lot of money until you look at the other side of the equation, Mr. Speaker. The increases that this provincial government have brought to bear on the people of this province on their wallets, Mr. Speaker, the numbers look a little bit different.

The PST increase that was announced in the last budget has generated \$136 million right out of the pockets of the people of this province. Other tax hikes that were brought to bear total \$44 million, Mr. Speaker.

And now we have word that the SaskPower rate increase — instituted by this government even before the rate review panel had a chance to look at it, averaging 9 per cent across the board — was going to generate about \$30 million between September 1 and the end of the year, and then, in 2005, an additional \$110.7 million coming from the consumers of this province. That amount is equivalent to \$320.7 million. Mr. Speaker, I think the sound of rejoicing has just died.

Mr. Speaker, how you can claim to be, how you can claim to be a benefactor of the people of this province by giving them 109 million and then taking \$320 million away from them is beyond me. It's beyond belief. It's certainly beyond the acceptance and the reasonableness as far as the people of this province are concerned.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have an interesting situation where the Premier is giving the people of the province credit when he's — through his various taxation policies, through the rate increases at the utilities — bleeding them of \$320 million. I think he should say more about their rejoicing and indicate exactly how hard they've been hit in order to achieve this particular set of figures.

You know, there's been lots of biblical analogies today. We've had a few. And I don't want to belabour the point, but I remember the story in the Old Testament about the children of Israel making bricks for the Pharaoh in Egypt. And every time the Pharaoh wanted to extract a little higher price from them, he made them produce more bricks — less food, less time, but make more bricks. And the ultimate test came when he demanded that they make more bricks without the materials, the raw materials necessary to do the project properly. He took away their straw and said make more bricks.

Mr. Speaker, this provincial government is asking the people of this province to make more bricks, taking away more and more of their opportunities, taking away more and more of their ability to produce and benefit for themselves and ultimately the province, but taking that capability from them and extracting a higher toll from the people of this province — \$320 million out of the pockets of the people of this province.

Should they rejoice, Mr. Speaker? I don't think so. I don't hear

much rejoicing. I don't hear much rejoicing in downtown Regina. I don't hear much rejoicing in my constituency. I don't hear much rejoicing anywhere, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I hear a lot of people talking very worriedly about where this province is going.

This mini-budget is not going to make a bit of difference to the majority of people in this province. The government will say that it makes their management look better, that it makes the fiscal resources of this province look better, it makes the long-term financial stability of the province look better. But it's come, Mr. Speaker, at a terrible cost. And the people — individually, in this province — are paying the price.

Mr. Speaker, I've heard with some interest this afternoon — in fact, amusement frankly — the suggestion that Saskatchewan not only is a have province now, but has been for the last three years. Mr. Speaker, something as important as having Saskatchewan achieve a have province status — if we, in fact, had achieved that previously, this government would've spent every last living breathing moment bragging about that. Mr. Speaker, we have never ever heard that this province was a have province until just in the last few weeks.

Mr. Speaker, a have province is one that achieves a certain level of financial resources and capability. A have province is a province that has solid prospects of maintaining that status going forward. A have province contributes much more than it receives to the equalization formula that affects the entire country.

Mr. Speaker, last year we heard nothing from this government about being a have province. Mr. Speaker, the year before we heard nothing from this government about being a have province.

What we heard, what we heard was the Premier and the ministers of this government repeatedly say, we're too poor; we don't have the money; we haven't got the fiscal resources to do what needs to be done to achieve these objectives to help these people in these areas. This government pled poverty every opportunity it had, Mr. Speaker. That doesn't sound to me like a have province.

So what are we finding out today? We've been a have province for the last two or three years. How did that happen? Is that a trick of bookkeeping? Is that something that we stumbled across? Is this creative accounting, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, claiming to be a have province also brings with it obligations and responsibilities. The Premier has said in the newspaper — it has been referred to previously — that we are now a have province but this is a one-time event and we may not be a have province in the future. Why would that be, Mr. Speaker? Does that speak to solid management? Does that speak to a government that has a plan for the future, that has a means and a mechanism for growing the prosperity of this province? It sounds to me, Mr. Speaker, like the admission of a Premier who's taking his good fortune, taking claim for it today, but has no way of promising it for the future.

That suggests to me, Mr. Speaker, that being a have province today, making Saskatchewan a have province today is an

accident of good luck and good timing, and maybe even a little bit of goodwill on behalf of the federal government. It doesn't sound to me like we have a sustained, long-term plan for maintaining our position as a have province.

You know, Mr. Speaker, as a point of departure, but maybe even to substantiate some of the things I'm saying, I recall very clearly the Premier standing in his place here and in the rotunda and other public venues where he often referred to Saskatchewan as a wee province, w-e-e. A wee province. Mr. Speaker, a have province is not a wee province. A have province is a strong province. It's a prosperous province. It has largeness in terms of its capabilities, its strength, its ability to contribute to other people's weaknesses. We are not a wee province, and yet the Premier has consistently referred to this place as a wee province.

We only have 3 per cent of the population, he would say. What can we achieve? Three per cent of the population in this wonderful land doesn't give us the capability — or the desire maybe even — to achieve the greatness that we ought to achieve. You know I mentioned that 3 per cent of the population business to somebody in a conversation the other day and they said, actually we've got 7 per cent of the population. The other 4 per cent are spread all across the country.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we have what I would describe as a Saskatchewan diaspora. We have people spread all across the country and around the world. And if we were the province that we ought to be, those people would still be here in Saskatchewan. We wouldn't be a wee province. We would be a province of proud tradition and a tremendous future. And I just . . . I feel that it's a slap in the face to the people of this province who continually contribute, almost bleeding their resources, into keeping this province as viable as it is. This is not a wee province; this is a strong province and has tremendous potential.

(16:15)

Mr. Speaker, there's so many things I would like to contribute to this debate this afternoon. But one of the things I need to refer to is an item that was mentioned in the mid-term financial statement relating to the \$53 million rebate proposal that the Minister of Finance alluded to earlier. Fifty-three . . . I'm sorry, \$54 million — I've got the figure a little wrong there — \$54 million, Mr. Speaker, is a substantial sum until you realize, until you realize how marginal it is in comparison to the amount of money being taken from consumers in this province, not just in the most recent SaskPower rate increases, but in other areas of taxation.

And I just, I find it a real interesting anomaly that SaskPower, after having generated what was considered to be almost a record profit last year of \$187 million, gave up 169 million of that to the General Revenue Fund via CIC. And then we had SaskPower pleading poverty just a few short months later, asking the Premier and his cabinet to approve virtually an immediate average 9 per cent increase in utility rates.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province have to meet their expenses based on what their income is. They have to buy

their capital improvements based on what their income is and what their cash flow is. But this government seems to believe that they can take money out of SaskPower in extraordinary amounts, in unprecedented totality, and then turn around and say to the people of the province, but we can't afford to run this operation because our costs are going up in natural gas, our operating costs are going up on an across-the-board basis. We have big infrastructure demands. We have to replace our infrastructure so we need an immediate rate increase.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if I ran my household that way, not only would I not last long but my banker'd be asking me in for an interview saying, what are you doing? And the people of this province are asking this government, what are you doing? Why would you take that much money out of SaskPower, especially when 111 million of it was fake money anyhow. It was just based on exchange rate differentials — a strengthening Canadian dollar against a weakening American dollar.

So here we have a, you know, a huge transfer of funds from SaskPower to the General Revenue Fund, most of which wasn't even real money. And then the company turns around and has a rate increase that is applicable to every consumer as of September 1 before the rate review panel even had a chance to consider it.

How does that rate increase break down? Well urban utility users, subscribers, are going to pay 8.7 per cent more; rural subscribers are going to pay 13 per cent more; farms are up 7 per cent; the urban commercial are up 8 per cent; the rural commercial is up 10 per cent. And we've got oil field activity that's paying 10 per cent higher rates. Resellers of electrical supply such as the city of Saskatoon and the city of Swift Current are going to see a 14 per cent increase at the wholesale rate. And we're going to see increases of fourteen and seven and a half per cent, respectively, in power rate and power contract rates as a result of this rate increase.

So we've got a \$187 million profit. We've got 113 million of it that's a result of foreign exchange gains. And we've got CIC sending \$169 million to the General Revenue Fund. And now we've got a rate increase.

Well, should the people of Saskatchewan be happy about getting a bit of a rebate? I suppose a little bit is better than nothing but when you break this \$54.1 million down among the just fewer than a million people, that's not a lot of money — \$54 per person. The question becomes, how much more are they paying for utility rate increases? How much more is their electricity costing them? How assured can they be that they won't get a big increase in energy costs because of natural gas prices going up?

You know, we almost got an increase in the cost of our insurance. SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) had applied for a rate increase that was going to be pretty substantial, about a 10 per cent increase across the board. And all of a sudden — what was that, oh about 60, 70 days later — the rate application was off the table because SGI mysteriously came up with \$100 million more revenue.

I'm wondering how that happened, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if that revenue had anything to do with the need of SGI to

accommodate the government's lowest rate promise.

Mr. Speaker, we've got a situation here that I think that the people of Saskatchewan need to take credit for. But instead of rejoicing, as the Premier indicated, I think that they're going to be very unhappy with the consequences of this mid-year statement.

You know, we want to cover a few other areas because there are some significant issues that I think this government has just completely overlooked. Now I don't like to stand up here and speak on behalf of my constituents unless I'm pretty sure of what I'm talking about. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to relate to you, I want to relate to you a situation that I think is borderline tragic.

On Remembrance Day, on November 11, I attended the service in the community of Shaunavon; a well-attended service, with all the pomp and sombreness that you can associate with a service like that, and I was pleased to be there as their elected representative.

But after the service was over, I took the opportunity to just walk through some of the people who attended and visited with a number of people who I hadn't seen in a long time. I count among those people a number of friends and I'll be candid about that. I can talk to them on a very personal and unique plane. They're not just constituents; they're friends.

And I came away from that visit very disheartened, Mr. Speaker, because out of the group of three or four people I met after the service, one of them said to me, you know, my dad told me that when there comes a time when I'm not making money farming, I should sell the place. I'm at that point now, were his words to me.

This man is just over 50. I know his operation well. I bought cattle from him. I've worked with him. I've sold machinery to him at one time. He's a friend. He said to me, I cannot afford to buy a new vehicle of any kind. I'm driving a 10-year-old truck. My car is older than that. My machinery is older than that. It's failing. I can't make my payments. I don't know what to do.

You know, Mr. Speaker, that's pretty hard to hear from a person you know well — a person that you know is at least a second and probably a third generation farmer, a person who you know has put every ounce of effort into surviving and operating that farm entity to the best of his ability.

This is not a fellow who made wild expenditures and bought brand new machinery when he couldn't afford it. This is not a fellow who wasn't careful with his money. Being a salesman and trying to sell him equipment, I know how careful he was. This is not a fellow who would string me a line. This is a gentleman who has dedicated all of his adult life to succeeding on that farm, and he is wondering if he's going to make it.

I took a little time that afternoon to just drive in the country. And I like to do that to familiarize myself with issues and people and reacquaint myself with some of the individuals I haven't seen in quite some time. I just went farm to farm outside of Shaunavon. I visited about four farms that afternoon. And, Mr. Speaker, when I . . . by the time I was finished and

driving home, I was so personally discouraged I wondered what future faces our rural farm families. What future do the people of my constituency and every rural constituency in this province face?

When I had, out of that group I visited, two more people tell me that they were quitting, absolutely quitting, and they knew of another person who had been a custom operator, who had bought machinery and worked at other people's land as a means of paying for his own operation and committing hours and hours and hours a day to the success of his farm . . . When we hear of reports of people who are not 55 and 60 and 65 quitting because they're discouraged, when you hear reports of people who are 35, 40, and 45 packing it in because there's no money, there's no future, there's no support from this government — that's what hurts, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I could give you a list as long as my arm of people who have left the constituency of Cypress Hills in the last 12 months. I know them personally. I know them by name. I know where they live. I know what they have done. When I see that kind of departure from my area, that kind of evacuation from my communities, that speaks to the diaspora that I mentioned early — the people of Saskatchewan are spread all over this country. When they have no hope in the future of the farming enterprise in rural Saskatchewan, we will see an exodus like we haven't seen since the '30s. And it's starting to happen now, Mr. Speaker.

And the reason I'm raising that is that I heard the Minister of Agriculture say that he's doing his best on behalf of Saskatchewan producers. Why is it then that this government will not honour its commitment to funding CAIS?

Our Ag critic earlier today talked about one farm family that had a \$28,000 shortfall because of the failure of this government to meet its obligation. My office just this last week have had two calls. One farm short 9,000. The other farm short about 10. This is just the start. These applications are just now really getting sent in and processed and returned. Mr. Speaker, \$9,000 might not be a lot of money, but that's the amount of money necessary to keep some of those people viable on the farm.

Mr. Speaker, this government has an obligation on behalf of the people of this province to fund the CAIS program. There was no indication of it in today's mini statement. In spite of the almost a billion dollars of new revenue, in spite of nearly a billion dollars of new revenue, no commitment to farm families who are suffering that kind of failure and hardship.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture says that we are unfairly penalized because we have such a large agrarian area, that on a per capita basis we have a high obligation when these programs are decided, when they're negotiated, when we have the 60/40 split. That's true; I won't deny that, Mr. Speaker, but here's the other side of that coin.

Is this government prepared to share the wealth of a prosperous farm economy with every farmer across the country when times are good? No, sir. They will not. They will not do that. We cannot claim a special right of privilege when we are on the losing side without providing the same kind of benefit when

we're on the winning side. I've never heard this government talk about sharing our agriculture wealth with anybody else on a per capita basis.

Mr. Speaker, this government was a signatory to the arrangement, the agreement that brought us CAIS. This government signed on. This government lobbied and negotiated for improvements and changes to it. They got what they asked for, and now they won't pay.

Mr. Speaker, this government has no credibility in rural Saskatchewan whatsoever. None. And if that's the way they're going to maintain their promises, if that's the way they're going to deal with the people of this province, they will have no credibility with anybody in the future.

Mr. Speaker, there's much more I would be happy to address today, but I see we've run out of time. I'll save my comments for a future date. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(16:30)

The Speaker: — Order. I see the Minister of Finance is rising to his feet. So it is my duty pursuant to rule 37(3) to advise the Assembly that the hon. minister is about to exercise his right to close a debate, and afterwards all members will be precluded from speaking to this question. Therefore if any member wishes to speak, let him or her do so now. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the outset I want to thank all those who participated in this debate. This reflects I think a historic moment — perhaps not that historic. I think it's probably been 30 years or so since we last saw supplementary estimates being debated in the Legislative Assembly in a fall session.

I think this augers well for the future. This is the way things should be done, that if there are supplementary estimates, they should be debated in the Legislative Assembly as opposed to simply being considered as special warrants by the government. That's an option that we had, but we decided that upon reflection, Mr. Speaker, that these are items that should be debated here properly by the members of the Legislative Assembly, and that is what the Legislative Assembly is all about.

Mr. Speaker, listening to some of the contributions in debate, again I want to just reiterate we know how this works — that if things are going well, then it's always because of someone else or something else, but if things are not going well, then of course you blame the provincial government. That's the way things work in this place, and that's in a sense what the opposition is saying again today.

And I'm just saying that we know how this works, but I do have one little question. It's that if things are working well with respect to equalization payments, why is it then that the Leader of the Opposition, back in the spring, attacked us as viciously and as sarcastically as he did and calling into question the government's campaign to elevate the issue of equalization for

the people of Saskatchewan in a way that I think helped us get some redress of a longstanding grievance and a redress of something that was fair and inequitable and has now been properly dealt with in the context of a payment from the federal government. So you know, sometimes these things, where it aren't apparent, it — upon further reflection, Mr. Speaker — may be the government has had something to do with things getting better.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just quickly deal with the question . . . a number of issues that have been raised. One is the issue of economic growth. As opposed to prohibiting growth, I just want to say that our growth last year was the second highest in Canada, our GDP (gross domestic product) growth. Our growth this year, again in these supplementary estimates and a mid-year report, is being revised upwards not just by us, Mr. Speaker, but by all the banks and other forecasters that look at our economy. Their forecast for this year and next year have been revised upwards because of the strength of the Saskatchewan economy.

Employment is up, and that's good for our economy. And we also see some signs that population is beginning to trend upward, Mr. Speaker. So I think that's positive.

I might say one other word with respect to these supplementary estimates. In my view, these supplementary estimates reflect sound fiscal management. And I think at the end of the day, that if you're to encourage businesses to invest in a jurisdiction, then obviously sound fiscal management is one of the factors that they have to take into consideration. And I think, again, with the supplementary estimate, Mr. Speaker, we are demonstrating sound fiscal management.

Mr. Speaker, some comments were made with respect to debt. And the opposition Finance critic indicated that we're putting some funds aside in our Fiscal Stabilization Fund, that it's a form of line of credit and that we may see debt increasing again in the future as we draw on that line of credit. And he's exactly right, Mr. Speaker; that's what will happen.

But the real issue that one has to look at is not sort of changes of the course of one year to the next year . . . and of course we have to be concerned about those changes, and we have to understand the nature of those changes and we have to analyze those changes. But the real thing that we need to look at is the long-term trends with respect to debt. And I can say — and the record will back me up — that the long-term trend with respect to debt that is the responsibility of taxpayers in Saskatchewan is a good picture in Saskatchewan. I know it's something they may not recognize given their experience of the 1980s of always increasing debt, Mr. Speaker, but we see now a trend of debt going down.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that not according to us but the Dominion Bond Rating Service in Toronto, which is a reputable agency, has stated that over the course of the last nine years in Canada — the last nine years in Canada — there have only been two provinces that have reduced debt, their taxpayers' supported debt, two provinces that have reduced their debt. One of those is certainly Alberta, given their windfall revenues over the years, but the other jurisdiction is Saskatchewan.

And I think it's time we had some recognition of that, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes to debt the long-term trend line is a very positive one and one of the reasons that the credit rating agencies, contrary to what was taking place in the 1980s, the credit rating agencies have been improving the credit rating worthiness of the province of Saskatchewan because they understand, and they see what is taking place with respect to debt. And they like what they see, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, and in these supplementary estimates we're doing something that only one of two provinces in Canada are doing, and that is permanently reducing our debt, Mr. Speaker, reducing the cost of government for the people of Saskatchewan. And I think that's a positive thing. I find it somewhat of a curious comment that when asked about debt reduction, the opposition critic in a press conference this morning said words to the effect that, well reducing debt is not a bad thing, not a bad thing. Well the question I have, Mr. Speaker, do you agree that debt reduction is a good thing? And is it that difficult to say it, that long-term debt reduction is a good thing?

Maybe we should give them credit, that given their experience in the 1980s of always increasing debt that they've come a long way by recognizing that debt reduction is not a bad thing. But we were hoping that we might get them to say that long-term debt reduction is a good thing — not just for today, but for future generations in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — We have to ask these things as to where it is that they stand on important issues like that because there seems to be a fair amount of division in their caucus. And the message we get from their leader is not always a clear one because we do have members on the opposite side who'd say, you know, the government should reduce its spending, reduce its spending. And then a week later, another one of their members gets up, you know; the government should spend a few million dollars more on this thing or that thing. And then another one of their members says, well if the government has extra money, I hope they don't spend it; they should reduce their spending. And then another one of their member says, well no, if they've got a few extra million dollars, they should spend it on this or spend it on that.

So there seems to be a little bit of a division on the other side. Are they fiscal conservatives, like some of them want to be, or are they simply inheritors of the Devine legacy of the 1980s when wild spending was the thing to do, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, I want to just touch for a minute on the question of equalization. Equalization measures the fiscal capacity of a province. If you have a fiscal capacity that's above an average, then you're deemed to be a have province. If you're below that standard, then you're deemed to be a have-not province, and you receive equalization payments. That's how the system works.

But can I just say that if you're a have province, it doesn't necessarily mean that you have great additional dollars. This year we do, but it doesn't necessarily mean that in every particular year. What it does mean is that you're replacing

equalization dollars with your own source revenues.

And can I make just one other comment and that is that . . . and I think the members of the opposition know this. But it takes the federal government about 30 months after the close of a fiscal year to finally determine in some cases whether or not your particular jurisdiction — in this case Saskatchewan — was a have province.

That's not the case in this fiscal year because here partway through the fiscal year we are able to say for this year we are definitely a have province. No ifs, no buts, no further analysis — Saskatchewan is a have province in this current fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, on that note, I do want to thank . . . I know we got off to a bit of a rocky start on that when we were criticized for trying to elevate this issue for the people of Saskatchewan and to increase the understanding that Saskatchewan people have of this issue, and the opposition leader attacked us on the way in which we went about doing that. I do again want to thank the opposition for working with us when it came to approaching the federal government on this question of equalization. I think it shows, Mr. Speaker, that when both sides of the House are united, work together, we can achieve important advancements for the province of Saskatchewan, and we look forward to working with them in other areas, to have them stand shoulder to shoulder with us to advance the interests of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

A short word with respect to Crowns and their management — and a very short word, Mr. Speaker — you'll hear members on the other side go on and on and on in great detail about this issue and that issue with respect to Crowns. All I can say, Mr. Speaker, that we believe that Crowns can, should, do provide good service to the people of Saskatchewan and should do so at good rates. That is what we are achieving. That is the goal that we have.

Not to be mistaken for what happened in the 1980s in Saskatchewan when the Crowns were stripped of their assets, when their debt picture was allowed to get out of control, we have sound, healthy Crowns that will provide good service at good rates for the people of Saskatchewan in the years to come, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a quick word with respect to revenue measures in case there's any confusion on this. The supplementary estimates speak to additional spending that is proposed and the supplementary estimates deal with budgetary appropriations for spending increases — spending increases — and the supplementary estimates do not deal specifically with revenues.

Mr. Speaker, speaking of revenues, again I want to emphasize something that I've been emphasizing all day, that what we're dealing with here is one-time revenues — one-time revenues. We have laid out a plan as to how to deal with one-time revenues. This plan focuses a lot on one-time commitments, Mr. Speaker, one-time commitments such as capital, both for government capital and for third party capital. We seek to replace the Regina Correctional Centre, some of the old buildings there. This is a one-time expenditure; it's not necessarily something that's repeated every year. It's not necessarily an ongoing commitment. It's a one-time

expenditure, Mr. Speaker.

And we have a number of capital commitments with respect to third parties such as post-secondary education and municipalities. So take these dollars, get them one time. We're going to expend them on one-time opportunities, Mr. Speaker, and some short-term commitments that we are booking for the next couple of years where we can see some things and we're going to need the money, and we want to ensure that our revenues are maintained to support health, education, other important priorities. We can see these things. We're booking funds to allocate for that and to ensure that these vital public services can be maintained, Mr. Speaker.

And we're putting money, again as I indicated, into debt reduction, reducing the cost of government. So you get these one-time dollars, put them into a one-time permanent reduction of debt that benefits the people of Saskatchewan forever. That's our plan. That's the way we see it going.

I'm very concerned about what I hear from the opposition who seem to be befuddled and confused about, you have one-time increases in revenues and therefore immediately start to make the transition into ongoing spending commitments, ongoing revenue measures — that is to say, tax reduction. And I think the opposition really needs to come a whole lot further if the opposition is to be credibly regarded when it comes to financial management in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Nothing that they've done today gives anyone any real cause for taking the point of view that they have something credible to say when it comes to fiscal management.

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We are proposing to put our dollars into one-time commitments: \$110 million for property tax relief, \$54 million to offset and reduce CIC dividends that funds our commitment to the lowest cost utility bundle, \$40 million in additional BSE funding, Mr. Speaker, \$66 million in new health funding. But we have \$66 million in additional revenues to cover that.

(16:45)

We have \$80 million to address third party capital and infrastructure commitments, \$110 million for government-owned capital, including a new provincial lab and the Regina Correctional Centre. And we have commitments to deal with our share of the northern uranium mine cleanup, Mr. Speaker. And again — again — \$179 million to permanently reduce our debt.

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. It's called prudent fiscal management. That's what we're sticking to and we welcome the opportunity for the opposition to make it clear where they stand on this. But we're going forward with our plan because it's a good plan. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Finance, the member for Regina Douglas Park, seconded by the member for The Battlefords:

That Her Honour's message and the supplementary estimates be referred to the Committee of Finance.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance, the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of the Assembly to move several motions to refer the supplementary estimates to the various policy field committees.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to move several motions with respect to referring estimates, supplementary estimates. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

MOTIONS

Referral of Estimates to Committee

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Nutana:

That the following supplementary estimates being:
 vote 53, Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation;
 vote 74, Information Technology Office;
 be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

I so move.

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

That the following supplementary estimates being:
 vote 53, Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation;
 vote 74, Information Technology Office;
 be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

That the following supplementary estimates being:
 vote 1, Agriculture and Food;
 vote 23, Industry and Resources;
 be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred
 to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

I move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

The Speaker: — On the motion moved by the member for Regina Douglas Park, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Nutana:

The following supplementary estimates being:
 vote 1, Agriculture and Food;
 vote 23, Industry and Resources;
 be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred
 to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion's carried. Votes 1 and 23 are hereby referred.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

That the following supplementary estimates being:
 vote 3, Justice;
 vote 5, Learning;
 vote 27, Culture, Youth and Recreation;
 vote 32, Health;
 vote 73, Corrections and Public Safety;
 be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred
 to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

That the following supplementary estimates being:
 vote 3, Justice;
 vote 5, Learning;
 vote 27, Culture, Youth and Recreation;
 vote 32, Health;
 vote 73, Corrections and Public Safety;
 be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred
 to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

That the following supplementary estimates being:
 vote 17, Highways and Transportation;
 vote 75, Northern Affairs;
 be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred
 to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs
 and Infrastructure.

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

That the following supplementary estimates being:
 vote 17, Highways and Transportation;
 vote 75, Northern Affairs;
 be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred
 to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs
 and Infrastructure.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

That the following supplementary estimates being:
 vote 21, Legislative Assembly;
 be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred
 to the Standing Committee on House Services.

I move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

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

That the following supplementary estimates being:
 vote 21, Legislative Assembly;
 be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred
 to the Standing Committee on House Services.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House

Leader that this House be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. We stand adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:51.

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CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. L. Calvert
Premier

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

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

Hon. B. Belanger
Minister of Northern Affairs

Hon. E. Cline
Minister of Industry and Resources

Hon. J. Crofford
Minister of Community Resources and Employment
Minister Responsible for Disability Issues
Minister Responsible for Gaming

Hon. D. Forbes
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for the Office of Energy Conservation

Hon. D. Higgins
Minister of Labour
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. J. Nilson
Minister of Health
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. P. Prebble
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety

Hon. F. Quennell
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Hon. C. Serby
Deputy Premier
Minister of Rural Revitalization

Hon. M. Sonntag
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister of Highways and Transportation

Hon. L. Taylor
Minister of Government Relations

Hon. A. Thomson
Minister of Learning
Minister Responsible for Information Technology

Hon. H. Van Mulligen
Minister of Finance

Hon. M. Wartman
Minister of Agriculture and Food